

**MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING HELD ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2015, AT 7:30 P.M. IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410.**

Present

Earl J. Kurtz, Chairman; Edward Gaudio, Secretary; Members: Gil Linder, Louis Todisco, David Veleber.

Alternates - Jon Fischer and Diane Visconti

Absent: Sean Strollo, S. Woody Dawson, John Kardaras, Vincent Lentini.

Staff: William Voelker, Town Planner

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Kurtz called the public hearing to order at 7:31 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

The clerk called the roll.

**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. BUSINESS**

**Overview of Draft Revisions (8/13/15) to the Cheshire Plan of Conservation and Development (Plan) Chapters.**

Town Planner Voelker read the call of public hearing.

Mr. Voelker informed those present that the Plan is on the Town website.

At the last public hearing Mr. Voelker reviewed the Commercial, Industrial and Residential Chapters of the Plan, and there are recommendations at the end of each chapter. This public hearing will focus on the Community Facilities, Environmental Resources and Historical Resources Chapters of the Plan. Mr. Voelker expressed appreciation to the Historical District Commission for their input on the historical chapter of the Plan. The Plan has been submitted to the Energy and Environmental Commissions and the Inland Wetlands Commission for review, and to date there has been no response from them.

**COMMUNITY FACILITIES RECOMMENDATIONS**

There are 15 recommendations for Community Facilities and Mr. Voelker briefly reviewed and highlighted them.

**Incorporate sustainable practices into all public projects** - this promotes public health, safety, reliability, cost effectiveness and quality of life; sustainable design should be considered for all new municipal buildings and those being improved.

**Maintain existing trees and encourage planting of new trees along public roadways and within public spaces** - streetscape is an important factor in the attractiveness of a community; we value the ecological importance of trees; and support maintenance of trees and encourage planting new trees.

**Preserve historic architecture of Town Hall, Humiston School and Hitchcock Phillips House.**

**Preserve the lawn at Senior Center as a character feature and avoid converting it to a parking area.**

**Consider reconfiguration of Cheshire Library parking layout to improve efficiency** - this could be a collaborative effort with surrounding property owners; the Library is an essential place in the community.

**Encourage transit stops within large scale development projects and major arterial roads.**

**Encourage bike sharing along Linear Trail as alternative for commuters** - bike sharing could become a program along the trail into New Haven.

**Support implementation of traffic calming techniques on major roadways and high volume intersections** - this could include rotaries that calm traffic.

**Review Route 10 Corridor specific problems and determine resolutions** - another study of this highway could be undertaken.

**Construct new sidewalks for safe pedestrian access and linkage between neighborhoods** - this would provide for safe access through commercial areas, Town Center, parks, public places.

**Complete, maintain and improve Linear Trail, including provision of public parking** - The State supports this project, has parking along the trail.

**Support improvements/enlargements to Cheshire Police and Fire Department facilities that are included in the capital budget** - these projects would come before PZC for an 8-24 review, but PZC does not advocate for expenditures.

**Continue to regulate land use in and around aquifer protection areas, public water supply watershed areas, Broad Brook Reservoir, and surrounding watershed** - the reservoir is a great resource for Meriden and parts of Cheshire; zoning in this area is lighter, R-40 or R-80.

**PZC adopts WPCA 2020 Facilities Plan** - the State Legislature stated the Commission must identify priority sewer areas.

**Consideration given to the needs of a broad cross-section of the community when designing new and passive recreation facilities** - the Plan includes an overview of Town recreational facilities.

With regard to implementation of the recommendations, Mr. Voelker stated that the Commission can encourage them under a 10 year window to be done in a reasonable time frame. There can be involvement of regional planning agencies, Town staff, commissioners and the public. This section of the Plan includes Parks and Recreation needs, the future requests are in the capital budget, and the Plan makes specific recommendations for having facilities for a broad cross section of the community.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Joy VanderLek, 160 Brook Lane, asked if the survey had new development with inclusion of open space/recreational space for the public. She asked for a copy of the Open Space Land Advisory report, and about more access to the Dime Savings Property for recreational activity, and information on more parks available to the public.

Mr. Voelker advised that the Town Council is considering options for public access to the Dime property.

The section of the survey on open space in new developments was read into the record by Mr. Linder, who noted there was an overwhelming "yes" to this question.

Tim White, 1682 Orchard Hill Road, read subdivision zoning section 9.2 into the record. He said new technology and energy changes present looking into the public utility section related to telephone land lines. He commented on the Town purchasing the streetlights from the utility company.

