

**THE CHESHIRE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION, PLAN OF
CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT SPECIAL MEETING, HELD
ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2018, AT 7:30 P.M. IN ROOM 207-209,
TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE, CT 06410**

Present

Earl J. Kurtz, Chairman; Sean Stollo, Vice chairman; Gil Linder, Secretary;
John Kardaras, Louis B. Todisco, S. Woody Dawson, Jeff Natale, Vincent Lentini

Alternate members: Robert Anderson, Robert Brucato, Donald Walsh

Absent: Ed Gaudio

Staff: William Voelker, Town Planner

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Kurtz called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

The Clerk called the roll.

III. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Following roll call, a quorum was determined to be present.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The group pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

V. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES – December 13, 2017

MOTION by Mr. Kardaras; seconded by Mr. Natale

MOVED to accept and approve the minutes of December 13, 2017 subject to corrections, additions, deletions.

VOTE The motion passed 8-0-1; Mr. Walsh abstained.

VI. DISCUSSION:

Review of the Highland Avenue Corridor and Discussion of Policy
Options

Chairman Kurtz informed the members the reason for this meeting is because commission was asked by Mike Milone, Town Manager, thru the Town Council and the Economic Development to take a look at the zoning end of the Highland Avenue Area, and to consider changes to promote more economic development in that area.

Mr. Voelker will be doing a presentation from the town GIS website showing town maps of the Highland Avenue corridor that will include wetland areas. He will review each side of Highland Avenue separately to determine how each property would be affected by the proposed changes.

Chairman Kurtz asked if anyone had any questions prior to the presentation.

Mr. Voelker started the presentation at Sand Bank Road on the west side, of the road, showing the industrial areas and the properties zoned I-1. He indicated the sizes of each property. He will be looking at each property as to what is currently there and whether there are wetlands.

Any changes/approach that would be recommended would be based upon an understanding of what is currently there. One approach would be an overlay district. This would not eliminate the I-1 and I-2. Any uses that are now there would remain and would not make any properties non-conforming.

Mr. Voelker reviewed one section at a time on the west side. He stated for commercial development no more than 10,000 feet per acre based upon the geometry of the site. That is possible. There may be some opportunities in there.

Mr. Voelker reiterated that this presentation is to review what the land use pattern is. We will be looking at land use policy that the Commission may or may not want to implement on one side or both sides of Highland Avenue.

Mr. Strollo asked if this area is all I-1. Mr. Voelker confirmed it. He indicated that in terms of any amendments being considered, it would be for properties that border Highland Avenue.

Mr. Voelker informed the members that he would be looking at the left side of Highland Avenue and then the right side because the two sides of the road are unique.

- The Industrial Avenue to Schoolhouse Road north area is zoned I-1, Commerce Court we would not recommend anything different.

There was discussion about what could be done based on the sizes of some lots and whether any proposed changes could be done on both sides of the street.

- Schoolhouse Road east of Johnson has potential for additional access, but there is no depth on this property.

- Creamery Road to Realty Drive, 7 parcels, well established. Business Park zoned I20-A, some possibilities with small parcels, industrial use.
- Mr. Voelker discussed 46.8 acres of the CL&P site. This site has potential commercial development but the wetland band on this parcel is significant and the property also slopes down. There is access from Fieldstone Court.

The members asked questions and Mr. Voelker answered him.

- Fieldstone to East Johnson, zone interchange and zone I-2. These two parcels have about 29 acres combined. There is a significant wetland area; only 15 acres are usable in the front.

Mr. Dawson asked if we are we just looking on Route 10.

Mr. Kurtz replied yes; we are being asked by multiple agencies in town to take a look at the Highland Avenue corridor.

Mr. Voelker explained the difference between the Interchange Special Development District, which has a 30-acre minimum, and the Interchange Zone District, which has a ten-acre minimum. The Special Development District offers more flexibility.

The IZS district only applies to one of the quadrants.

The Town Planner reviewed the quadrant area that includes properties owned by Bozzuto, the State of CT and the Gas Company.

There were questions regarding, with the new changes. what flexibility do people want that cannot be done now.

Mr. Voelker stated he would propose a special regulation for the projects. Projects are based on the individual characteristics and unique features of the land.

Mr. Voelker is trying to work towards a set of regulations under the Highland Avenue Overlays District, with context sensitive design to enable the applicant to come to the Commission to show the design of the project specific to that location. This would be a pre-application meeting, a constructive dialogue. Also the applicant would be encouraged to contact the abutting neighbors to advise them of their proposal. The Commission can enable and inform to applicant to have a pre-application, informal meeting and to contact the abutters, but the Commission cannot force the applicant to do so.

Discussion ensued regarding what options are available for this area and acres restrictions.

Mr. Voelker discussed a design district approach, which emphasizes design and takes into consideration the unique features of a property.

Mr. Voelker's recommendation would be a consideration of an overlay district as a design district that would enable the introduction of commercial uses. This would involve public input, including an informal review which gives more flexibility to the unique features of each property. Mr. Voelker stated it is important to look at what is already there.

East side of the property also has limiting factors in wetlands and topography.

There is a recommendation to the interchange properties to reduce the lot size from 10 acres to 3 acres and to eliminate the 30-acre minimum, in the ICS zone.

The Town Planner explained that this procedure is a two-step process. The first step would be to amend the town plan of development. The second step would be the development and adoption of the Highland Avenue Design District regulations and amendments. These would require public hearings.

Mr. Voelker will distribute a complete package of amendments that will include a complete draft of the design district to the members.

Mr. Kurtz asked the members to review this package.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by M. Kardaras; seconded by Mr. Natale

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 P.M.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:



Angela Izzo