

PLANNING & ZONING  
COMMISSION  
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TOWN HALL ANNEX  
238 Danbury Road  
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PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP  
SUMMARY MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 2, 2009

PRESENT: Sally Poundstone, Chairman, John Wilson, Vice Chairman, Bas Nabulsi, Secretary, Alice Ayers, Doug Bayer, Marilyn Gould, Dona Pratt, Michael Rudolph, Eric Osterberg and Town Planner Robert Nerney

ALSO PRESENT: Glen Chalder and Heidi Samokar of Planimetrics, LLC, Michael Vigeant of the Center for Research and Public Policy, and members of the public and press

Chairman Poundstone convened the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Mr. Vigeant provided a brief company overview and described the process under which the Center presented questions aimed at achieving accurate and unbiased responses. The survey was conducted between December 8 and December 12, 2008 and includes responses from 400 Wilton residents. The Center achieved an 82% completion rate with an accuracy rate of +/- 5%.

Mr. Vigeant stated that the Center, based on input from the Commission, surveyed the following areas:

- Perception of local quality of life;
- Local issues of concern;
- Views of natural resources and open space;
- Perceptions of development along Route 7;
- Views on residential development and housing;
- Use of trains and bus service from Wilton station; and
- Demographics

With respect to "Quality of Life", Mr. Vigeant stated that 96.3% of polled residents describe the quality of life in Wilton as "good" or "very good". He further noted that such percentage is very high, as responses to similar questions in other areas of the country are considerably lower. Topics of interest (or concern) included high taxes (46.0%), followed by Route 7 development (22.5%), no reported issues of concern (18.3%) and financial spending decisions (14.3%).

Mr. Vigeant discussed findings relative to “Natural Resources and Open Space”. Survey results revealed strong support for implementation “green” or “environmentally friendly” standards, storm water attenuation requirements, open space acquisition and the regulating of tree clearing. Statistical results suggest less support for water and aquifer protection and preservation of ground water. Mr. Vigeant cautioned the Commission that less support for a particular issue could be the result of the survey group not fully understanding the subject matter.

Results pertaining to “Residential Development” showed strong support for encouraging housing that “fits in with neighborhoods”. Respondents also showed support for allowing higher densities for senior housing yet showed less support in allowing higher densities for conventional housing.

With regard to “Special Areas” nearly three-fifths of those polled like the way Wilton Center has developed. Slightly more than half of the respondents like the way in which Route 7 has developed from Norwalk to Lambert’s Corner and from Lambert’s Corner to Cannondale. Nearly 72% support the way Route 7 has developed in areas north of Cannondale.

Mr. Vigeant reported survey findings with respect to “Transportation”. Fifty-five percent (55%) of respondents either strongly agree or somewhat agree with the concept of establishing traffic signals at busy road intersections (non-Route 7 roads). Nearly two-thirds of polled residents support greater opportunities and places for walking and bicycling. Trends relative to train and bus ridership service appeared less clear.

With respect to “Overall Priorities” Mr. Vigeant noted that the creation of trails, purchase of open space and upgrade of fire and police facilities rank high while other projects such as Town Hall renovations and recreation facilities ranked lower in priority.

Mr. Vigeant thanked the Commission and applauded their effort to seek out public opinion. He stated that his firm would be available to answer any additional questions or cross-tabulate responses so as to derive further information.

Heidi Samokar handed out a document outlining the suggested structure of the Plan of Conservation and Development; further noting the plan’s overarching goals. Mr. Rudolph suggested preservation and acquisition of open space be consolidated into one category. Several Commissioners opined that the issue of light and noise pollution should be addressed within the conservation section of the document.

The Commission requested that the reference to “sewer expansion” be changed to “sewer policies” so as to avoid the appearance of advocating sewer extension. It was suggested that a category “u” under infrastructure be established to identify “Facility Systems”. It was also suggested that a category entitled “Operational Strategies” be created to reflect evolving changes with regard to information technology. The Commission agreed that a public meeting should be set for May and suggested that it be held at the Wilton Library’s Brubeck Room.

Chairman Poundstone thanked the consultants and adjourned the meeting at 9:15 p.m.