

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF CHESHIRE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, AT 7:30 P.M. IN ROOM 207, TOWN HALL, 84
SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410**

Present

PZC Commissioners: Earl J. Kurtz, John Kardaras, Gil Linder, Louis Todisco, David Veleber. Alternates: James Jinks and Jeff Natale
Absent: S. Woody Dawson, Edward Gaudio, Vincent Lentini
Staff: Town Planner William Voelker.

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ROLL CALL

The clerk called the roll and a quorum was determined to be present.

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. COMMUNICATIONS

**1. Letter from Ronald Walters, Senior Environmental Analyst dated
11/3/15 RE: Proposed Revisions to the POCD 8/13/15 draft.**

Mr. Voelker reviewed the letter from Mr. Walters. He informed the Commissioners that changes in the narrative were made in response to the RWA comments about storm water management systems, underground detention systems, rain gardens, and all designs to net zero increase for storm water calculations for an individual project. Stating it is uncertain as to how many nonconformities would be picked up, Mr. Voelker said one would be too many. The changes were satisfactory to Mr. Walters.

In the updated POCD, Mr. Todisco noted there is a recommendation to increase lot coverage in the industrial zone, and asked if RWA is saying not to do this.

Mr. Voelker said RWA and Mr. Walters are okay with this, but to do that he wanted more on-site treatment of the storm water, and come up with the overall impervious calculation. He commented on the Stop & Shop site which has enormous impervious surface, and 1/3 of the parking is not needed. Today, if this project were being proposed, they would be encouraged to defer some of the parking. RWA wants the Commission to take a look at these things. In the narrative it states...any regulation that is put together for increasing building coverage should be looked at for any storm water management requirements, and refer the amended text regulation to the RWA for comments.

Mr. Kardaras asked about impervious issues and not taking into account the soil, the non-impervious part of the land. Depending on the topography he said there could be variance in the need.

In response, Mr. Voelker said we do get drainage calculations; the engineer representing the applicant must account for them; test borings are done; and the chosen storm water management must take this into consideration. Most of the underground detention is under the parking area.

The issue of rain gardens in the industrial zone was raised by Mr. Veleber.

Few of these are seen in the industrial setting, and Mr. Voelker stated they could be seen in corporate headquarters type settings, with landscaping plans using rain gardens as features. Mr. Voelker pointed out all the other items in the RWA letter have been taken care of.

The Commissioners reviewed the Municipal Facilities section of the POCD. The watershed map shows a portion of Lake Whitney (in Hamden) as coming into Cheshire, and Mr. Voelker read an excerpt into the record.

Historical District Commission Section of the POCD (page 2) has been modified, with language included about protection of the pedestrian crossing. Mr. Voelker read an excerpt into the record, and advised that everything requested by the Historical Society was done.

West Main Street District - with the revitalization of this area, a special development district (design district regulation) is needed to work for West Main Street. The DOT will recognize West Main Street as more than just an arterial change; this area has a village nature; it is pedestrian focused; there will be improvements to the cross walks in Town. Rumberg Road is a safety issue for people in this area of town, and it is up to the State to have a light in this area for pedestrian safety. The bigger problem is cars coming down the hill; the visibility problem is coming the other direction; and as more things happen in this area, the more people will be familiar with it, and a light is a good idea.

It was pointed out by Mr. Veleber that the main and dangerous concern on West Main Street is making a left turn out of the businesses. With more development of this area people will be making left turns. He asked about a bypass on West Main Street.

A bypass is impossible, and Mr. Voelker noted there is no land for a service road. On the West Main Street map he showed this area is a gateway to Cheshire. The Town has been approached by the development community about this area. Mr. Voelker and the Commissioners looked at the map of Mountain Road, parcels surrounding the golf driving range, the houses (R-80 zone) on Prospect Road, the houses in R-20 zone, the wetlands on the driving range land. He commented on interest in putting parcels together for an 8-30G Affordable Housing project in this area.

Mr. Voelker read the narrative "West Main Street Gateway Focus Area" into the record.

