

**MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2019, AT 7:30 P.M. IN TOWN HALL, ROOM 207-209, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410**

Present

Earl J. Kurtz, Chairman; Gil Linder, Secretary; Members: Matthew Bowman, Robert Brucato, John Kardaras, Jeff Natale, Louis Todisco.

Alternates: Robert Anderson, Tom Selmont, Donald Walsh

Absent: S. Woody Dawson and Sean Strollo

Staff: William Voelker, Town Planner

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Kurtz called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.

**2. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

Following roll call a quorum was determined to be present.

**3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The group Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

**4. DISCUSSION:**

- 1. Review of the Highland Avenue corridor and discussion of Policy Options and potential schedule for POCD Amendment.**
- 2. Recommended public hearing date: March 25, 2019 (Per Section 8-23.2h) (copy attached)**

Mr. Voelker stated the goal is to develop the design district regulations, amend the POCD first, and schedule a public hearing for the POCD amendments.

The POCD was adopted by the PZC in 2016. The Town Council had a favorable recommendation for the POCD.

The process includes the amendment(s) (maps, location of potential overlay district, and narrative) being sent to the Town Council, which can hold its own public hearing on the matter. During the process of review and discussion, the revised POCD must go through all the entities, be publicly noticed for a public hearing, with a copy of the plan submitted to the State to insure it is not in conflict with the State POCD.

Section 37 (new) 1/3/19 will not be sent to the Town Council, as Council has no role in adoption of the regulations. Their role is limited to making comments on the proposed amendments to the Plan.

The Commission goes through the process of amending the POCD, and then begins the process of adoption of new Section 37.

Draft of Section 37 – 37.3A Permitted Uses within the Design District – Mr. Natale asked about “A” (residential) and if this section was to be removed from the new regulation.

Mr. Voelker said the intention was to eliminate residential from the design district regulations. This would eliminate the potential for Section 8-30G applications. The design district is mostly industrial property, and Highland Avenue properties are industrial.

With regard to enabling 10% to 20% residential in the design district, Mr. Bowman talked about having mixed use in the district.

Mr. Voelker said the Commission’s plan was not to include residential in the design district, and it will be removed. If the Commission enables residential, it is subjecting industrial property to 8-30G. Most of the design district is industrial property.

It was stated by Chairman Kurtz that the idea was to take this industrial property and generate revenue for the town as commercial type property. A residential type property was not wanted in this area.

According to Mr. Voelker the intention was to keep the Highland corridor to be business oriented...commercial and industrial, with no residential. The adoption of the POCD amendments does not displace industrial, but enables a design district project to do other things. With enabling residential, PZC is opening up the district to 8-30G projects.

Mr. Todisco considers residential an innovative idea, encouraging affordable housing.

There is another area in town for consideration of residential...and Mr. Voelker said that is West Main Street. This street has a design district approach with residential part of the design.

In this particular area, Mr. Todisco asked if Mr. Voelker believes residential is not a good idea.

Mr. Voelker said this is his opinion, and we do not want to compete with business uses on these properties with a residential component. There are problems with this corridor. He commented on the property being limited, tough topography, wetlands, the soft market, limited access points, and issues which will be an impediment to good development. Mr. Voelker said we should try to get non-residential projects into the district rather than having residential competing with industrial and commercial. The residential projects can be done in a more flexible way than non-residential.

Two pieces of property were cited by Mr. Bowman...Ostuno and Papandrea properties for consideration of residential development. They have the land mass with ability to do residential.

There are two or three places to put a project to scale, and Mr. Voelker said regulations would be flexible. We do not want residential development competing with the economic base. The purpose of the POCD is to enhance the economic base.

The Muldrow Report was referred to by Mr. Kurtz, who asked if residential development was in this report.

Mr. Voelker noted the Muldrow Report talked about general types of zones, i.e. overlay areas.

Mr. Kardaras said his understanding of what makes this area attractive is the visibility.

It is more attractive and Mr. Voelker cited more traffic and more trips per day.

On the map, Mr. Bowman clarified that the only part of the I-C zone that will come into the design district is the far northeast corner.

Mr. Voelker noted the I-C zone is already governed by a special design district with residential component.

There is no residential, and Mr. Todisco read an excerpt which says...the Highland Avenue focus area was commercial and/or mixed use development or mixed use building.

Mr. Voelker explained that mixed use can be restaurants, offices, banks.

After the public hearing, Mr. Kurtz stated that the Plan can be changed.

37.3 – 5 Minimum Design Standards – “A”...Minimum lot size shall be 120,000 square feet.

Mr. Walsh commented on the minimum lot size for projects, and some would have to be combined lots.

The minimum lot size was reduced from three (3) acres, and changed to 120,000 square feet. Mr. Voelker said this is consistent with Section 32.

- In the R-80 district the minimum lot area is 80,000 S.F.;
- 40,000 S.F. is a builder's acre;
- The final version will have minimum lot area at 120,000 S.F.

This is easier for the developers to do a project. Some older buildings would be ripe for redevelopment; some properties could be assembled together for a 120,000 S.F. design project.

Mr. Bowman commented on the 120,000 S.F. as a good recommendation.

The Commissioners discussed and reviewed the potential hearing date of March 25, 2019, and the process to be followed.

Chairman Kurtz stated the PZC will request the Council to review the maps, overlays, and changes to the POCD.

A copy of the public hearing process is attached to these minutes.

It was pointed out by Mr. Voelker that with the changes to the POCD, the Commission sends a positive signal with making zoning changes right away. Developers discuss their projects with Planning Department staff, not the Commission.

With regard to sanitary services in the design district, Mr. Voelker explained that sewers will not be required; sanitary services must be provided; and it could be with septic systems. There is a benefit to extend sewers at cost to the developer, but it is not a requirement.

After the POCD is amended, the regulations must be worked on by the Commission, and Mr. Todisco talked about the changes going to the Town Council.

Mr. Voelker explained that after the public hearing the regulations are approved by the Commission.

The following facts were outlined by Mr. Voelker.

- The public hearing is set 35 days out;
- This gives legislative bodies time to review the POCD changes;
- If the Council says "no" to the changes, the PZC, by 2/3rds vote can approve the POCD changes;
- The changes will also be looked at by the Economic Development Commission.

MOTION by Mr. Natale; seconded by Mr. Brucato.

MOVED that the Planning and Zoning Commission begin the process to amend the Plan of Conservation and Development in accordance with the schedule submitted by Planning Department Staff and attached to these minutes.

VOTE           The motion passed unanimously by those present.

**5.     **ADJOURNMENT****

MOTION by Mr. Kardaras; seconded by Mr. Walsh.

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

VOTE           The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

---

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk