

MINUTES

PLANNING & ZONING PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DESIGN SUBCOMMITTEE, WEDNESDAY, 15 MARCH 2023, 7:00 P.M.

- A. Call to Order was at 7:01 pm.
- B. Attendees: J. Kader, J. Mortimer, J. Quish / STAFF: D. Sulkis, M. Greene

Chairman Quish opened the meeting and confirmed that consultant would not attend.

C. Topic for discussion:

POCD draft document review and discussion for consultant

Chairman Quish said he made edits to the document but thought he hadn't saved them properly. Mr. Sulkis displayed the draft document.

Cover: Mr. Mortimer thought the cover photos could be improved.

Introductory pages: Mr. Quish asked that both current and former subcommittee members be listed.

Welcome section: No change.

Open Space/Recreation: The group thought the section photo was great. Passive recreation table was examined. Mr. Sulkis said it was supplied by the OS agent with types of parks noted. Mr. Quish asked if the OS map could allow online readers to zoom in and see more detail. He also thought the connection between the Classification Table and the map could be made more obvious. He made a comment that he repeated throughout most of the other tables that the color key has shades that are difficult to tell apart. Mr. Mortimer was advised by Mr. Sulkis that certain state land was deed-restricted to prevent people from disturbing natural areas that require protection, such as nesting areas. Also noted was a federal fishery research station and the Audubon Coastal Bird Sanctuary. He noted an update that was missed—that the city now owns a parcel on Seeman's Lane, rather than the federal government.

Natural Diversity Map: Mr. Sulkis noted that this map comes directly from state, Mr. Quish asked for a sentence to explain what it is and commented that the graphics are hard to distinguish; they could use more contrast.

Greenways Greenbelts: No change, except possible support for cross-references between related Figures. The online document could contain "jump to" links that are interrelated.

City Recreational Facilities: Request to support zooming in for detail, better contrast in color keys—perhaps different shapes and sizes of the key. Mr. Sulkis reminded the group that a paper version is also required.

Eisenhower Park: Mr. Sulkis recalled a study done for it before 2010, which was never fully implemented, but subsequently, the city took parks of plan and implemented those.

Beach Access Points: Mr. Quish again requested a "zoom-in" feature and said that if the viewer can't zoom to better see where these access points are, the map should be enlarged over multiple pages, perhaps featuring 2 maps, one for parks, one for public beaches. He suggested using another shape for access points or several maps to provide more detail about the coastline. Mr. Sulkis reminded the group that this is a planning document, not an implementation map. Mr. Quish and Mr. Mortimer liked the idea of any general wayfinding the document could provide.

Public Private Partnership: Mr. Quish noted several displeased comments from the absent Mr. Castignoli on this topic.

Coastal Resources: Both Mr. Quish and Mr. Mortimer suggested moving the photo from this section to the cover. Mr. Sulkis suggested also having one that shows downtown. The group found compelling several photos depicting Storms Irene and Sandy photos but thought the flood metrics weren't as informative as they could be. Mr. Sulkis explained that to eliminate confusion over the possible frequency of serious storms, older language regarding "100-year flood zones" is being dropped in favor of percentages of probability. Mr. Sulkis and Mr. Mortimer discussed of how the POCD and regulations are used by applicants for projects. Mr. Sulkis was going to see if a regional resilience plan was formally adopted reference in the POCD to creating one could be eliminated. Discussion ensued about providing explanations of more technical language for both online and hardcopy versions, including "jump to" links for definitions, and footnotes or endnotes. A note on removal of Flagship Marina was entered; it doesn't exist. Notes from Mr. Castignoli said he wishes to remove section. Mr. Quish thought Mr. Castignoli may have objected to two notes that refer to supporting public funding of private resiliency. Mr. Sulkis said he thought the comments were implementation-oriented and probably did not belong in the document. Mr. Quish thought the planning function of the board can support visioning and not every implementation feature must be fed to the Regulation Subcommittee, but he respected that Mr. Castignoli doesn't want the city to pay for private improvement.

