

**2014 Plan of Conservation and Development Subcommittee  
Special Meeting Minutes  
December 3, 2012**

The 2014 Plan of Conservation and Development Subcommittee of the Planning and Zoning Commission held its December 3, 2012 Special Meeting at 7:00PM at the Stonington High School Commons, 176 S. Broad St., Pawcatuck, CT.

Attending this initial public input meeting were members Wendy Bury, Bob Birmingham, Walter Grant, Jim Kelley, Sara Lathrop, Bill Lyman, Robert Mohr, Alisa Morrison and John Prue. Town Planner Keith A. Brynes was also in attendance.

Mr. Brynes presented an introduction to the Plan of Conservation and Development and efforts to update the document over the next 2 years. Moderator, Glenn Chalder of Planimetrics, LLC was introduced.

Mr. Chalder explained the meeting format and asked for public comment on various topics.

***Protection of Resources:***

Pat Ryan stated that “resources” in the plan should not be limited to natural resources but should also include the Town’s people and jobs.

Jeff Callahan stated that the Town can do better at protecting open space. More permanent and publically accessible open space is needed.

Rob Holland stated that the Non-Infringement Area regulation in the GBR-130 zone is overly cumbersome and redundant since the Wetlands Commission regulates inland wetlands.

Ed Hart asked about sustainability in the 2004 plan. Goals related to sustainability should be realistic and not just theoretical.

Dexter Murphy suggested reviewing the 150 recommendations in the 2004 plan to see which have been met and which should be modified or deleted. Ms. Lathrop explained the role of the POCD Implementation Committee and that implementation has not always worked very well.

A speaker stated that the Town should look at the cumulative impacts on natural resources over time. Discussions on sustainability should define economic vs. environmental sustainability.

Lou Allyn, member of the Mystic Harbor Management Committee, stated that committee had implemented its assigned strategies in the 2004 plan. The revised plan should address the issue of sea level rise and whether the Town agrees with DEEP’s goal of reducing our presence on the coast.

Juliet Leeming stated that “resources” in the plan should not be limited to natural resources.

Carlene Donarrumo stressed protection of publically accessible open space. The Conservation Commission and Board of Finance should support municipal spending on such open space. The Town should come closer to achieving its goal of 30% open space.

Bob Montgomery suggested that the plan’s implementation schedule include cost estimates.

Dexter Murphy asked what percentage of the Town’s land has been preserved as open space. Ms. Bury stated that the Subcommittee is struggling with that answer and it will be analyzed as part of the revised plan.

Jennifer Herbst stated that open space including historic farms should be preserved.

Ed Hart commended the Board of Finance for limiting spending, keeping taxes low and the Town’s bond rating high.

Harry White stated that open space should be better defined.

Ed Hart stated that preserving agricultural land is important.

Binti Ackley recommended spending additional funds on open space preservation and coming up with creative financing mechanisms for preservation including a municipal conveyance tax.

Tom Hyland recommended including quality of life and water resources as important recourses to protect.

Carlene Donarrumo discussed the Town’s fee in lieu of open space that is collected for open space preservation.

Lou Allyn recommended neighborhood public gardens as beneficial to residential areas.

A speaker recommended policies to preserve air quality and views of the night sky.

Gary Anderson recommended preserving views of the night sky.

Curtis Lynch stated that types of open space should be better defined and that the POCD could be organized similar to the “standards for granting a Special Use Permit” in Section 6.4 of the Zoning Regulations.

Fran Hoffman, president of Clean Up Stonington Harbor (CUSH), stressed that preserving water quality should be a concern with development proposals. Water related infrastructure should be maintained.

### ***How to Manage Development:***

Tom Hyland, chairman of the Stonington Affordable Housing Committee, stated that the POCD should include significant affordable housing goals. The lack of affordable housing is making it difficult for businesses to attract workers and is difficult on seniors.

Ed Planeta, Economic Development Commission member and owner of ACME Wire, recommended incorporating the goals of the 2007 Affordable Housing Report directly into the POCD. Continuing to build large homes on large lots is not sustainable.

Harry White stated that the plan should address the public cost of services for different land uses.

Dexter Anderson stated that affordable housing is important but should still account for neighbors by providing adequate buffers.

Pat Ryan asked if there is an overarching strategic vision for the Town.

Rick Newton stated that the Town's Open Space Development regulations should be incentivized. The Town should promote redevelopment of existing commercial areas rather than building on undeveloped land.

A speaker stated that new development should be suited to its surroundings. Commercial development should be located in areas with public utilities. Residential developments should respect the density and character of existing neighborhoods.

A speaker recommended firmer lines drawn in which new development will not be permitted. New development is not needed.

Ed Hart recommended a Pawcatuck Enterprise Zone to assist with revitalization. The Town should promote redevelopment of the Mystic Color Lab property.

Jonathan Duncklee stated that the LI-130 zone should not be squeezed out and residents should appreciate local businesses and support their efforts to expand.

Dexter Murphy stressed the Mystic Color Lab property as an excellent redevelopment opportunity.

### ***Services we Want to Provide:***

Lou Allyn stated the POCD should take a regional view and investigate sharing resources with other towns.

Harold White recommended developing an overarching rationale for promoting sidewalks and bicycle trails that stresses positive impacts on several areas.

Steve White recommended incorporating the goals from the Mystic Multi Modal Study in the POCD.

Ms. Bury read comments from a resident who could not attend the meeting stressing greater ADA accessibility.

A speaker stressed sidewalks to schools should be a priority. The current situation near the high school is dangerous.

A speaker stated that the Town needs stronger schools and recreational facilities for families to move here.

***Open Comments:***

A speaker asked whether the plan should stress planning for current residents or for the future make up of the Town and whether targeting extra residents should be addressed.

Fran Hoffman stated that the Town should adopt a more pro-active economic development strategy.

Harold White asked whether the plan will prioritize goals or recommend funding.

A speaker stated that an initial vision for the Town is important and will drive other goals.

Curtis Lynch suggested considering "scenario planning" in which various future scenarios are explored and risks are analyzed.

A speaker stated the Town should be pro-active in dealing with sea level rise and protect its infrastructure.

Lou Allyn suggested interviewing new residents about what attracted them to Stonington.

Rob Holland suggested forming a Parks and Recreation Department to pro-actively develop publically accessible open space.

A speaker suggested reviewing the recommendations of the 2004 plan.

Ed Hart recommended development of a multi-faceted community center. AMTRAK and I-95 should be upgraded.

Nancy Dunn stated that the Town should do more emergency planning for major storms.

Dexter Murphy stated that school athletic fields should be upgraded.

Gary Anderson recommended additional bicycle lanes.

Steve White recommended more shared public/private spaces.

Ms. Bury and Mr. Brynes provided concluding remarks and referenced the online questionnaire at [www.stonington-ct.gov](http://www.stonington-ct.gov).

Respectfully submitted,

  
Keith A. Brynes, Town Planner