

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF CHESHIRE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2016, AT 7:30 P.M. IN ROOM 207, TOWN HALL, 84
SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410**

Present

PZC Commissioners: Earl J. Kurtz, John Kardaras, Gil Linder, David Veleber.

Alternates: James Jinks and Jeff Natale

Absent: S. Woody Dawson, Edward Gaudio, Vincent Lentini, Sean Strollo

Staff: Town Planner William Voelker.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kurtz called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

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

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. DISCUSSION - PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT
(POCD)**

1. Review of steps and possible implementation schedule.

Mr. Voelker distributed a staff overview of the POCD recommendations for the Industrial and Commercial Areas of the Town of Cheshire. The list and information contains things which can be done in the near period and begin to establish momentum and purpose to get the Plan underway. Mr. Voelker said there could be some controversy for the Industrial Change Zone.

INDUSTRIAL

1. Increase lot coverage to at least 35% in all Industrial Districts to improve Cheshire's competitive position with neighboring communities.

This is for building lot coverage. There must be assurance to OPM and DEEP that the Regional Water Authority (RWA) and Town will work together for additional storm water management. Mr. Voelker said the Town is seeing some more storm water management practices with incoming applications. He noted the Elim Park application showed pervious pavement. If we keep moving, everything can be done and decisions made.

Next month, Mr. Voelker informed the Commissioners he would have text for their review.

This recommendation can be implemented within 120 days, which includes preparation of zone text, referrals to regional agencies and public hearings.

- 2. Reduce minimum lot area to 40,000 sq. ft. for Industrial 2 properties to match that of Industrial 1 in exchange for an overall site development plan that includes access management strategy with shared parking and fewer curb cuts.**
- 3. Reduce minimum lot area for Interchange zone from 10 acres to 3 to 5 Acres in exchange for overall site development plan that includes an Access management strategy with shared parking and fewer curb cuts.**

The minimum lot area would be 40,000 sq. ft. but keeping the 3 acre minimum in the I-2 Zone does not make sense anymore.

Industrial items 1 and 2 are the signal of support for the town's existing economic base and users, and sends the right message. The 40,000 sq. ft. works well in the I-1 zone, and includes the size of the building and parking. Mr. Voelker does not see any controversy about this item. For the I-C zone, there must be a decision on 3 or 5 acres. There are four quads in the I-C zone. The south quad has utilities available and the Bozzuto quad has sewers. The northeast quad is owned by the State of Connecticut; the southeast is owned by the gas company with nothing being done to this area. The area being talked about is the north and west quad.

This recommendation can be implemented within 120 days, which includes preparation of zone text, referrals to regional agencies and public hearings.

COMMERCIAL

- 1. Consider establishing a Special Development District or Planned Area Development Regulations for select areas within the West Main Street Focus Area.**
- 2. Revise the zoning regulations for properties within the West Main Street Focus Area to enable the village atmosphere to be maintained With buildings located closer to the street that is currently allowed.**

The focus is on West Main Street, establishing a Special Development District (S.D.D.) or Plan Area Development regulations. It is hoped to develop a single district, some kind of a mixed use district. The Plan talks about having residential component and having it be a mixed use. The design is important; we do not want flat roof buildings; and it must be substantial enough to attract investments.

Mr. Voelker noted there could be some "push back" regarding the West Main Street area which is surrounded by established and well maintained residential areas. The gateway area is important; the idea is to do something to maintain control of it; there is not much land in this area; and to attract investments there must be a mixed use project. The area has an 8 acre of town property which will not be given up. We are talking about the corner piece of property; there are wetlands back in this area which will not be encroached; there is about 10 to 12 acres of developable land. The Plan talks about a scale of densities similar to the R-20A infill areas and this must be allowed to attract investment. This makes sense; it creates a village; and we should look at the plans for the Blue Back Square project in West Hartford.

The focus area slopes down and away from West Main Street, and something must be built in the same natural buffer requirements. To make it work the building(s) can go up three (3) stories. We already have an existing West Main Street village center. Marbridge Home still has an active project, keeping many of the historic themes with the building. It would be the same with the village center area. The residential area of Robin Lane and Deepwood Drive abuts the Strollo property. The driving range parcel could be a large part of the project. The corner piece of property is zoned C-3.

Mr. Voelker informed the Commissioners that people have come to the Planning Department and talked to him about 8-30g projects on the driving range parcel. He said we would have regulations adopted to include an affordable housing component. This is a potential location and done right it could be in this area. The affordable housing projects must be "like" in many ways to the market rate projects and this puts a responsibility on the developer.

For the West Main Street village area, the existing area is zoned C-3; it has a 50 foot setback; buildings are old and do not conform to the regulations; building and fire codes have evolved making older buildings very expensive for investment and making changes. The C-3 zone makes sense from a use stand point, but does not makes sense from a dimensional standpoint. There have been some requests for demolition of the older buildings...we don't want this done under the current regulations as the next building must conform to the setback. We want to have a pedestrian friendly atmosphere. What is presented to the neighbors must be a package of policies.

Mr. Voelker said we need some outreach, and everything must go to PZC and their having informal community outreach meetings. Outreach will be very important for the West Main Street area and there are ways to undertake this effort in an appropriate way.

It was noted by Mr. Veleber that this plan involves more traffic in the West Main Street area.

In that regard, Mr. Voelker said the rush hour has heavy traffic, and Saturday has high traffic volume going to sporting and town events. In some cases there will be more consumer activity brought into the area and helping with the economy of the zone.

People would be walking in the area due to the Linear Trail and the Ball & Socket facility...this brings more activity with people spending money.

The Commissioners were informed by Mr. Voelker there are lists of names of residents and business owners in the West Main Street area. They will be contacted and the town can outreach to them through mailings and newspaper/media.

These recommendations can be implemented within 120 to 180 days, which includes preparation of zone text, referrals to regional agencies and public hearings.

3. Revise the Zoning Regulations to facilitate mixed residential and Commercial uses in the C-3 zone in the West Main Street Focus Area.

Mr. Voelker will strive to pull everything together in the next few months, and #3 is linked to #1 and #2...it is a good start. There will be review of affordable housing and cluster regulations, with the Commission taking on challenging things in the beginning.

The Commissioners talked about the Town Council's reaction to the POCD. Mr. Voelker reported the Council comments were pro-economic development. The POCD will be taken to the Economic Development Commission by Mr. Sitko.

Mr. Voelker will be sending information to the Commissioners, requesting their assistance as implementation of the Plan moves forward. The POCD will enable Cheshire to be more competitive with surrounding towns with industrial and commercial growth.

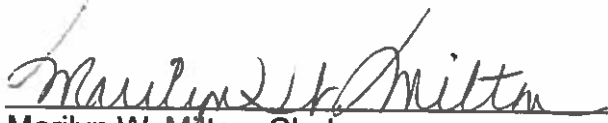
VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Veleber; seconded by Mr. Kardaras.

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:


Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk