

PLANNING & ZONING
COMMISSION
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TOWN HALL ANNEX
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PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP
SUMMARY MINUTES
MARCH 30, 2009

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

EXCUSED Marilyn Gould
ABSENCE:

ALSO Heidi Samokar of Planimetrics, LLC and members of the public and press
PRESENT:

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

As a follow up to the Commission's last POCD meeting, Ms. Samokar handed out a memorandum outlining strategies related to funding of various programs. In response to an earlier question, she also confirmed that the town offers tax incentives for the use of alternative energy resources.

Commissioner Bayer clarified a comment from the previous POCD meeting indicating that "higher" density housing as opposed to "high" density housing should be considered when encouraging affordable housing.

Commissioner Bayer expressed interest in encouraging policies that promote the retention of Wilton Center as the commercial hub for retail development and questioned the types of uses that should be encouraged in the center. Commissioner Nabulsi indicated that review standards should not be viewed with an eye toward minimizing development, noting the need for an array of services, some of which may or may not be desirable in a downtown location.

Discussion ensued regarding the proposed Hubbard Road extension. Commissioner Ayers noted that such improvements would be difficult given the assemblage of property owners and possible environmental issues. Following discussion, the Commission decided to keep the Hubbard Road extension proposal in the plan.

Commissioner Nabulsi raised the issue of municipal parking and opined that a central parking arrangement would relieve downtown parking congestion while accommodating future development. Discussion followed with respect to tiered parking in the center; however, the majority of the Commission felt that the emphasis should be placed on shared parking arrangements.

The Commission questioned the wisdom of a 10-foot minimum front setback in Wilton Center; suggesting that the setback be increased to 20 feet. Chairwoman Poundstone recommended page 60 be modified to discuss the encouragement of “limited support services” in and around the Wilton Train Station.

Other ideas for the downtown were discussed, including the introduction of traffic calming along Old Ridgefield Road and enhancements to public transit, possibly in the form of an electrified trolley.

Discussion involving Cannondale followed. Opinions varied concerning land use policies for the Cannondale with some Commissioners expressing interest in modifying the adaptive use regulations and others suggesting the creation of an entirely new zoning district; possibly designed on the principle of “form-based zoning”. Commissioner Nabulsi suggested desired design could be achieved by way of zoning-related incentives.

The Georgetown neighborhood was the next topic of discussion. The Commission noted the presence of workforce housing and further noted that a significant number of homes have undergone gentrification in recent years. Commissioner Rudolph indicated the need to discuss alternative uses for the former Gilbert and Bennett School. The Commission recognized the desire to retain the scale of development in the Georgetown neighborhood and such desire should be clearly stated in the plan.

Discussion continued regarding the management of business development along Route 7. It was suggested the 1st sentence of paragraph 3 on page 64 be modified to read “Most future development will likely occur along Route 7”. Following an in depth discussion, it was suggested that the topic be suspended to allow for further review.

Infrastructure needs were discussed; specifically water and sewer service. It was recommended the consultant strike language involving sewer recommendations outlined in the strategies section of the chapter.

Commissioner Osterberg questioned the desirability of maintaining police and fire services at the main Town Hall complex location and queried spatial concerns impacting the Ridgefield Road fire station. Commissioners expressed strong support for the retention of athletic fields as well as the benefits of supporting private schools as such privatized services reduce public burden.

Chairman Poundstone thanked the consultants and adjourned the meeting at 9:10 p.m.