It was clarified by Mr. Voelker that the regulations do not require telephone land lines, only that the location of the lines.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Voelker briefly reviewed the Environmental Chapter of the Plan. Cheshire's natural resources include inland wetlands, watercourses, lakes, ponds, aquifers, forest lands and grass lands...and these resources are our natural heritage.

**Remain committed to purchase of open space alone and in partnership with other agencies - Land Trust, Regional Water Authority, CT DEEP** - the Town maintains a \$1 million budget for keeping these resources.

**Open Space should fulfill important public purposes including protection of historic and rural character, preservation of significant environmental resources, including farmland, provision or enhancement of passive recreational areas,**

**linkage with other open space properties, and protection of ridge lines, especially around the western perimeter** - the Open Space policy is being refined and re-studied from the prior plan; open space purchases come under an 8-24 review to the PZC.

**Maintain public access to open space so it may be enjoyed.**

**Consideration should be given to accessibility for persons with special needs when planning improvements to open space properties.**

**Adopt and implement the Open Space Maintenance Program** - this program began this year; it is before the Town Council for formalization; and has come under the efforts of Town staff, Parks and Recreation, Police and Fire Departments.

Ms. Visconti raised the idea of inclusion of barite mining history into the Plan.

Mr. Voelker informed the Commissioners that the Town Attorney advises the PZC be careful about discussions and statements on barite mines in the community. The issue should not be included in the Plan.

The issue of open space within a subdivision and its availability to the public as well as subdivision homeowners was raised by Mr. Veleber.

Chairman Kurtz noted that this would be "private open space", and the land is not owned by the Town for public access.

### **HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Retain Section 45! (Special Adaptive Reuse Development District) of the regulations; review and amend when necessary to insure it is consistent with its purpose to enable the reconstruction and/or rehabilitation of historic buildings for uses that are compatible with and beneficial to the community** - this relates to maintaining the historical character of important municipal buildings/West Main Street buildings/Main Street buildings; an example is the Ball & Socket Arts Center building on West Main Street.

**Context sensitive design should be emphasized for development projects that include historic properties that are located within or adjacent to both historic districts. Section 40.4.7 provides the Commission to determine if projects are in harmony with the surrounding area, and applicants should be required to demonstrate that consideration of context was given in project design.**

**Encourage preservation of historic walls, barns, and other historic features through flexible regulatory requirements including coverage** - there are some historic barns on properties in Town; in the future they could be mixed use facilities.

**Support the preservation of historic and cultural resources town wide.**

**Respect the historic features of municipal buildings, especially Town Hall, Humiston School and the Hitchcock-Phillips House, when doing renovations, expansions or improvements.**

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Karen Schnitzer, 8 Currier Place, expressed appreciation to Mr. Voelker and Commissioners for their work on the Plan and the outstanding presentation. She likes the Plan and supports it.

Mr. Voelker advised that the Plan must go to the Town Council, which can hold a public hearing before it approves the Plan.

Attorney Anthony Fazzino, Two Town Center, asked about the opportunity to make comments on the Commercial, Industrial and Residential Chapters which were the focus of the prior public hearing.

It was recommended by Mr. Voelker that Mr. Fazzino submit his comments and questions to the Planning Department for Commission response.

Attorney Fazzino spoke about the importance of the Plan, which is intended to shape any specific changes that come before the PZC in the next ten years. He suggested Chairman Kurtz author a letter to the *Cheshire Herald* about the Plan and its importance to the Town.

Regarding the concept of bike sharing, Mr. Fazzino commented on other states/cities having this program through a private enterprise, and people paying a fee to ride a bike for two hours.

Town Center Area - Mr. Voelker talked about this area of Town, which is dominated by institutional use and lack of parking. He noted that not much will change, and the S.D.D. is part of it. The S.D.D. regulations should be looked at and loosened up a little.

Mr. Fazzino commented on the great network of sidewalks in the center of Town.

Ms. Visconti likes the idea of the bike sharing program. She reported that Chicago has lots of public art, so she recommends Cheshire encourage public art and mention it in the Plan.

With regard to people walking or coming into the center of Town, Mr. Veleber pointed out that they will come if there is something interesting to do or see.

#### **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION by Mr. Veleber; seconded by Mr. Todisco.

MOVED to adjourn the public hearing at 8:40 p.m.

VOTE           The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

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Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk