

PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD MINUTES FOR SPECIAL MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY, 24 MAY 2023, 7:00PM via Zoom

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

A. ROLL CALL

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

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

Consultant: A. Tecza

Staff: D. Sulkis, City Planner; M. Greene, 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) Part 2.

Chairman Quish opened with an invitation for any remarks from attending board members. **Mr. Hirsch** said he would reserve comment but welcomed new public input. **Chairman Quish** then invited Mr. Tecza to speak, followed by public comment. **Adam Tecza**, Consultant, FHI Studio, thanked the attendees, saying he is a planner/urban developer who assembled the POCD draft and that he welcomed comments as the POCD is finalized.

Robbie Silver, 55 Governors Avenue, said she would like to see the city provide more welcoming methods like signage. She also suggested public composting and recycling receptacles in addition to more public trash cans. She said Milford is walkable but was concerned by reports of pedestrians and cyclists getting hit by traffic. She suggested exploring technology to avoid such incidents. She said she supports affordable housing that is appropriate in size and scale, noting that many current apartments under development are rented at market rate and are not affordable.

Michele Kramer, 104 W. River Street, said she reviewed Historic Preservation ordinance, section 18-224, which discusses the advisory responsibilities of the commission, one of which is participating in drafting the POCD, as well as advising and assisting other city boards, commissions, and staff. She noted her long involvement in historic preservation and said she had observed various outcomes of projects. She asked whether and if, when a development application is made, historic review could be done earlier in the process. She said that now notifications to boards and commissions involved in historic preservation are typically seen as advisories of demolition. She said the current order places historic review after several other agencies.

Rachel Merva, 90 Dart Hill Road, said she approved of revisiting multi-family restrictions and review of the Post mall. She said she was concerned about restricting affordable housing to commercial corridor districts and asked about the limited number of such districts to consider zoning changes—she was aware of two and wondered why none were targeted to the New Haven Avenue corridor. She wondered if the POCD had incorporated findings from an ARPA review and Economic Development study of public facilities and infrastructure for repurposing in long range planning. She said she was aware of deliberations for repurposing school buildings and wondered if the Board of Education's long-range land use plan could be coordinated with the POCD. She listed statistics on housing shortages and related waiting lists, noting that there is no mention of public housing in the document. She said it was important to specify the number of affordable housing units that are needed. She said she found no vision about real estate owned by the city. She thanked the board for adding more community gardens.

Carolyn Alling, 29 Rivercliff Drive, said she is a Conservation commissioner and that she approves of community gardens in high-density areas, noting that Edgemont Park is not feasible due to salt-water areas. She said she favors Open Space expansion and appreciated the explanation of how Open Space acquisition is funded. She emphasized the importance of having funds available when the opportunity arises for open-space land purchases. She wanted to see more progress on the Beaver Brook Trail boardwalk reconstruction. She stressed that it is important to educate property owners on their responsibilities in preventing future fires. She said she favors housing available to all income levels.

PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD MINUTES FOR SPECIAL MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY, 24 MAY 2023, 7:00PM via Zoom

Rachel Merva, 90 Dart Hill Road, asked if written comments can still be submitted; **Mr. Sulkis** said they are still being accepted for another day due to the need to synthesize them into the document soon, along with comments from the previous meeting.

Cheryl Cappiali, 234 Grinnell Street, said she is on the Conservation Commission. She expressed appreciation for the effort in creating the document and for including public participation in the process. She said she agreed with earlier opportunities for the various historical commissions to comment on upcoming development and would like to have the Conservation Commission included in that practice as well.

Chairman Quish asked for more comments. Seeing none, he asked Mr. Sulkis to extend the period of time for accepting written comments. **Mr. Hirsch** observed that another commenter wished to be heard.

Kara Flannery, 41 North Street, said she was detained and apologized for being late to the meeting. She said she reviewed the minutes from the last public forum and was impressed by the Historic Preservation Commission's comments. She urged the Planning and Zoning Office to request specific language from the historic commissions as they represent a resource to preserve Milford's character. She expressed concern that some of the city's most historic resources are in the MCDD zone and wants to see specific guidelines for historic properties if they are converted to offices or other uses. She said she didn't see that in the document.

Richard Platt, 132 Platt Lane, added that historic properties include more than structures for preservation, noting the proximity of Milford's settlers' burial ground to a recent development proposal.

Wendy Simbardi, 200 Red Root Lane, advised that Connecticut's Open Space acquisition strategy has a goal of 21% land preservation, and that she wants to see Milford's progress toward meeting that goal.

No additional commenters asked to be heard. **Chairman Quish** thanked all participants and asked Mr. Sulkis to review the timeline.

Mr. Sulkis displayed the schedule, saying the goal was to submit the updated draft, with comments incorporated, at the regular board meeting on 6/6 or 6/20. The Planning-and-Zoning-Board-approved draft is then sent out for Aldermanic and South Central Regional Council of Governments review. The Alders get 65 days to adopt, approve, reject, or ignore the draft as does SCRCOG with the latter also checking for conformity with the Connecticut state plan of conservation and development. After this process, the document is posted to the city's web site, after which, a public hearing on adoption of the final document is scheduled. Mr. Sulkis suggested a cutoff for submission of comments by end-of-business on Friday, 6/9, so the document can be delivered to the Planning and Zoning Board for 6/20.

At this time, **Mr. Sulkis** also noted a late email from a resident of Governor's Avenue who was concerned about traffic, speeding, and wrong way driving. He said he would forward it to the Milford Police Department.

A motion to approve the 5/17 minutes was made by **Mr. Mortimer** and seconded by **Mr. Castignoli**. The motion carried unanimously except for an abstention from **Mr. Satti** who was not present at that meeting.

Mr. Tecza thanked the group again for their comments and said he looks forward to incorporating them.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:32pm.