Affordable Housing 8-30G - in this area of Town there could be 150 housing units, and under the statute such a project would move forward, with the developer building what they have planned. For the 20 acre parcel, with significant wetlands, only 7 or 8 houses could be built, and affordable housing must honor the wetland regulations. Affordable housing is different than low income housing, and has an 80% median income requirement. There could also be a mixed use development project.

A two acre parcel could get 25,000 to 30,000 square feet of commercial use.

Planned Area Development (PAD) - Mr. Voelker cited his recommendations for the Commission to develop regulations for a PAD approach to redevelop the West Main Street area (and other areas of town) which would permit mixed use development with integration of commercial and residential land uses. It would permit residential at a density which is compatible with this gateway location. Similar areas along South Main Street could be permitted with the Infill Development. With approval of a PAD, Mr. Voelker could include it in the POCD.

West Main Street Area - C-3 zone with 50 foot front yard setback, with many buildings on the street over the setback line. Older commercial buildings are difficult to renovate due to their age of construction and curb requirements now in place. Regulations for the core area should be developed... form based, village district, or other design regulations to enable people to tear down and build in place. Some buildings will be demolished, rebuilt in accordance with the regulations, with parking in front rather than the rear (not wanted in a "village"). It is importance to respect the historical nature of the buildings and the area.

Mr. Voelker commented on the area being a large industrial area, looking at addition of some type of mixed use development (i.e. Ball & Socket Arts Center project) and investment type projects. The Linear Trail is important and comes through this area. A PAD would have lots of design cuts in it with many different things going on. There is interest in this area, and Mr. Voelker said these are active neighbors who take a real interest in what is happening in their neighborhood. Any plans for West Main Street will be discussed with the neighbors.

For the Plan, Mr. Voelker will tune up and modify the SDD/PAD with maps, and insert into the POCD. Before they can be used they must be adopted by the Commission.

Ball & Socket Arts Center - this group has some things ongoing, toxins were found in the buildings, and Mr. Voelker informed the Commissioners that they have some fund raising taking place.

A brief discussion was held about the West Main Street area becoming an "artsy" section of Town, similar to the spaces in Hartford around the train station...with live/work units for people in the arts community.

Mr. Todisco asked for language in the POCD that strengthens Cheshire's interest and plans for affordable housing. He read an excerpt from this section into the record.

A comment was made by Mr. Kardaras that Cheshire needs housing in town that is affordable for people who work in town.

It was stated by Mr. Voelker that Cheshire has an affordable housing regulation which has not been updated in years. It should be evaluated in terms of what Section 8-30G says and updated based on this evaluation. He noted that Cheshire has done as much as it can regarding affordable housing. He cited the Infill Development in R20-A zone with diversity, on a main road, and this is an effective implementation under the statute. The same could be done in the West Main Street area and other places in town.

Mr. Veleber talked about the Interchange zone, and the need for more economic development in this zone. He cited the fact that 3/4 of the zone is not used, and 1/4 is now in limbo. He asked about the 10 acre minimum acreage and discussion about possible development for this area, and looking at alternatives for the I-C Zone.

According to Mr. Voelker the issue is valid entitlements still involved, and people are shopping those entitlements. He will look at this, and PZC discussion on modifying the acreage requirement. The PZC can discuss modifications of the acreage in the IC zone, looking at it based on the market.

2. **Letter from Elizabeth Pratt Fox, Chairperson, Cheshire Historic District Commission dated 1/27/16.** (discussed earlier in the meeting)

VI. DISCUSSION

1. PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

- a. **Referral to the Planning and Zoning Commission to begin the adoption process.**

The Commissioners discussed the referral process and time line to refer the Plan to the Town Council. Following discussion, the Commissioners made the decision to make referrals of the POCD at the February 22nd meeting to the Town Council and regional planning agencies.

Mr. Voelker cited the requirement for the POCD passage by the PZC requiring a super majority vote.

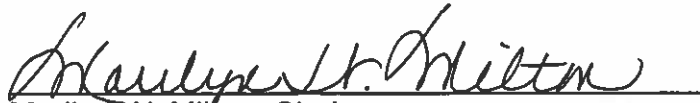
VII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Veleber; seconded by Mr. Kardaras.

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:



Marilyn W. Milton

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk

