

MINUTES

PLANNING & ZONING PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DESIGN SUBCOMMITTEE, TUESDAY, 24 JAN. 2023, 7:00 P.M.

A. **Call to Order** was at 7:00 pm.

B. **Attendees:** J. Castignoli, J. Kader, J. Mortimer, J. Quish / **CONSULTANT:** A. TECZA / **STAFF:** D. Sulkis, M. Greene

Chairman Quish opened the meeting. He said meeting goals were to review the results of a survey scheduled at the last meeting.

C. **Topic for discussion: Results of the survey distributed to the POCD subcommittee.**

Mr. Tecza thanked those subcommittee members who were able to complete the survey. He said presenting results would allow him to take live notes from the group. He said he targeted redundant topics to be eliminated or areas that need further study. He had identified 90 or so topics, thus he hoped this subcommittee review would be a more limited, general response. He said the text presented was from the most recently edited POCD version.

Open Space: Submitted language claimed during discussion by Mr. Mortimer cited a need for balance between nature and development. An agreed-upon goal was continued efforts to acquire land that meets requirements for grant funding. Mr. Sulkis explained that Milford currently has an Open Space fund, so there is no need to make it a goal. Chairman Quish said acquisition of contiguous land is desirable. There was review of current designated green spaces.

Recreation: The group didn't find identification of new locations for dog parks a compelling goal. Expansion of space for community gardens was deemed very important. Regarding use of downtown riverfront assets, Mr. Sulkis noted achievement of the reconfiguration goal for Fowler Field identified in the previous POCD, including a rerouted road, bike lanes, and changes to the ballfield. Chairman Quish thought the area is still under-utilized. He said an action plan underpinned by consultant input and public outreach would be ideal. Eisenhower Park was acknowledged as a great resource by Mr. Mortimer, who also saw it as an under-utilized asset. Chairman Quish thought use of passive agricultural projects like the planting of fruit trees could be supported, perhaps by young environmentally conscious citizens.

Coastal Resources and LI Sound (flooding, coastal surge, and inundation): Mr. Sulkis noted that mandating flood compliant design for new structures has been achieved. Regarding the "Carbon Neutrality by 2030" goal, Mr. Tecza said survey comments indicated that homeowners should undertake most improvements toward this end, whereas Chairman Quish and Mr. Mortimer agreed that public infrastructure should be more burdened than efforts from homeowners. Chairman Quish felt that the Planning and Zoning Board has little ability to mandate environmental home improvements, except for board-approved projects, such as commercial or multi-family developments. Mr. Castignoli said he submitted the language regarding homeowners assuming the costs of reducing environmental impacts because it could add to a home's value. Chairman Quish thought incentivizing compliance may help. Mr. Tecza reminded the group that figuring out details was off-topic and suggested that a way to think about this item would be as large neighborhood protection projects. Discussion ensued about funding for flood protection efforts, such as grants for seawall repair for public properties. It was noted that larger cities got public funding to protect infrastructure, but not Milford as yet. Mr. Tecza said he will work on the language. Access walkways to shore: Chairman Quish thought inadequate information to help people find public beach access is a problem. Mr. Sulkis noted that maintaining signage is difficult. Chairman Quish thought wayfinding in general is important for the city, particularly with beaches and downtown. A second reference to Fowler Field was deemed redundant and will be taken out and cross-referenced. Improve water quality: Mr. Sulkis suggested it could be redundant due to statutory requirements for low-impact stormwater management practices, such as rain gardens, which are addressed and tracked by building code and the Inland Wetlands Agency. Other aspects of water quality were discussed such as maintaining existing public stormwater infrastructure and the problem of nitrogen runoff to LI Sound. There was discussion of nonprofit promotions such as Freedom Lawns. Mr. Kader pointed out that fish die-offs affect quality of life; Chairman Quish wondered if such topics are in PZ purview. Mr. Castignoli thought the city ordinance was more appropriate. Mr. Mortimer said that since the POCD is an aspirational document, the topic could be included. Chairman Quish suggested moving the idea to a mission statement. Mr. Tecza again cautioned against getting bogged down by details. He said he would create higher level language.

Agriculture: Chairman Quish stressed a need for protecting farms and promoting awareness of the PA 490 farm tax credit. He suggested using Open Space tools to acquire and protect farmland, albeit acknowledging that the city won't run such farm. Removal of some language suggesting that farming uses were not protected by regulations was advised. Chairman Quish suggested promoting local farms and farmers markets; Mr. Sulkis thought that was more the purview of the Economic/Community Development Office. Discussion of folding this topic into the green space section was shared.

Mr. Tecza noted that the group had only addressed about 1/3 of the topics but noted that it was more than might be tackled in one meeting.

Chairman Quish asked to allocate the last 10 minutes of the next meeting to discuss a public engagement schedule. Discussion of the availability of time for future meetings ensued and a date of 2/1 was chosen with a goal of a 1.5-hour meeting, starting at 7:00.

D. Committee member suggestions/comments –None

E. Minutes from 1/11/23 were approved unanimously.

F. Adjournment was at 8:09.