

APPROVED/AMENDED Minutes
BROOKFIELD PLANNING COMMISSION
THURSDAY, September 6, 2012 – 7:30 PM
MEETING ROOM #133 – TOWN HALL, 100 POCONO ROAD

1. **Convene Meeting:** Chairman J. Van Hise convened the meeting at 7:30 p.m. and established a quorum of members: J. Van Hise, Chairman; A. Kerley, Vice Chairman; D. Frankel, Secretary; Regular Members: R. Baiad and P. Conlon; Alternates L. Taylor and N. Tolmoff. Also present: K. Daniel, Community Development Director, and Recording Secretary, J. Llewellyn.

2. **Review of Previous Minutes: 8/16/12:** A motion was made by P. Conlon to approve the Minutes of 8/16/12 as submitted. The motion was seconded by R. Baiad and carried unanimously.

Prior to continuing with the agenda, A. Kerley asked why this was an “amended” agenda, and K. Daniel clarified that the original agenda included the Ferry property. This application was withdrawn. They need to revise the maps.

As there was time before the scheduled Public Hearing, a motion was made by P. Conlon to amend the agenda to go to item 4: Minutes of Other Boards and Commissions. D. Frankel seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

4. **Minutes of Other Boards and Commissions:**
 - **8/9/12: Zoning Commission:** Discussion on the Laurel Hill Townhomes Proposed Incentive Housing Development
 - **8/23/12: Zoning Commission:** Public Hearing on Laurel Hill Townhomes was closed; B.J.’s Wholesale Club: eliminating restaurant as part of its original proposal and including a gas station;
 - **8/13/12: Inland Wetlands Commission:** Also discussed Laurel Hill Townhomes; Whispering Glen II application in progress;
 - **8/27/12: Inland Wetlands Commission:** Approved gas station for BJ’s; further discussion on Whispering Glen II

PUBLIC HEARING: 7:45 P.M.

Update of the Plan of Conservation and Development – Four Corners Revitalization Incorporation:

a. **Letter from N. Marcus to K. Daniel dated 8/23/12 re: Four Corners Revitalization Plan – Brookfield Plan of Conservation and Development**
Chairman Van Hise opened the hearing at 7:45 p.m. and Vice Chairman A. Kerley read the legal notice into the record. Chairman Van Hise noted that this Commission had requested an update on this report. A number of Commissioners had attended the informational meetings with Fitzgerald and Halliday, Inc., and seek to add this as an addendum to the current Plan of Conservation and Development. In the current plan, Section 8 includes plans to Establish a Village Center, but Chairman Van Hise feels this new plan offers more details that are vital for future plans for development. Community Development Director K. Daniel reviewed the plan in a large, visual format for the Commission’s and public’s benefit. This document was developed through a public participation process, with the goal of reaching a consensus on what the public

would like to see in a Four Corners downtown area. A Four Corners Vision Statement was developed (and read into the record by Ms. Daniel). A key factor in this proposal, she noted, was State roads, and the plan was developed with the specifications from the Department of Transportation. There was also input from the HVCEO (Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials), HART (Housatonic Area Regional Transit) and members of Brookfield's boards and commissions. Also represented were local business and property owners, developers and members of the general public, all of whom provided valuable input. The Four Corners Concept Plans covers more than 170 acres with a variety of uses considered including recreation, mixed-use, and commercial establishments. The existing conditions and specific proposals for each quadrant were outlined in the report, with the intent to have a "pedestrian friendly" area, keeping auto circulation more "internal" rather than flowing onto Federal Road. The future plans seek a "higher and better use" of the present properties which currently feature gas stations at each of the four corners. These potential uses include retail, entertainment, office, residential or mixed use. The remainder of the report featured The Implementation Program includes a Community Forum Initiative; a Marketing Initiative, a Complete Streets Initiative, and a Cultural/Civic Enhancement Initiative. The Appendix outlines Recommendations for Zoning Adjustments.

J. Van Hise noted that the Village Concept, began in 2002, now has some "flesh" to it. He called for the public comments. N. Dechamps, of Newbury Village, praised the proposal but is concerned "it may sit on the shelf." He wants to get a feel for developer interest in implementing the plan. Chairman Van Hise said the Town works off the Plan of Conservation and Development, which is why this Commission is seeking to make this an addendum to the existing Plan. "This will have a great bearing on what gets done," added Economic Development Commission Chairman H. Kurfehs. Mr. Dechamps called it a "terrific plan," acknowledging all the work that went into it. He called for it to "keep moving."

H. Kurfehs felt that there is some "danger" in showing specific uses in specific quadrants of the Village Center, adding that this doesn't happen in real life. He's concerned about people "taking this literally," though A. Kerley said the quadrants have always been presented for illustration purposes only.

K. Daniel noted that a new final paragraph has been added (on page 17) is to clarify that this is a "concept plan": and that "the approximate square footage of new development shown in the quadrant plans for the core do not directly correlate to the market potential." It further states that "as the vision for the Four Corners begins to take form, the dynamic nature of the new downtown will have potential to generate more market demand above that which today's market conditions reflect."

H. Kurfehs favored the circulation proposals for automobile and pedestrian traffic. However, he believes that the area will not attract retail unless "you get people," adding that the proposed 259 new units *are not* going to get retail unless you get people. He doesn't know if 259 new units are going to support retail. Chairman Van Hise believes that there is a core group of existing residents who would patronize this area "in a flash" in order to avoid the congestion of lower Federal Road.

