

**MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING HELD ON
TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 2019 AT 7:00 P.M. IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, TOWN HALL,
84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410**

Present

Robert J. Oris, Jr. Chairman; Jeffrey Falk, Patti Flynn-Harris, Sylvia Nichols, Thomas Ruocco, Timothy Slocum, Peter Talbot; David Veleber.

Absent: Paul A. Bowman

Staff: Sean Kimball, Town Manager; Al Smith, Town Attorney; Arnett Talbot, Assistant Town Manager; James Jaskot, Finance Director; Gerald Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator; William Voelker, Town Planner; George Noewatne, PW Director; Louis Zullo, Personnel Director.

Guests: Planning and Zoning Commissioners – Earl J. Kurtz, S.Woody Dawson, Jeff Natale.

Public Hearing Subject Matter

**Consideration of a proposed amendment to the
2016 Plan of Conservation and Development
For Highland Avenue Design District**

1. ROLL CALL

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

2. EXPLANATION OF HEARING PROCEDURE AND AGENDA

Chairman Oris explained the hearing procedure.

3. READING OF LEGAL NOTICE

The clerk read the legal notice into the record.

4. PRESENTATION ON HEARING SUBJECT

Town Planner Voelker informed the Council that on March 25th, the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) will hold a public hearing on the proposed amendments to the 2016 POCD for the Highland Avenue Design District.

The POCD was adopted in 2016 to include such a district, as commercial uses were precluded in this zone. Mr. Voelker stated the PZC contemplates a design district on Highland Avenue from Creamery Road to East and West Johnson Avenues, covering the industrial zone properties on the east and west side of Highland Avenue. This design district would function the same as the Special Design District and will be an overlay district, with introduction of commercial uses in order to diversity the economic base.

Mr. Voelker read CGS Section 8-23 into the record.

The properties in the design district have frontage between Creamery Road to East and West Johnson Avenue. Properties on the westerly side are deep; most are developed; the greater opportunity will be on the east side of Highland; there are constraints such as tough topography, wetlands, limited access to significant intersections. If the POCD amendments are adopted the PZC will take a flexible approach with the zoning regulations to enable design to specific restrictions on a site.

The amendment to the POCD is simple. Mr. Voelker read the amendments to the sections for Highland Avenue Focus Area and Industrial Focus Area into the record.

Mr. Voelker commented on the word “design” being an important word. The PZC with the Council will have an informal procedure in place to review design and most plans before the Commission, which has complete discretion on a project.

5. QUESTIONS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIR.

None

6. PROPONENTS AND OPPONENTS STATEMENTS ALTERNATELY EXPRESSED.

David Schrumm, 369 Sir Walter Drive, addressed the Council about being cautious going into the north end. He commented on the Bond Book and table showing existing land use and what has gone on since WWII. The original zoning map showed 12% of industrial land in Cheshire, and it is now down to 3.6% of undeveloped industrial land, mostly in the north end, indicating there is little land left. Mr. Schrumm said his concern with the Special Design District /overlay district is making mistakes you will regret after a number of years. He cautioned the Council to be careful, and noted the new medical building which does not fit in where it is being built.

Regarding the town budget, Mr. Schrumm talked about the \$2.7M requested increase in the BOE budget, which requires four Whole Food property taxes at \$280,000 annually to offset this increase. He noted the last Cheshire revaluation had a 6% reduction in the Grand List; local property taxes are 80% of revenue source; and messing up has long range implications.

Mr. Sitko read a letter into the record in support of the POCD amendments from David Pelletier, EDC Chairman.

7. REBUTTAL AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIR.

None.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Oris adjourned the public hearing at 7:25 p.m.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk