

**2014 Plan of Conservation and Development Subcommittee
Regular Meeting Minutes
July 15, 2013**

The 2014 Plan of Conservation and Development Subcommittee of the Planning and Zoning Commission held its July 15, 2013 Regular Meeting at 7:00PM at the Stonington Police Station Meeting Room – 173 S. Broad St, Pawcatuck. Attending were members Bob Birmingham, Wendy Bury, Walter Grant, Sara Lathrop, Bill Lyman, Robert Mohr and John Prue. Town Planner Keith A. Brynes was also in attendance.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Lathrop at 7:00PM.

Mr. Lyman motioned to approve the draft minutes of the 6/3/13 meeting; seconded by Ms. Bury. The motion was unanimously approved 6-0. Mr. Prue arrived at 7:05.

Mr. Brynes distributed maps of commercial areas of town and a list of the 2004 POCD's goals related to economic development. The Subcommittee followed the outline of economic development issues Ms. Bury prepared for the meeting.

Discussion of Village Areas

Old Mystic:

Ms. Bury summarized that there is little to no room for new commercial development. Some vacancies are yet to be filled. Mr. Prue stated that the future of the school administration building should be considered. Consensus was that this site should not be rezoned to commercial.

Mystic:

Ms. Bury stated that Mystic has some redevelopment opportunities such as Seaport Marine and the Inn at Mystic. Issues include potential conflicts with abutting residential uses and floodplain requirements. The Subcommittee discussed the possibility of a developer using the Neighborhood Development District (NDD) floating zone on these sites. Consensus was to encourage the use of floating zones or other tools for flexibility in redeveloping such sites. Mr. Birmingham stated that the plan should encourage flexibility and creative adaptations regarding some flood hazard requirements in historic areas.

Pawcatuck:

Ms. Bury stated that one of the key challenges is how to encourage re-use of the area's mills. The Subcommittee discussed the EDC's "M-1 Initiative" to encourage update uses the Town's manufacturing zones. Mr. Birmingham recommended strongly encouraging a wider range of uses in all of the M-1 zones. Consensus of the Subcommittee was to recommend expansion / updating of allowed M-1 uses.

The Subcommittee discussed the possibility of creating separate zones for downtown Pawcatuck and Mystic and the possibility of a regulation requiring 1st floor retail uses similar to

Westerly. Funding for a façade improvement program and extension of the streetscape program could also be sought.

Discussion of Highway Interchange Areas

Exit 90:

Ms. Bury summarized issues in this area. The Lattizori / Perkins Farm property on Jerry Browne Rd. has been fully committed to residential use since the 2004 plan. Mr. Prue asked whether the plan should still recommend a “transitional” area somewhere. Mr. Birmingham asked whether commercial zones should be expanded somewhere in this area. The Subcommittee discussed updating the TC-80 (Tourist Commercial) zone possibly with the more recent language in the HI-60 (Highway Interchange) zone. Mr. Prue recommended an entire rewrite and simplification of the Town’s zoning regulations with a deadline for implementation. Consensus of the Subcommittee was to not encourage mixed use redevelopment in the Exit 90 area since these uses should be primarily downtown.

Exit 92:

Ms. Bury summarized issues in this area which has abundant buildable commercial land including the Liberty Crossing development. The Subcommittee agreed that this area should be the Town’s focus for new large scale commercial development. Protecting groundwater resources will always be an issue in this area.

Exit 91:

Ms. Bury summarized issues at Exit 91 and asked whether the Town needs the LI-130 zone to meet its economic development goals. The 3 main options discussed were 1. Maintaining the 2004 POCD’s recommendation to re-orient the LI-130 zone east to west. 2. Rezone part or all of the zone to GBR-130 residential, or 3. Maintain the LI-130 zone as is.

Consensus was to not recommend the re-orientation as in the 2004 POCD. The land that would become LI-130 is wet and largely inaccessible. Mr. Prue and Ms. Bury recommended leaving the LI-130 zone as is. Mr. Lyman stated the POCD should be concerned with more than just locating industrial properties and that preservation of the historic homes and agricultural uses on Taugwonk Rd. should also be considered. Rezoning the residential properties GBR-130 would still leave a 89 acre undeveloped property as LI-130. Large industry will be difficult to locate without utilities. Mr. Lyman stated that if the land remains LI-130 at least residential uses should be allowed to expand and agriculture should be permitted. Mr. Brynes discussed a draft regulation amendment considered by the PZC that would accomplish these goals. Ms. Lathrop stated that the Town should not eliminate the benefit of this highway interchange.

Ms. Lathrop called for individual opinions on recommending leaving the LI-130 in place and amending the regulations to allow expansions to existing residential uses and allowing agriculture. Prue, Grant, Birmingham, Bury, Lathrop and Mohr – in favor. Lyman – in favor of changing zone to GBR-130 but could support changing text only. Mr. Brynes recommended reviewing the text of the LI-130 zone to modernize it and eliminate any uses that the Town considers inappropriate.

Ms. Bury summarized the process for drafting chapter outlines which will be distributed to members a week before the next meeting.

Ms. Lathrop asked for public comment.

Jim Smith recommended creation of an Open Space zoning district and stated that the Town should not advertise 200+ acres of industrial land on Taugwonk Rd. when much of it is now protected open space.

Stanton Simm stated that there is an inventory of open space prepared by the Conservation Commission. The Taugwonk Rd. area was originally zoned M-1 in order to keep away residential development. Wetlands encompass much of the area and will inhibit commercial development.

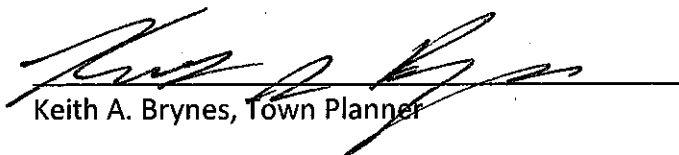
Ed Haberek, First Selectman, stated that downtown Pawcatuck is slowly seeing progress. There is currently a proposal to develop the 4th District Voting Hall in Mystic into public parking. The lack of public infrastructure on Taugwonk Rd. does not support large scale commercial development. The road north of the D'Amato property is shimmed and cannot support truck traffic. Development of this area is not important for the entire Town's economic development.

Carlene Donarrumo stated that the WPCA Chairman reports the Pawcatuck sewer plant at approximately 50% capacity and that North Stonington could tie in for a substantial fee. Stonington's WPCA must agree to such an arrangement.

Mr. Lyman asked about a complete table of contents with general goals. Ms. Bury will complete the table of contents. The Subcommittee discussed the possibility of hiring a professional editor to integrate the chapters that individual members will be writing. Mr. Brynes discussed the PZC's pending re-designation of the Subcommittee as a 7 member group.

Mr. Prue motioned to adjourn; seconded by Ms. Bury. The meeting adjourned at 9:35PM.

Respectfully submitted,


Keith A. Brynes, Town Planner