

PLANNING & ZONING PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES FOR MEETING 16 JULY 2019 AT
6:30 P.M.

AT BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING ROOM, PARSONS CENTER BUILDING, 70 WEST RIVER STREET

- A. Call to Order was at 6:37pm.
- B. Roll Call: D. Sulkis, S. LaFond, J. Quish, S. Marlow, P. Kearney, J. Kader, J. Griffith
- C. Review update of Action Plan Items from POCD 2012

Chairman Quish requested another hard copy of the POCD from **Mr. Sulkis**.

Chairman Quish asked each member to join him in review of the action plan with numbered items, adding, deleting and amending as needed. Once that is completed, he would like input on each member's opinion of the existing plan. At a future point, he will invite **Steve Johnson, Paul Piscitelli** and other stakeholders to discuss items pertinent to their interests. We can then decide for which items we may wish to request public input.

1. **Mr. Quish** asked **Mr. Sulkis** to add to the narrative, including expanding upon "desirable" as meaning something that meets the definition of open space as defined in our regulations. **Mr. Sulkis** read from Page 23 of the POCD to describe passive open space and active recreation spaces, and maintained open spaces such as the City green. **Ms. Kearney** said she would like to be able to see online once a month to see if the City has purchased any property and what the intended use will be, with updates each time a purchase is made. **Mr. Sulkis** indicated the City only purchases land if they have a use for it and, sometimes, a grant for it. **Ms. Kearney** used the example of the Board of Aldermen's purchase of a property on North Street. **Mr. Sulkis** indicated the Board of Aldermen meeting records would provide this type of information. **Mr. Quish** agreed there should be a place for this information on the City website and recommended **Ms. Kearney** speak to her alderperson about it, because looking at the Board of Aldermen schedule is not very convenient. **Mr. Kader** questioned whether we are actively seeking space; **Mr. Sulkis** indicated it is up to the Board of Aldermen as to whether or not to purchase properties. He said we can write the road map but it is up to the Board of Aldermen. The Board of Aldermen used to fund an open space line item. Not sure if they have been doing that recently. **Mr. Quish** said he believes the POCD document is not used as frequently as it could be. He asked if we can change language in the new POCD to make this a stronger piece of narrative for the Board of Aldermen to follow. **Mr. Sulkis** said we could, but cautioned we do not have control over how fully our POCD is followed. He suggested **Mr. Rosen** should be in the meetings where stakeholders are present to be a voice and sounding board for the Mayor. **Mr. Griffith** suggested we can prioritize items such as this. **Mr. Marlow** suggested identifying items of greatest importance and then determine how to add "teeth" to those, and how to get other City agencies to advocate for them. **Mr. Griffith** suggested our goal could be getting the other City agencies to advocate for specific items in the POCD. **Ms. Kearney** suggested addition of properties with historic value as a priority. **Mr. Quish** flagged as something we want to put "teeth" behind, to obtain assistance from the Board of Aldermen. **Mr. Marlow** asked what a "1st ring suburb" meant on page 23 of the POCD. **Mr. Sulkis** said there are different tiers of urban areas. He used a comparison of our size being between a large city and a smaller town such as Bethany, for example.
2. Question regarding what 28-32 represents. **Mr. Sulkis** explained it is just a group of page numbers in the POCD. **Mr. Sulkis** recommends we flesh this out because we need to think more now about coastal resiliency as it is important for the City's future. **Mr. Quish** indicated there are 2 tiers of acquisition; both open space and coastal resilience. He flagged this item to add "teeth" to as well. He suggested we look for input from **Steve Johnson, Paul Piscitelli** and perhaps **Mr. Rosen**.
3. **Mr. Sulkis** explained PA-490 is a State act offering tax relief for not developing agricultural and other land for a 10 year period without renewal. He said Milford only uses the portion of the act having to do with agricultural land, and that expansion to other types of land would be an act of the Board of Aldermen. He said it could be residential land, forests, or whatever this Board identifies which is then pursued by the Board of Aldermen. He also stated the incentive is not to develop land for a ten year period if it meets the criteria and that the Assessor is also involved in the decision making process in regard to how much relief would be provided. **Mr. Griffith** asked **Mr. Sulkis** to get a list of properties which are currently taking, or have previously taken, advantage of this program from the Assessor, so we can be aware of what we have coming up that will be expiring. **Mr. Sulkis** said early sale and development of one of these properties prior to the 10 year expiration would cause a penalty to the property owner. He also said the Board of Aldermen cannot extend the 10 year timeframe. **Mr. Quish** requested that the list **Mr. Sulkis** obtains includes either initiation date or finish date, and that we discuss with stakeholders what we might be able to do to make this opportunity more visible to the public. **Mr. Sulkis** indicated that even with an assessed penalty, the property owners can develop the land at any time during the 10 years if it is lucrative enough for them to do so. He said we could purchase property

