

**MINUTES OF THE PLANNING AND ZONING POCD SUBCOMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING HELD
Wednesday, March 10, 2021 AT 6:30 P.M.**

Call to Order was at 6:30 pm.

Roll Call: J. Castignoli, J. Kader, P. Kearney, J. Mortimer, J. Quish (chair), D. Sulkis, M. Greene

Others in attendance: M. Kramer, A. Maher, R. Pratt

Continuing discussion of Corridor Design Districts including the MCDD (Milford Center Design District)

Mr. Sulkis shared the new GIS zoning-use mapping tool again. The group reviewed the color coding to gain an impression of what areas denoted what kind of activity. **Ms. Kearney** asked for background on the previous POCD's Corridor Design District action plan, which **Mr. Sulkis** provided, saying that a proposed Cherry Street corridor study had been incorporated into the previous plan. He summarized the design guidelines and discussed the development of the old cinema multiplex lot into the current ShopRite/Total Wines/Starbucks shopping center. Discussion turned to the MCDD, with its restriction on 1st floor residential use of mixed-use buildings, with **Mr. Sulkis** commenting that historically this is a classic urban paradigm with retail on street and apartments above. The group scrolled through the Zoning Regulations list of Permitted Uses in MCDD. **Mr. Sulkis** said that the listed uses may be somewhat behind the times, with the example of popular new uses like a brewery being linked to the SBC restaurant. Discussion turned to the issue of parking. **Mr. Sulkis** said that many other towns are moving away from relying as heavily on parking calculations to restrict a proposed downtown project. He said Milford probably "overparks" new buildings. **Mr. Quish** said downtown is much more than a zoning district; that it is iconic to everyone in the city—more like a brand. **Mr. Sulkis** asked the group to consider what criteria might be used to preserve the character of downtown, such as minimum lot size. He referred to Appendix B that talks about downtown design. He noted that the regulations cannot dictate a building style—that an architectural review board would be required to evaluate this. **Mr. Quish** posited that creating such a board would require aldermanic action. **Ms. Kramer** asked for permission to comment and the chair granted it. She said she understood that dense development is desirable for the growth of downtown businesses, but what happens, she asked, when that goal clashes with preserving Milford's historic core. **Mr. Quish** said there is arbitration to deal with that tension both in the POCD and Regulations Subcommittees. Discussion ensued on overlay zones with a physical boundary; **Mr. Sulkis** reminded the group that zoning must be uniformly applied to be legal. He advised that a line can be drawn around areas such as Prospect Street to create a Prospect Street Overlay Zone. **Ms. Kramer** said the planned historical survey update could help identify potential zones. **Mr. Sulkis** said he is working with the GIS analyst on getting more zoning layers and potentially a historic layer to the new mapping tool. **Mr. Quish** asked that the RFP for a POCD consultant be sent to POCD subcommittee members. Discussion turned to downtown parking. **Mr. Sulkis** said the mapping tool shows parking areas and asked if this amount of parking represents the best use of land for downtown. He used the example of the Milford Bank with its several parking lots and pointed out that from a historical standpoint, vacant downtown lots are a new phenomenon—there was a time when structures were on all these lots. **Ms. Kearney** asked if a developer could build apartments over such parking lots and **Mr. Sulkis** replied that they probably could be. He noted that planning forecasting suggests that in 20 years, people may call electric cars to pick them up and deliver them to destinations—that car ownership and parking lots as we now know them may be obsolete. **Mr. Quish** asked if other areas in the MCDD should be protected by an overlay; it was observed that a majority of River Park Historical area is zoned residential now. **Ms. Maher** was allowed by the chair to comment and reminded the group that River Park includes quite a lot of commercial development as well. **Ms. Kearney** revisited her idea about post-COVID retail moving past big box stores; she and **Mr. Sulkis** reviewed the idea that the CDD1 and CDD3 zones could be modified to add residential uses. There was discussion of the mixed use of very big tracts of developed land like the mall and a suggestion that the SCD zone be included on the next agenda. The group expressed a desire to invite representatives of the mall management. **Ms. Greene** recalled that part of the 2020 mall presentation included a very comprehensive demographic study of Milford, the Milford mall, and malls in general; she suggested revisiting it. **Mr. Castignoli** suggested consulting the mayor for his take. **Mr. Kader** said he would very much want to see an environmentally viable use for that parcel and acknowledged that everyone may have a different vision for it. **Ms. Kearney** recalled that one reason the mall management's 2020 proposal was rejected was that it did not include a comprehensive plan for the entire mall. **Mr. Sulkis** was asked to contact the City Attorney's Office to see if having mall representatives participate in the subcommittee meeting would pose any problems regarding future plans, applications or discussions. **Mr. Kader** expressed regret that malls, though appealing to him as a youngster, had wreaked havoc with the viability of downtown businesses over the past several decades. As **Mr. Platt** was in attendance, he was asked about the original use of the land now occupied by the mall. Mr. Platt said the area had been farmland and he remembered picking produce there as a youngster for 30 cents per hour. He said people shopped for groceries near the green's end and the shops such as Harrison's Hardware were busy and vibrant.

Chairman Quish noted that discussion had consumed an hour and another meeting was scheduled in 2 weeks.

Approval of Minutes of 2-24-21 was unanimous.

Member suggestions: None.

Adjournment was at 7:34.