

PLANNING & ZONING
COMMISSION
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TOWN HALL ANNEX
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, Connecticut 06897

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION SUMMARY MINUTES
PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT INFORMATIONAL MEETING
WILTON LIBRARY BRUBECK ROOM
JUNE 1, 2009

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

ALSO Glen Chalder and Heidi Samokar of Planimetrics and members of the public and press

Chairman Poundstone convened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and introduced commissioners, staff and the consultant. Chairwoman Poundstone stated that the draft Plan of Conservation and Development has been made available to the public and the purpose of the meeting is to receive comment from the general public before proceeding further.

Heidi Samokar, consultant with Planimetrics, explained the purpose of the plan and provided members of the public with a project status update. Ms. Samokar further explained that the document is not binding in nature but rather advisory.

Ms. Samokar stated that the draft plan evolved by way of input from various individuals; including members of town boards and commissions, town department heads, stakeholders and the general public. Opinions were also gathered by way of a town-wide random survey.

With regard to survey findings, Ms. Samokar reported that the overarching public issue included the preservation of community character and maintaining a high quality of life throughout Wilton. Other areas of concern included the protection and preservation of open space, minimizing drainage impacts, safeguarding water supplies and conserving energy resources. Other areas of public interest included the retention of low density development, addressing housing needs and the retention of smaller house. Ms. Samokar reported that the lessening of traffic throughout the community and exploring alternative modes transportation also ranked high among those polled.

Discussion ensued regarding the next steps. Ms. Samokar stated that discussion and consideration of comments would take place in June with further public review in August and

September. Ms. Samokar noted that a public hearing has been tentatively scheduled for October 5, 2009.

Chairwoman Poundstone opened the meeting for public comment. Dick Ziegler of 20 Fullin Lane stressed the importance of tree preservation pointing out several examples of areas where excessive tree cutting has occurred.

Carol Russell of 15 Hemmelskamp Road stated the need for historic preservation and recommended the acronym "HDC" be properly spelled out as the "Wilton Historic District and Historic Property Commission". Ms. Russell further recommended the plan encourage and support existing and future historic district designations.

Hermon Telyan of 8 Freshwater Lane complimented the Commission but suggested greater attention be given to southwest Wilton. Mr. Telyan further stated that sprawl should be avoided and development should be encouraged near public transportation centers. Mr. Telyan expressed support for other ideas, including a river walk, design guidelines for housing and protection of exiting greenbelt areas throughout the community; particularly on the east side of Wilton.

Matt Kehoe of 34 New Street spoke of pedestrian and affordable housing needs and how such needs may affect the Georgetown area of Wilton.

Michael Lindberg of 139 Thunder Lake Road felt that greater discussion needed to take place concerning inter-model travel, pedestrian linkage and bus-work drop offs. Mr. Lindberg also recommended the drafting of a community-wide economic development plan.

Bob Faesy of 10 Kellogg Drive opined the need to define certain words, such as "upscale" and "affordable". Mr. Faesy noted a loss of population due to a lack of affordable housing options. Mr. Faesy further stated the need to revisit and amend the town's adaptive re-use regulations, promote a river walk and promote appropriate architecture by way of clear guidelines.

Barbara Holdridge of 14 Forge Road expressed support for the preservation of the former Gilbert and Bennett School in Georgetown.

Former Wilton resident Karen Strickland recommended that programs offered by the Wilton YMCA be recognized and supported as valuable community resources.

John Weiss of 126 Hurlbutt Street noted the lack of discussion with respect to historic preservation funding sources. Mr. Weiss also expressed the need for pedestrian sidewalks and higher development density to achieve necessary critical mass where appropriate.

Gail Lavielle of 109 Hickory Hill Road recommended a two-tiered funding approach with regard to rail improvements, noting that signalization improvements needed to occur prior to other planned rail improvements. Ms Lavielle stated the need to go into greater depth regarding train station parking, information that would likely place the town in better standing when pursuing

state grants. Ms. Lavielle supported the concept of inter-modal travel; particularly for area businesses.

Barbara Quincy of 87 Grey Rocks Road expressed support for Schenck's Island including handicapped access thereto.

