

**Plan of Conservation and Development Implementation Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
July 19, 2021**

The Plan of Conservation and Development Implementation Committee held a regular meeting on Monday, July 19, 2021, 5:00PM at Stonington Town Hall, 152 Elm St.

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

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Chesebrough at 5:04PM.

Approval of Draft Minutes

Ms. Hibbard motioned to approved the draft 12/7/20 & 4/26/21 minutes; seconded by Mr. Hammond. The motion was unanimously approved.

Discussion of First Selectman's Implementation Priorities

Update Zoning Regulations

Mr. Brynes summarized the Board of Finance's decision to fund \$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. The Department of Planning is starting to prepare a Request for Proposals to find a qualified consulting firm to lead this effort. The rewrite is expected to take approximately 2 years to complete. The POCD Implementation Committee might have a role in helping in this process by providing input and urging other boards and commissions to provide input. The rewrite will implement several of the specific tasks in the POCD.

Dealing with Sea Level Rise

Ms. Chesebrough discussed possible tasks for the Climate Change Task Force including working with the CT Greenbank or C-PACE programs. The Town's schools and Police Station seem to be the municipal buildings best suited for solar panels. The Southeastern CT Council of Governments recently passed a regional Climate Emergency Declaration; the next step is a regional action plan. During the next budget cycle the Town can try to address the Board of Finance's concerns with starting a municipal climate fund.

Revitalization of Downtown Pawcatuck

Mr. Hammond discussed the EDC's efforts in exploring acquisition of the "Circus Lot" at the end of Noyes Ave. for use as a riverfront park. The EDC is exploring whether this land could help potential redevelopment of privately owned parcels on Liberty St. First step will be a survey of the property and conceptual drawings of what is possible. The EDC is trying to advance the concept of a Riverwalk between Donahue Park and Rt. 1 and has begun discussions with an engineer to provide surveying and permitting work. A new Pawcatuck Bridge State Historic District, encompassing 4 historic properties,

has been nominated by the Town. The State Historic Preservation Council will hold a virtual public hearing to consider the district's adoption on August 4th.

Sustainability Initiatives

The Town recently received 2 grant awards through the State's Brownfields Program - \$750,000 for environmental remediation at the Mystic River Boathouse Park and \$200,000 for assessment of soil contamination at the former Stillmanville Mill site. The Town is also working with an intern to apply for the next level of recognition through the Sustainable CT program.

Complete Streets Resolution

Mr. Kluberanz has consulted with the Police Chief and was invited to one of the Police Commission's future meetings. Ms. Chesebrough stated that the advocacy group, Bike Stonington, has resumed meeting and can help with these issues. The Committee discussed Coogan Boulevard as a road in particular need of a Complete Streets retrofit to increase pedestrian safety, beautify the area and address stormwater runoff. The Town Engineer has been exploring options in this area. The Rt. 1 Sidewalk project is progressing although additional private easements are still needed.

Low Impact Development

Mr. Brynes stated that the Town Engineer has been working with consultants who are drafting changes to land use regulations which would promote low impact solutions. The Town's planned low impact development features at the 4th District Voting Hall are scheduled to be constructed later this year. The Town is also looking at other municipal sites that could accommodate such features, including Town Hall. Several municipal drainage improvement projects are being planned including improvements to Allen St. in Mystic. The State recently passed Public Act 21-115 which enables municipalities to form their own stormwater utilities.

Attract Employers to Town

Mr. Hammond stated that the EDC is working to unstick certain commercial properties that could provide substantial employment.

Affordable Housing

Mr. Hammond stated that the mixed income residential development at the Campbell Grain Elevator site in Pawcatuck requires a fixed property tax assessment from the Town to be eligible for necessary CHFA grant funds. The developer's CHFA application was denied for lack of a local match. The development has received local land use approvals. The Town did not want to hold a virtual Town Meeting on the fixed assessment during COVID. A Town Meeting to consider the fixed assessment is now scheduled for August 9th. Some of the Town's funding from the Federal American Rescue Act could be used to promote affordable housing. A Town Meeting may be held in the fall to allocate American Rescue Funds. A preliminary concept is to create a local loan program to restore existing housing units for use as affordable housing for those under certain income limits. Construction has restarted on NeighborWorks New Horizon's stalled Spruce Ridge housing development; completion is expected in the

fall. The Town's Affordable Housing Plan is now complete. Next step is for the Planning and Zoning Commission to adopt the plan as an appendix to the POCD after a public hearing this fall.

The Committee discussed the Mystic Parking Study funded by Stonington and Groton which included recommendations for metered parking and shared use of private parking lots. Representatives from both towns will meet to discuss next steps which could include formation of a Mystic Parking Authority.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:11PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Keith A. Brynes, Town Planner