

The Special Meeting of the Planning and Zoning Board came to order at 7:03pm.

A. ROLL CALL

Members Present: J. Castignoli, E. Hirsch, B. Kaligian, J. Mortimer, J. Zahariades, J. Quish

Not Present: N. Austin, J. Kader, C.S. Moore

Staff: D. Sulkis, City Planner; S. LaFond, Rec. Sec'y

B. TOPIC: A Public Hearing to provide the opportunity for the public to comment on the draft 2032 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).

Chairman Quish spoke. We are in attendance to review the draft of the 2023 POCD, which is reviewed every 10 years. The Board has been working on this via subcommittee for a couple of years; we have engaged a third-party consultant with land use and city plan expertise. He advised attendees how they could indicate their desire to speak.

Mr. Sulkis spoke. The purpose of the Special Meeting is to gather public comment on this draft tonight, and again next Wednesday. This is a freshening and update of the City's current POCD. The City is required to perform this update every 10 years. Most sections in the POCD are dictated by State statute. The Board is looking forward to hearing everyone's comments and suggestions.

Adam Tecza, Consultant, FHI Studio, spoke. He thanked everyone for attending. He explained the POCD is divided into sections largely mandated by State statute. Each section is organized with background information and a series of recommendations at the end. One reason the document is organized this way is the previous POCD recommendations were peppered into the narrative of the text which made them difficult to find.

Chairman Quish requested comments from the Board; hearing none, he then opened the floor to public comment.

Richard Platt, 132 Platt Lane, spoke. He questioned the MCDD zone, which encompasses much of the north side of West Main Street from First Church to High Street. He referred to the proposed apartment and office complex at 67 Prospect Street - the Peter Prudden property - and recalled some Board members stated they voted in favor reluctantly because the property was zoned MCDD. He is requesting that area be removed from the MCDD. He is concerned about the lack of movement to restore the existing historic house at 67 Prospect Street. Asked for protection for historic areas.

Emmeline Harrigan, 107 Oronoque Road, spoke. She said the reformat makes it easier to find goals and policies. She addressed Zone CDD-3 and notes it still does not allow for residential use. As a corridor which has evolved over time, she stated it should reintroduce residential use, due to apartments adjacent to the zone and proximity to train station. She believes the Sea Level Rise section should include language noting specific resiliency planning efforts and project funding opportunities, including acquisition where available. **Ms. Harrigan** is Assistant Planning Director for the City of Fairfield and noted that Fairfield is realizing there is not enough room to implement resiliency projects easily. She stated both Milford wastewater treatment facilities are not yet completely protected. She strongly suggests we add language for any funding opportunities available for that project. She stated these projects tend to be favorable for funding sources. She said that, given the recent increase in pedestrian fatalities, the POCD language should very strongly indicate the

necessity of working with State DOT on future planning studies to find ways to introduce better multimodal and pedestrian crossings in

the future as well as room for bicycle infrastructure. She found the crash data map is startling but more specifically our state roads have been ignored in terms of providing required safety improvements. Within the Multi Family section, she suggests an inclusionary requirement based on income for private developers. She noted developers remain profitable and even a 10 percent inclusionary requirement for projects over 10 units provides necessary affordable housing. She believes the map on page 8 showing greenways should be expanded.

Chairman Quish advised **Ms. Harrigan** her initial comment time had expired, and asked if she would put her comments in writing. **Mr. Sulkis** advised once all other speakers were heard, she could speak again if she would like.

Eric Johnson, 40 Benson Street, spoke. He has been a Commissioner on the Milford Historic Preservation Commission since 2016. He seconded **Mr. Platt's** comments on the MCDD. He pointed out language in the POCD, "...to ensure better contextual compatibility of new construction with existing structures" (page 37) and hopes the Board keeps that in mind. He pointed out Milford has taken several steps to add ordinances referencing historic preservation. He would like those City ordinances added to the POCD.