Pat Hagnauer of #25 Route 107 supported preservation efforts for the former Gilbert and Bennett School further suggesting re-use of the building as a community center. Ms. Hagnauer felt the concept of rain gardens should be encouraged.

Lisa Manix of 181 Old Boston Road expressed support for a possible bike path connection between Silver Mine and Wilton Center. Ms. Manix also expressed support for a dog park.

Bruce Resnick of Wilton Acres expressed support for the creation of safe bicycle routes.

Jamie Van Acker of 69 Portland Avenue stated the need to set aside meaningful and useful active and passive recreation land.

Maryann Rossi 195 Mather Street noted that the former Gilbert and Bennett School was not listed as a historic site.

Wes Stout of Ridgefield Road suggested the introduction of a round-a-bout at the intersection of Drum Hill Road and Ridgefield Road and stated the need for traffic calming on Wolfpit Road. Mr. Stout recommended greater connectivity between Old Highway and the abandoned portion of Old Ridgefield Road. Mr. Stout also stated the need for appropriate density as a means of promoting economic vitality.

Jessica Kaplan of 356 Thayer Pond Road stated that the town now has a tree committee charged with implementing a tree plan for Wilton Center with possible future expansion to other areas of the town.

Kristine Begor of the Conservation Commission informed the Planning and Zoning Commission of adopted changes at the Transfer Station.

David Hapke of the Conservation Commission expressed the need for actions plans.

Nancy Faesy of 10 Kellogg Drive opined that the open space recommendations were not as strong the recommendations within the last plan. Ms. Faesy suggested the inclusion of an addendum listing of desired open space properties. Ms. Faesy also recommended terminology used to describe "unprotected open space" be changed to read "managed open space".

Gerald Holdridge of 14 Forge Road noted the need for improved transportation into and out of Wilton, further noting that the widening of Route 7 does not represent a long term solution to addressing regional traffic concerns. Mr. Holdridge stated that the idea of Super 7 should be given proper consideration. Mr. Holdridge expressed concern regarding the proposed Comstock

Community Center stating that details had not been adequately spelled out. He suggested the reference to an artificial turf field be deleted. Mr. Holdridge indicated the need to contain costs via creative ideas such as regionalizing fire service.

Joseph Torg of 15 Azalea Lane stated the town should be encouraging the preservation of neighborhoods such as the Deerfield Road area, further stating that such efforts would complement the promotion of affordable housing. Mr. Torg noted a lack of discussion concerning future needs at the Wilton High School.

Fred Herrick of 20 Comstock Lane expressed concern over the lack of policy for the handling of long-term drought conditions.

Bob Russell of 15 Hemmelskamp Road noted the need to reopen the Wilton Train Station and complete the pedestrian bridge across the Norwalk River. Mr. Russell suggested the creation of provisions to protect smaller houses and agreed with the comments of Bob Faesy concerning changes to the adaptive use regulations.

Dave Kahal of 43 Cannon Road supported the suggestion of defining boundaries for Cannondale as well as creating a vision for the area.

Steve Geoggedu of 63 Cannon Road expressed concern regarding clear cutting and a perceived lack of community voice.

Harry Clark of 68 Cannon Road noted the need to protect the unique river buffer in Cannondale.

Milton Pohl of 17 Hurlbutt Street questioned the cost of acquiring easements. Mr. Pohl expressed support for a long term community vision noting its importance in arriving at wise decisions. Mr. Pohl also suggested the town consider the former Gilbert & Bennett school site as a possible location for 55 and older housing.

Amy Quigley 37 Cannon Road expressed support for sidewalk and trail development.

Steve Hudspeth of 6 Glen Hill Road expressed support for a connection between the future Wilton Commons and Wilton Center and inquired as to whether an alternative connection could be achieved under the current Route 7 widening project.

Paula Brydy of 26 Serendipity Lane noted the need to clarify language pertaining to affordable housing, address the need for higher density, senior housing and town programs for the elderly.

Sue Marcone of 64 Sugar Loaf Drive supported the concept of adopting a tree cutting ordinance.

Chairwoman Poundstone complimented and thanked members of the public, noting their comments truly reflect the character and spirit of the community. Ms. Poundstone stated all comments would be taken into consideration over the coming weeks. The informational meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.