

**2014 Plan of Conservation and Development Subcommittee
Regular Meeting Minutes
November 18, 2013**

The 2014 Plan of Conservation and Development Subcommittee of the Planning and Zoning Commission held its November 18, 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 and Robert Mohr. Town Planner Keith A. Brynes was also in attendance.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Lathrop at 7:05PM.

Public comment:

Judd Rosen, property manager for the Riverwalk Condominium Association on West Broad and Coggswell Streets discussed issues related to the revitalization of downtown Pawcatuck. Mr. Rosen advocated using the Pawcatuck Redevelopment Organization's 2005 "Pawcatuck Revitalization Strategies" Plan as a guide. The Condo Association is still interested in promoting a pedestrian bridge to Westerly and redevelopment of the "grain elevator" site on Coggswell as a mixed use development. He is available to assist the Commission in its endeavors.

Discussion of outline for Chapter 4, Agriculture:

Mr. Grant presented revisions to the draft of the Agriculture chapter. Subcommittee members recommended adding Public Act 490 properties to the Agriculture map. Map should clarify that it represents land currently used as agriculture. Staff will get more information on the amount and percentage of land in agricultural use and in the PA-490 program. Members recommended some mention of aquaculture and local fisheries. Chapter should make mention of "prime agricultural soils" as defined by the state. The Assessment section of the chapter should discuss national and state level trends such as backyard farming, the local food movement, farmers markets, high tech farming/greenhouses, etc. Mr. Lyman stated that the chapter should tell the story of where Stonington is related to agriculture. The Overview section should be shorter with less detail and focus on what the chapter covers. The bulleted items should be moved to the Assessment section. Ms. Bury reminded the Subcommittee of comments received from Peg Moran regarding agriculture. Members recommended replacing the Working Land Alliance's vision with the Town's own vision. The Board of Selectmen, rather than PZC should form an Agricultural Committee.

Discussion of outline for Chapter 6, Open Space:

Mr. Grant presented revisions to the Open Space chapter. The draft Open Space Map is completed but needs some refining. PA-490 land should be explained and shown as "managed open space" but with different cross-hatching. The Subcommittee recommended that the chapter's recommendations should be backed up in the text. Mr. Birmingham recommended a description of the subdivision process and how open space is set aside. Mr. Brynes will prepare a written summary of the subdivision process and its requirements for open space set-asides or fees in lieu of open space. Ms. Bury will forward memos from the Tax Assessor regarding open space properties. Members discussed suggested edits drafted by resident, Chris Dixon. The Subcommittee concluded that the chapter should not include much detail about specific land

trusts and their holdings. Much of the language related to cultural landscapes will be reviewed as part of the Scenic / Historical Resources chapter. The Vision section of the chapter should include the 3 broad goals for open space established by the Subcommittee. Ms. Bury suggested that members can upload comments on the chapter in Google Docs. This will give consultant, Planimetrics, an idea of what the Subcommittee's thoughts are even if the chapter is not rewritten.

Discussion of outline for Chapter 9, Housing:

Ms. Bury presented a first draft of the housing chapter. Mr. Lyman suggested organizing the chapter by type of housing – single family, multi-family, etc. The Vision section should state that single family residences in low density areas should be low impact. Curtis Lynch of the Planning Zoning Commission discussed his written comments suggesting the Plan address the village areas and also the low impact development areas in between. Mr. Birmingham noted that there is an excess of large single family homes in the area built during the height of the real estate market. These could be converted into additional accessory units. Ms. Bury noted data from Les Bray of Sound Investments also showing that there is too much single family inventory in the area. Town regulations may need to be changed to allow more housing options. Adjustments to the Town's policies may need to be made for the Town to keep its current quality of life. Members recommended eliminating some of the charts. The Context Chapter also includes housing information.

Discussion of outline for Chapter 11, Community Facilities:

Ms. Lathrop presented revisions to the Community Facilities chapter. Ms. Bury suggested including some more information on certain buildings. Mr. Lyman recommended a reference to the Community Facilities map in the text. Members recommended combining Policies B and E. A new task should be added to reconstitute the Town Building Committee.

The agenda for the next meeting will include the Utilities, Sustainability and Natural Resources chapters.

Ms. Bury discussed the issue of what services the Subcommittee wants from Planimetrics. Consensus was that Planimetrics should review the draft chapters for general feedback, inconsistencies, strengths and weaknesses and make relevant recommendations on the Plan. Editing and/or wordsmithing should not be provided. The goal is to send Planimetrics draft chapters by mid-December. The review will take from 4 – 6 weeks. The PZC will be asked to provide feedback prior to a public hearing in the Spring.

Ms. Lathrop motioned to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mr. Birmingham. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 9:35PM.

Respectfully submitted,


Keith A. Brynes, Town Planner