

Plan of Conservation and Development Implementation Committee
Virtual Special Meeting Minutes
April 26, 2021

The Plan of Conservation and Development Implementation Committee held a Virtual Special Meeting on Monday, April 26, 2021 via WebEx.

Attending were Chairman / First Selectman, Danielle Chesebrough, and members, David Hammond, Susan Hibbard, Donald Kluberanz, Ben Philbrick, Lyndsey Pyrke-Fairchild (arrived 5:30PM), John Truscinski, Lynn Young and Keith Brynes, Town Planner. Members, Erika Lebling and Barbara McKrell – Director of Public Works were absent.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Chesebrough at 5:03PM.

Approval of Draft Minutes – 1/25/21

Mr. Philbrick motioned to approved the draft 1/25/21 minutes; seconded by Ms. Hibbard. The motion was unanimously approved.

Discussion of First Selectman's Implementation Priorities

Update Zoning Regulations

Mr. Brynes summarized the Board of Finance's recent decisions on the 2021-2022 budget which is up for referendum tomorrow. The budget included \$75,000 for the next fiscal year to begin a comprehensive rewrite of the Zoning Regulations with another \$75,000 expected to be funded the next year. This project is an important means of implementing the POCD's tasks, many of which include modifying regulations. The Committee discussed having a role in providing input to this process. Other approved budget items help address POCD implementation, including the Rt. 1 sidewalk project, coastal resilience and open space set aside funds and a small set aside for development of the next POCD.

Affordable Housing

Mr. Brynes summarized the Town's Affordable Housing Plan currently being drafted by a consultant. A public input session will be held to get feedback on the plan. The goal is for the Planning and Zoning Commission to adopt this plan as an appendix to the POCD after a public hearing. The plan will include recommended zoning modifications which will feed into the Comprehensive Zoning Rewrite. It is unclear if adoption of an appendix to the POCD "restarts the clock" on the requirement to update a POCD every 10 years. Mr. Hammond updated the Committee on the approved mixed income development at the Campbell Grain Elevator site in Pawcatuck. The project is temporarily on hold until a Town Meeting can be held on a potential tax abatement which is needed to receive CHFA funding.

Low Impact Development

Mr. Truscinski updated the Committee on a proposed bill which would enable the formation of municipal stormwater utilities and expand the authority of Flood and Erosion Control Boards. Ms. Young stated that the Board of Finance's has been hesitant to give spending authority to such a board. Mr. Brynes discussed the "MS-4" Low Impact Development projects the Town Engineer is working on with

the Town's consultant. These include disconnecting areas from the municipal storm system by creating rain gardens or similar features on Town property – likely to include one of schools. Consultants are also drafting recommended changes to land use regulations which would modernize stormwater standards and promote low impact solutions.

Dealing with Sea Level Rise

Ms. Hibbard stated that the Climate Change Task Force is working on a list of priority action items expected in May.

Complete Streets Resolution

Mr. Kluberdanz will consult with the Police Commission on this issue. Ms. Chesebrough described the new trail connecting Spellman Park with the surrounding neighborhood. The Committee discussed Coogan Boulevard as a road in particular need of a Complete Streets retrofit to increase pedestrian safety and beautify the area. UCONN Landscape Architecture Students previously developed conceptual plans to achieve these goals.

Sustainability Initiatives

Ms. Chesebrough summarized drainage improvements to be constructed at the Fourth District Voting Hall property in Mystic which will include new Low Impact Development features. The Town will look into improving the condition of the building and may seek State Historic Preservation funding. The Town is also applying to increase its ranking in the Sustainable CT program.

Revitalization of Downtown Pawcatuck

Mr. Hammond described the Economic Development Commission's investigations into whether the Town should acquire the "Circus Lot" at the end of Noyes Ave. in Pawcatuck for the purpose of public riverfront access. This could tie into potential development of vacant parcels on Liberty Street. The EDC is also working to advance concepts including a Riverwalk between the Rt. 1 bridge and Donahue Park and a pedestrian bridge to the Westerly Train station.

Ms. Chesebrough updated the Committee on the request by the Climate Change Task Force for the Board of Selectmen to declare a Climate Emergency. The Southeastern CT Council of Governments is now looking into whether to declare such an emergency at the regional level. This may be a better option than an emergency declared by individual communities.

Attract Employers to Town

Mr. Philbrick departed the meeting. Mr. Hammond stated that EnKo occupying the former Monsanto building on Maritime Drive is hiring several people. The Committee discussed possible ways of attracting employers and expanding growth opportunities for existing businesses. Ms. Young stated that even after the Mystic sewer moratorium is lifted, sewer capacity across town may be a limiting factor on growth. The Town will need to rationalize its 3 sewer plants at great cost. The Committee discussed the need to initially focus on implementing one main task.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:31PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Keith A. Brynes, Town Planner