Michelle Kramer, 104 W. River Street, spoke. She is the current President of Milford Preservation Trust, and Vice Chair of Milford Preservation Commission. She would like to see much more robust and specific language regarding historic preservation, including naming each Commission. She said the commissions are the first line of defense. Most commissions are notified of considered demolitions. The demolition delay is mentioned but the historic ordinance is not. She referenced design standards are the MCDD design standards; is there inclusion of the Secretary of Interior standard? If not, can that be linked?

Bill Silver, 55 Governors Avenue, spoke. He is Chair of the Milford Historic Preservation Commission and an architect. He agrees with previous suggestions regarding historic preservation. He said he has worked with many POCDs throughout the state and almost all name their historic commissions in the Historic Preservation section; he asks that Milford do the same as they are here to serve the citizens. His commission has found that infill has represented the greatest threat to the historic character of our neighborhoods. Preservation is not only the listed historic properties, but also those properties adjacent to them. He referenced page 37 of the Plan, under Goals, and asked that we add language that guides and manages infill of properties in or around historic districts and properties. He stated the goal is to protect neighborhoods, not just individual registered properties. He feels some properties in the upper duck pond area are at risk of infill that could be uncontrolled. Regarding Traffic, he said that while it is part of the Police Department's responsibility, he would like our POCD to encourage strategic installation of passive speed controls throughout the City. Milford has very few passive speed controls that are prevalent in other parts of the region.

Etan Hirsch had a question for **Mr. Sulkis**. Asked for definition of infill and passive speed controls. **Mr. Sulkis** explained passive speed controls are physical means to bring down the speed of vehicles, such as speed bumps, roundabouts or restriping to narrow the width of a road. Infill is typically where something in a developed neighborhood is taken down and something new is put in its place, or something is developed on an extra building lot. **Mr. Hirsch** asked how infill affects historic development. **Mr. Sulkis** said the concern is that a new building could be constructed that is not of the same proportions or character as the buildings

around it. He questioned if there is a way to develop a standard to make infill more harmonious with its surroundings. He used some of the waterfront homes as an example. There is now a mix of colonial and modern style, and one could argue the modern home is not a sympathetic infill.

John Kranz, 15 West Main Street, spoke. His home is the former parsonage of First Church. He is a member of the Milford Historic Preservation Commission. He echoed previous comments. He said one important thing regarding historic preservation is to include scale and define what that means. He has seen at times, new developments may save one historic property, then dwarf it by large scale development directly adjacent to it. He said protecting history and character in the downtown area and historic districts could benefit from that.

Joseph Simoncek, 61 Governors Ave, thanked everyone for their work. He commented on infill. He stated sometimes, infill tears down an old house and replaces it with 6 living units in its place. He believes that is an infill which is not a 1:1 replacement but expanding from a single neighbor to a big apartment building. He said suddenly a side yard now has 6 or 7 apartments in it. He echoed the need for more language in the POCD about Historic Districts. He stated the Industrial area drives good tax income and good jobs; are there things that could be added to the report that would encourage industrial development? He believes there has been encroachment into industrial areas by dense housing, and subsequent complaints from those residents regarding noise or other issues from the industrial businesses. He recommends guidance on how to encourage industrial installations. He said that regarding sustainability, we have done good work planting trees, but we need a very large effort to increase our tree planting to maintain the character of the City. He stated the City has had a large die-off of trees and the City can jump start planting new trees in those areas to enhance beauty. He referenced POCD Page 72 which talks about residential areas, which states "every effort should be made to preserve the prescribed density of the underlying zone and promote and preserve the commonly found single-family home..." yet the City just passed an ordinance that every single-family home can have an accessory apartment. He believes that is a conflict.

Donna Dutko, 236 Buckingham Ave, spoke. She has been following the development of the POCD. She has emailed comments to **Mr. Sulkis**. She sees CDD-4 as a good opportunity to move the MCDD. She stated New Haven Avenue between Gulf Street and Buckingham Avenue is residential; the area includes the natatorium and is 15 minutes to downtown. She further said the area has a lot of waterways and opportunities for walking trails. She stated the small neighborhoods off New Haven Avenue which abut Gulf Pond would be complemented by more residential development along the waterways there. She agrees with Mr. Quish's suggestion that the MCDD be extended down New Haven Avenue toward Pond Point.