from a farmer with a leaseback or similar. **Ms. Kearney** would like us to actively pursue purchase of developable property as open space. **Mr. Quish** would like to make sure we make land owners aware that this is available. **Mr. Quish** requested a copy of PA-490 from **Mr. Sulkis**. **Mr. Sulkis** will get the Board a copy of the pamphlet distributed by the State. **Mr. Marlow** suggested we consider other options we can pursue and checking with other towns to see how they are utilizing this tax relief. **Mr. Sulkis** said the northeastern and northwestern areas of CT where they have minimum 3 or 4 acre zoning make the most use of this. He said to remember you are volunteering to lower your grand list. **Mr. Quish** would like all information requested available at the August 6th meeting so Subcommittee members can review before the next POCD meeting on August 20th.

4. **Mr. Quish** discussed the hiring of **Steve Johnson**. He was hired through a grant, but since that time, Public Works lost their Assistant Public Works Director, so **Mr. Johnson** has been doing a lot of the Assistant Public Works Director work, in addition to his original scope of responsibility. He is now an employee (not on a grant). He is not a full time Open Space manager. **Mr. Quish** would like to know how much time **Mr. Johnson** is allowed to devote to this, and whether he should have an assistant. **Mr. Marlow** said originally it was questioned whether Milford needed a full time Open Space manager. **Mr. Sulkis** advised the subcommittee that the Assistant City Planner position was eliminated in order to fund this position. **Mr. Quish** said we will defer to **Mr. Johnson's** input.
5. **Mr. Quish** asked if anyone needs a hard copy of the information other than via Dropbox. No one requested it. **Ms. Kearney** asked how often this will be updated. **Mr. Sulkis** indicated **Mr. Johnson** said this is a work in progress. **Mr. Quish** requested we ask **Mr. Johnson** what the status is and when any updates would occur.
6. The Solomon property was donated to the City back in the early 2000s and they have been knocking houses down and marking trails. **Mr. Sulkis** said the city acquired this property via a donation. **Mr. Quish** suggested we have more open space acreage and easements we don't know about. **Mr. Griffith** indicated we have been discussing a GIS layer for this purpose. He suggested we need to be able to see the data and that **Mr. Johnson** has been working with the Department of Permitting and Land Use on that for our CRS project. However, there is also land that is not deeded open space but designated conservation easement - housing projects, Great River, etc. **Mr. Quish** wants an inventory and a plan of maintenance. **Ms. Kearney** said we were given a piece of property north of the railroad tracks in north Milford and we don't know what has happened to that property.
7. Discussion as part of #6.
8. Same – we should flesh out and identify these in writing with associated plans.
9. **Mr. Quish** stated some of this has been done but more is needed. **Mr. Sulkis** said the mapping we have now was via a grant. He will ask **Mr. Johnson** if we have a hard or electronic copy available for the Board. **Mr. Quish** said we want to engage the public via social media, websites, and links specifically for this purpose. We want citizens to have easy access via a more robust public communication piece. **Mr. Kader** feels we need someone more aggressive to pursue this. **Mr. Griffith** said we are taking the direction from this committee and then utilizing other city groups to come back to us with the answers. **Mr. Quish** wants to determine whether we need to push for additional resources and manpower based on **Mr. Johnson's** feedback. **Mr. Kader** suggested we need someone to come up with new ideas and present them to us, including media other than Facebook. **Mr. Quish** would like yearly updates on how they are progressing toward the goals we are setting. **Mr. Kader** suggests we have young people volunteering for the social media aspect of this. **Mr. Quish** said **Steve Johnson** has been very good at getting young people to participate in things like beach cleanups, et al. **Mr. Griffith** said the action plan is just a starting point. **Mr. Kader** suggested tying some of these into regulations. **Mr. Sulkis** said we have an open space fund which is paid into by developers who cannot provide us with suitable actual open space, which could be available for City land purchases. **Mr. Marlow** said we need to put in what we would like to see, and then get other boards and the public involved. Funding comes from sources that may be political in nature, i.e. the Board of Aldermen.

Mr. Quish concluded the meeting here, to be resumed at item 10 during the next POCD meeting. He said we will get through this list in its entirety to generate enough questions and information to make **Mr. Johnson's** time productive when we invite him.

Mr. Quish made the motion to adjourn. **Mr. Marlow** seconded.

G. **Adjournment** was at 7:22 pm.

H. **Next Meeting – August 20, 2019**

Attest: S.R. LaFond, Administrative Assistant