

**2014 Plan of Conservation and Development Subcommittee
Special Meeting Minutes
June 30, 2014**

The 2014 Plan of Conservation and Development Subcommittee of the Planning and Zoning Commission held its June 30, 2014 Special Meeting at 7:00PM at the Stonington High School Commons, 176 S. Broad St., Pawcatuck, CT.

Attending this Public Informational Meeting were members Wendy Bury, Bob Birmingham, Walter Grant, Sara Lathrop, Bill Lyman and Robert Mohr. Town Planner, Keith A. Brynes, was also in attendance as were Planning and Zoning Commission members, Ben Tamsky, John Prue, Curtis Lynch, Fran Hoffman and Alternate, A. Gardner Young.

Chairman, Sara Lathrop, introduced meeting moderator, Glenn Chalder of Planimetrics, LLC. Mr. Chalder gave a powerpoint presentation summarizing the draft plan, its chapters and general goals and called for public comment.

Public comments on draft plan:

Barbara Dixon, co-chair of the Cultural Landscape Foundation stated that the Town should support Cultural Landscapes, which can be defined as places where man and nature come together and the results are valued. Examples are historic and agricultural sites, parks and cemeteries. Stonington has many such assets which support historical tourism and provide other benefits.

Ward Smith recommended that the plan should strongly support small farms and farmers markets. Small farms provide food, jobs and cultural benefits. The Town should develop a food policy encouraging local food production and food security.

Stuart Schwartzstein stated that labeling land as "underutilized" in the discussion of existing land use in Chapter 2 implies that it should be developed. "Vacant" land has value even if it remains undeveloped.

Marsha Standish, Stonington Tax Assessor, stated that the number of square miles in Town does not include public roads and some open space. The plan should mention mobile home parks as an affordable housing option for seniors. Ms. Standish explained the State's "PA-490" program which provides tax relief for owners of farm and/or forest land. Such land is not permanently protected open space. Currently, the Town does not provide such relief for undeveloped land which is not an approved farm or forest land of over 25 acres. The Town could adopt a policy to expand PA-490 to non-farm/forest open space land.

Chris Freeman stressed the importance of clean water for humans, animals and the environment. Clean water directly impacts quality of life and the local economy. The Town has been receptive to turf and stormwater management improvements. Supporting pump-outs of recreational marine vehicles is also important in maintaining clean water.

Gary Anderson stated that the Town should finally complete sidewalks from the high school to downtown Pawcatuck. Cluster residential developments should be supported.

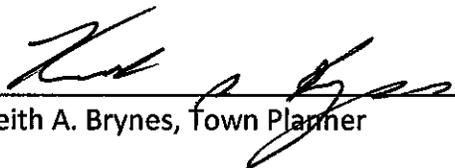
Steven Bessette stressed the importance of supporting small businesses. Such businesses help the local economy and contribute to vibrant villages.

Rufus Allyn recommended support for community gardens in the Agricultural Chapter. The Coastal chapter could also support preservation of coastal land from erosion and offer environmentally sensitive solutions.

Rick Newton recommended adding more language on the threat of sea level rise. The Town should be doing more to plan for sea level rise including forming a commission to devise a plan. DEEP has labeled the Pawcatuck River impaired and the river should be better protected. The Town should create a municipal land trust which would enforce municipal conservation easements and take over ownership of town owned open space. The Town should hire a consultant to comprehensively rewrite the zoning regulations. While the Planning and Zoning Commission has endorsed senior housing, efforts should be made to promote more affordable senior housing to help local residents.

Ms. Lathrop stated that written comments could also be submitted by July 7th and could be emailed to the Town Planner at kbrynes@stonington-ct.gov.

Respectfully submitted,



Keith A. Brynes, Town Planner