Cheryl Cappiali, 234 Grinnell Street, spoke. She is the Conservation Commission Chair. She feels there is not enough emphasis on conservation in the document. Schools need some access to gardens in their areas or at least an introduction to nature. She said this is currently forgotten in the education program. She believes the City should include teachers and students in outreach. She indicated her commission would like to participate in more City planning activities.

Paige Miglio, 9 Highwood Road, spoke. She is the Director of the Arts Council downtown. She backs up what **Ms. Cappiali** said about open space and gardens. She feels more densely populated areas along the shoreline would appreciate open space for local community gardens and more livable open space. She said the North Street area, where the current community garden is located, already has large properties which "don't need community gardens." She expanded on **Ms. Harrigan's** comments regarding the Traffic and Accidents section,

saying she works downtown and sees the rise in population and new buildings and TOD developments affecting the traffic patterns immensely. She sees speeding has been a huge issue and suggested raised crosswalks to make areas for pedestrian traffic more visible.

Mr. Platt spoke again to clarify earlier comments. He said some very historic areas are part of the MCDD and should be taken out of the district. He recalls 20 years ago, his commission began asking for their removal, but no action occurred. He believes First Church, Plymouth Building, Lauralton Hall, and 67 Prospect Street – home of Peter Prudden and where early settlers were buried without permanent landmarks – should be excluded from the district.

Bill Silver spoke again regarding passive traffic controls; he clarified islands and vehicle traffic lane narrowing was what he was picturing, but not speed bumps. He said speed humps are also a goal.

Cheryl Cappiali spoke again. She said the swimming pool at 67 Prospect Street is now a mosquito breeding ground that needs to be addressed. She noted there are no fences around the pool for safety. **Mr. Sulkis** asked her to report the pool issues to the Health Department who are equipped to deal with blight.

Emmeline Harrigan spoke again. She supports the additional housing comment within the plan that talks about re-reviewing housing at the CT Post Mall. She noted larger retail properties are struggling and need to diversify. She stated the City needs to make sure the property has long-term viability as it is one of the City's largest taxpayers. She is aware the need for diversification of large retail properties has been an issue with malls across the state. She said regarding traffic, the Orange Avenue/North Street double intersection has been problematic, and she would like to see a roundabout. She will send other comments to **Mr. Sulkis**.

Donna Dutko spoke again. She echoed **Ms. Harrigan's** recommendations for roundabouts, as they buffer the massiveness of the state highways going through the area. She added that decorative stones, gardens, etc. create a focal center for that road. She agrees the CT Post Mall should be considered for diversification with housing; they are one of our biggest taxpayers and we want to protect our tax base.

Mr. Sulkis asked for additional comment; hearing none, **Chairman Quish** reminded the public another special meeting will occur a week from tonight (May 24). He would like to try additional outreach to other stakeholders to be sure we reach groups who may have an interest. He said the Board will compile public suggestions and review them in committee; those found to have merit will be brought to our consultant for editing and a final draft. He said the draft document, once edited, will be available for viewing online. He asked that additional suggestions be sent via email to **Mr. Sulkis**.

Michelle Kramer spoke again, asking if we could include the two local historic commissions in our outreach. She is a member of the First Local Historic District but was not clear if South of the Green had been made aware.

Mr. Quish is hopeful word will spread organically throughout the community to help us reach as many people as possible for input.

Mr. Sulkis reminds all attendees that the City website is the best source for meeting information regarding the POCD. He noted a link to the draft of the 2023 POCD is on the opening page of the City website. He added that newspaper articles and public hearing notices have been published. He believes there is ample opportunity to find the information.

PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD MINUTES FOR SPECIAL MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY, 17 MAY 2023, 7:00PM via Zoom

Mr. Tecza thanked everyone and felt the comments show a great understanding of Milford and the difficult task of putting together the POCD.

The meeting closed at 7:59pm. Motion to adjourn by **Mr. Sulkis**; second by **Mr. Mortimer**.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.