First Selectman Bill Davidson also offered his comments, emphasizing the importance of the fact that this is a "concept." He pointed out that the proposal by Fitzgerald and

Halliday worked with what was already there, instead of recommending starting with a clean slate. He added that the 259 units was their best estimate of what the market would bear. K. Daniel further added that this number was a “starting point.” A. Kerley echoed Chairman Van Hise’s earlier comment that the existing Brookfield population base would favor and support a downtown area. He then asked the First Selectman if the Town would be offering incentives to attract development for this area. Mr. Davidson noted that grant money is being applied for (see later discussion under “Tabled Items”). He further elaborated that the Town’s current population of 16,800, with a median household income above \$100,000.00 offers potential to support retail development in this area. Betsey McElwein liked that the proposal includes a civic space, adding that a new library/theater may be a draw for this area, without the necessity of patrons living in the immediate area.

Ed Vozek stated that he’s been opposed to this from the start, noting that there are “still real estate people and developers who are involved. “ He doesn’t believe the Town will be getting anything out of this (except a Library). “You can’t build backwards,” he stated. He doesn’t see this plan working.

Chairman Van Hise shared his experience traveling through a town in Maine which, following the advice of consultants, went from being a dreaded “bottleneck”, to instead become a place people chose to visit, due to internal circulation of traffic flow (a parking lot in the rear of retail establishments).

Commissioner A. Kerley also pointed out that while proposals to improve the Four Corners area have indeed been a long-time in the planning process, things in the way of bringing the Four Corners plans to fruition (the by-pass, sewers, and water, for example) have been, or are in the process of being, resolved.

The quality of the first few projects will “set the tone,” stated First Selectman Davidson, and will make a difference in seeing this proposal “go from a theory to a reality.”

A motion was made by A. Kerley to close the Public Hearing on the Brookfield Town Center Revitalization Plan Incorporation into the Plan of Conservation and Development. D. Frankel seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

A motion was made by P. Conlon to amend the agenda to go to Tabled Items, item 7: Main Street Investment Fund Grant Application. The motion was seconded by R. Baiad and carried unanimously.

7. **Tabled Items:**

a. Main Street Investment Fund Grant Application: *K. Daniel, Community Development Director, present.*

Ms. Daniel explained that she is in the process of writing an application for a \$500,000 grant available from the 2011 Jobs Bill, which is focused on creating viable businesses in small towns less than 30,000 which have approved Town Center plans. Because of the previously-discussed Four Corners Revitalization Plan, she believes we are “very well placed” to succeed. For the application, she needs to propose improvements that are confined to \$850,000 (we already have \$350,000). Any money received would have to be spent within a year.

In this application, she focused on the median at the Craft Center; sidewalks at that median along the eastern side of Route 25, and sidewalks from Station Road, around the corner and southward along Federal Road. Sidewalks along Laurel Hill Road (near the new proposed development) will also be included. The proposal would also include lighting and benches along these sidewalks. . The Brookfield Craft Center, an anchor for the Four Corners, is struggling financially, so this grant proposal also includes signage that could benefit the Craft Center and other businesses in the Four Corners. Ms. Daniel wanted confirmation from this Commission that she’s headed in the right direction.

Following a brief discussion on what the new Town Center District would be named, the Commission gave Ms. Daniel its support to go ahead with this grant application.

A motion was made by D. Frankel, seconded by P. Conlon to return to Update of the Plan of Conservation and Development (from tonight’s Public Hearing). Motion carried unanimously.

Update of the Plan of Conservation and Development: Four Corners Revitalization Incorporation

-Letter from N. Marcus to K. Daniel dated 8/23/12 re: Four Corners

Revitalization Plan – Brookfield Plan of Conservation and Development

Chairman Van Hise noted that Attorney Marcus’ letter recommended that this Revitalization plan be incorporated as an “addendum” to the present Plan of Conservation and Development.

A motion was made by P. Conlon that the September, 2012, version of the Four Corners Brookfield Town Center Revitalization Plan be incorporated into the Plan of Conservation and Development as an addendum to Section 8: Establish a Village Center. Motion seconded by D. Frankel and carried unanimously.

2. **New Business:** There was none at this meeting.

5. **Correspondence:**

- a. **Memo from K. McPadden to the Planning Commission dated 8/27/12 re: Water Pollution Control Plan and Sewer Service Area Map**
 - **Brookfield Water Pollution Control Authority Water Pollution Control Plan:** This color-coded map was reviewed by the Commission.
- b. **Memo from Zoning Commission to Planning Commission dated 8/30/12 re: Proposed Zoning Regulation Changes**
 - **Application #201200756: Proposed Regulation Change to Section 242-505A – Town Center District:** Change proposed for Vision Statement (to mirror that which appears in the Four Corners Revitalization proposal). **A motion was made by A. Kerley to send a memo to the Zoning Commission stating that the Planning Commission has reviewed Application 201200756 for Section 242-505A and we are in accord with it. R. Baiad seconded the motion which carried unanimously.**
 - **Application #201200721: Proposed Regulation Change to Section 242-401E – Prohibitions in Residential Districts: (letter not attached):** K. Daniel was able to provide explanation for the Commission on the reasoning behind the proposed Zoning Regulation change: the language is being taken out because it is unenforceable the way it is written (re: drainage). **A motion was made by A. Kerley to advise the Zoning Commission that Application 201200721 for the proposed change to Section 242-401E has been reviewed by the Planning Commission, and we are in accord with the rationale. D. Frankel seconds the motion which carried unanimously.**

6. **Informal Discussion:** There was none at this meeting.

8. **Adjourn:** A motion was made by A. Kerley to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 p.m. The motion was seconded by D. Frankel and carried unanimously.

J. Van Hise, Chairman