Farm/Agriculture Resources: There was agreement that a cross reference would help when reference is made to Figures shown on other pages of the document. Mr. Quish noted inconsistencies with some map conventions. He suggested outlining the lots where farms exist, or only if they're too small to map, using dots. Mr. Kader suggested just resizing the dots to be consistent. Mr. Quish again asked for more contrast with color coding keys. Mr. Sulkis noted that this map is from a state soil map. He suggested deleting language about additional community gardens because the recreation department and public works are focused on Eisenhower gardens, with no resources to spare for other areas. The group reinstated the community garden sentence with a condition that new

gardens are supported by neighborhood gardeners. Another map displayed smaller existing community gardens. Mr. Quish against requested “zoomable” or multiple maps to see where the gardens are. The group noted that the key colors don’t match colors on the map. Several notes about specific gardens were removed but then reinstated. Mr. Kader pointed out some ambiguity in the language, producing agreement to change the word “prioritize” to “explore” and check on the status of space on Melba Street. Mr. Mortimer said the residents, not the city should initiate new gardens. Mr. Quish asked to revise the goal to include language to “promote and expand the creation of community gardens.” Mr. Quish suggested that if the city owns some abandoned or blighted property, the city should consider giving access to gardeners. Mr. Kader wondered if the city would then have to ensure that any garden land is not contaminated. Mr. Sulkis thought this was crossing into implementation issues, which Mr. Kader allowed. Mr. Quish stressed that the overall goal is to use any excess land to promote community gardens and combining into one statement.

Housing: In the demographic data section, some copy edits for figure numbering were identified. Mr. Mortimer said he thought this information was extremely important for planning purposes. Mr. Sulkis noted that this section was new and well written, targeting the city’s need for housing and where it could go. A strong possibility was identified as underutilized office parks as potential development areas (Bic Drive/Sub Way, Wheelers Farms Road near the parkway), which are zones that don’t currently allow housing. Mr. Quish said he supports this direction. Mr. Kader asked about repurposing warehouses on Bridgeport Avenue west of the current MCDD zone. Mr. Sulkis said that an elegant solution might be to simply extend the MCDD along that area. Mr. Quish supported expanding the now-thriving nightlife of downtown along that corridor and liked the idea that the board would not have to rewrite CDD3 language. It was also seen as an opportunity for eventual 8-30g expansion. Soil contamination issues were raised. Mr. Quish referred to a recent training session where he was pleased to learn about new state guidance that allows municipalities to actively encourage sustainable measures with tradeoffs such as height setback relief.

Corridor Zone Edits: Mr. Sulkis shared portions that were eliminated because goals had been accomplished based on updates from the Assessor’s office. Mr. Quish again asked for better color coding and suppressing non-zoned parcel definitions and to make the map linkable to Google® Maps and/or “zoomable.”

Transit: Mr. Sulkis commented that most of the rest of the document is technical with input from outside sources, such as transit ridership. Mr. Mortimer and Mr. Sulkis discussed use of public transit and other commuter issues, including conversion to environmentally sustainable fueling and the impact of the Covid pandemic on ridership. Mr. Kader asked about encouraging mass transit. Mr. Sulkis made a distinction between the effectiveness of mass transit when residential areas have density (good for mass transit) versus suburban, spread-out residential areas. He moved to the Transit-Oriented Development section of the document. The group discussed newer trends in scheduling rides versus set maps and work commutation using public transit.

Safety: new section that includes an incident map. The group had commented on increased pedestrian incidents in Milford Center. It was noted that language about EV chargers should be added based on the state statute.

Edits to remove obsolete language were noted.

Schools: There was a request to add color coding to identify types of schools.

Walnut Beach Arts District: Mr. Quish noted that while this area has experienced strong development since the last POCD document, sections of Naugatuck Avenue to the north of Walnut Beach are still problematic.

Sustainability: The group supported the concept of smart growth policies and clean energy. They felt the desirability of Milford as a place to live can be leveraged to build in sustainability using a carrot-and-stick approach. Mr. Quish suggested something he learned about at the training session he attended—a floating overlay zone might be created that would incentivize a developer, using something like higher density as the carrot.

Land Use: Mr. Sulkis shared a map with all land use types throughout the city. Discussion ensued about creation of residential uses, including considering a live/work/shop use at the mall. The group wanted Mr. Sulkis to add a paragraph to address what they would like to see in that zone aiming at highest and best uses.

Zoning: Mr. Quish said he would like to encourage the use of consulting for a professional revamping of the zoning regulations. He would like to see cleanup of the language and the addition of goals reflecting updated, modern regulations. Mr. Sulkis agreed, noting a need the funding. Support was expressed for a “jumpstart” by expanding MCDD regulations into CDD3 and perhaps into CDD4 to Pond Point Avenue as well. Mr. Sulkis emphasized the need to envision housing remedies that are consistent with the state’s plan.

Committee member suggestions/comments: None.

D. Approval of Minutes: Minutes from 3/1/23 were approved unanimously.

F. Adjournment was at 8:54 pm.