

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND ZONING
COMMISSION HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5, 2013 AT 7:00 P.M. IN ROOM 207,
TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410

Present

Earl J. Kurtz, Chairman; Gil Linder, John Kardaras, Louis Todisco

Absent: Sean Strollo Lelah Campo, S. Woody Dawson, Edward Guadio.

Staff Present: William Voelker, Town Planner.

I. CALL TO ORDER.

Mr. Kurtz called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

The clerk called the roll.

III. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Following roll call it was determined that a quorum was not present to conduct an official meeting. The commissioners present and Mr. Voelker conducted a non-meeting, held a discussion on the Plan, and no actions were taken.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The group Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

V. DISCUSSION

A. Plan of Conservation and Development (Plan)

The Planning Department prepared binders for commissioners as they work through the Plan for amendments and possible changes.

The binder included the following documents:

Existing Plan of Conservation and Development adopted in 2002

Profile of the 2012 CNRV

Profile/Comparison of Connecticut municipalities

Residential Build Out Analysis

U.S. Census Information (Cheshire)

Avon CT Plan survey.

Mr. Linder reported that he has researched Plans and surveys from several municipalities, and commented on the excellent survey of Southbury CT. Mr. Linder informed those present that there is a web site for a firm called PlanAMetrics Consulting, and there is a great deal of information about Plans on this site. He asked about the possibility of using a mailing company to produce and distribute a Cheshire survey to households and businesses, and the Town paying for this service.

It was suggested by Mr. Todisco that the commission develop a list of expenditures for a town wide mailing, present it to the Town Council, and request funding for the survey.

Mr. Voelker explained that this type of expense would have to be a line item in the operating budget, and at this time the Council is looking at reductions, not additional expenses. To do this type of mailing, Mr. Voelker said that someone would have to be hired to put the survey together, do the research, and compile the response data. His recommendation was to use the Town web site for the survey, noting that those people really interested would respond to the survey on line. The survey could also be available in the Library and the Planning Department.

Regarding a survey, Mr. Voelker said the commissioners could decide on the questions to be asked by looking at other community surveys, and there could be an open ended statement at the end of the survey for a written response.

Mr. Todisco suggested using local media to inform the public about the work of the Commission on the Plan, and this would include the Cheshire Herald, Cheshire Citizen, Meriden Record Journal. The Town web site is a very good tool for publication of a survey.

It was stated by Mr. Linder that the survey results should be statistically valid.

Survey topics were discussed, and they could include public safety, education, open space, commercial development, and many more. Mr. Voelker will get a copy of the Southbury CT survey and e mail it to the commissioners.

The issue of requesting funding from the Town Council for a survey was again raised by Mr. Todisco, who said that the results would provide feed back and creativity for what the Town wants to include in the Plan.

It was decided that commissioners would review the surveys provided, draft questions for a Cheshire survey, and go forward with getting costs of using a mailing company.

There was discussion on the best time to hold a public information session on the Plan, and it was thought that late September or early October would be the best time for this meeting.

In the binder there is information about CGS 8-23, Affordable Housing Act. There was a brief discussion on Cheshire having only 3% affordable housing at this time, and the fact that the Town would never reach the 10% State requirement. It is possible Cheshire will never reach the 7.5% affordable housing level. There is no private developer, nor is there a strong market of enough space in Town for more affordable housing.

Mr. Todisco questioned whether it is a good idea to put out to the public the idea of affordable housing, and whether there should be encouragement for more of this type of housing.

According to Mr. Voelker there must be consideration of additional affordable housing in the amended Plan.

For affordable housing to be considered and approved, Mr. Kardaras said there must be transportation, roads, central location, and other related needs to encourage this type of development.

Cheshire's affordable housing regulations have been used in the community. Mr. Voelker said there would never be an override of local zoning under CGS 8-23 as this law will never change. He also commented on his findings that Cheshire has the most progressive zoning body in terms of affordable housing. The issue is the cost of land not going down, not enough land available for this type of housing, and in R-80 zones there will never be public sewers.

The commissioners present discussed how to proceed with review and amendment of the Plan through to July 2014. It was noted that the amendments and review should be done by March 2014, as the Plan must go to the Town Council and a public hearing must be scheduled. The timeline for completion of the Plan is July 2014.

The following proposals were approved for upcoming meetings:

June 19, 2013 – 7 p.m. – Commercial/Industrial Development, Issues and Changes in the last 10 years: Economic Development Coordinator Sitko and Chamber of Commerce Director Sheldon Dill.

Public Safety – Police Chief Dryfe and Fire Chief Casner. (date to be determined)

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kurtz called an end to the non-meeting at 8 p.m

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk