



PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

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**PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT (POCD)
STEERING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES 4:30 P.M – 6:30 P.M.
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2018
CANOE BROOK SENIOR CENTER
11 Cherry Hill Rd., Branford CT.
*DRAFT***

Staff Present: H. Smith- Town Planner, R. Stoecker Assistant Town Planner

Plan of Conservation & Development Steering Committee Members Present:
C. Lezon, P. Basserman, P. Carloni, B. Horne, G. Renz, J. Lust, J. Chadwick, M. Palluzzi, T. Elton, B. Ricoszi, V. Hanchuruck.

Glenn Chalder – (Planimetrics, 70 Country Road, Simsbury, CT) Town Consultant for the Plan of Conservation & Development was the main speaker.

1. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 4:40 P.M . Chairman P. Carloni asked everyone to speak into the microphones as the meeting was being taped for airing with BCTV. Steering Committee members and staff introduced themselves to those in attendance
2. Overview of Meeting - Glenn Chalder welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the Conservation discussion would concentrate on the five (5) booklets prepared and posted on the town website including the following:

#4A – Natural Resources, #4B – Open Space, #4C- Coastal Issues, #4D - Community Character, #4E – Sustainability – Resiliency.

The intent of the review of the booklets is to review and identify current strategies and discuss the best reasonable approach to the topic listed in booklets and take questions from the Steering Committee.

3. Listening Session To Hear From Invited Participants Glenn reviewed the input presented from conservation related commissions/contacts via e-mail or summary comments. Glenn sought spokesmen in attendance from the various invited conservation related contacts to summarize

their comments. The e-mails and summary comments that were received were included in the Steering Committee Agenda packets.

Branford Land Trust (BLT) – A spokesman was not present to read the prepared report. Glenn summarized the report that identified the mission, past success, protection of key environmental areas, trail system linkage, tabulation of properties and sea level rise considerations. Glenn noted the two specific suggestions for the POCD update. The suggestions are the following:

- 1) **To improve stormwater quality to protect wetlands, marshes and other undeveloped open space that provide defenses against flooding**. The summary letter noted the importance of continuing to guard against water quality degradation through education of the public about the harm of the use pesticides, fertilizers and deicing agents. The Land Trust continues to seek collaboration with the town to reduce amounts of pollutants that wash into Branford's wetlands and ultimately flow into Long Island Sound.
- 2) **Correct and update Open Space Map**. The BLT seeks to improve the management of the open space database and correctly identify dedicated open space parcels. BLT suggests annual updating of the GIS Open Space in the POCD revision.

Community Forest Commission – Shirley McCarthy presented the written summary from the Community Forest Commission which highlighted importance of tree preservation that provides a broad range of invaluable benefits to individuals and the environment. The CFC requests the following to be included in the POCD update:

- 1) The CFC be notified of new or revised site developments, both residential and commercial so as to be included in the planning phases of sites to insure
 - A) Adequate plantings – native where possible.
 - B) Preservation of mature, valuable trees.
- 2) The CFC will develop a comprehensive tree planting program to be adopted by the town, so as to replace the canopy that has been lost through natural causes and utility pruning and elimination.
- 3) Boards/commissions serving Branford become familiar with the abundant scientific evidence that shows that trees/have profound economic, social, physical and mental health benefits.

Louise LaMontague was introduced who will be the new Chair of the Community Forest Commission. Louise noted that booklet #4D B E & F page 7 were crossed off and would like to see statements put back into the plan to emphasize the proposed more involvement in review process. Promoting tree

Tree Warden - Diana Ross, Town Tree Warden highlighted the one page written summary report which emphasized the importance of tree planting be considered early in the planning process. Trees should not just be treated as architectural enhancements and given enough space to thrive with long term maintenance. Trees are a living part of the built out environment, surrounding natural areas and native ecosystems. Diana noted the summary includes recommendations for planning, development and preservation/conservation.

Inland Wetlands Commission – Diana Ross, Inland Wetland Officer, highlighted the summary report distributed at the meeting. Protection of wetlands be more strong within the regulations and review of the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Conservation Commission – Dan Fitzgerald from the Commission highlighted key issues including the following - Salt marsh conservation to address the expansion as sea level rises, micro grid renewable energy to reduce reliance on the main power grid for the area, and more areas for cartop launch of kayaks and canoes.

Branford Green Committee – David Minicozzi, Chairman of the Green Committee highlighted the key issues including - New issues to be considered in the POCD update, New strategies and recommendations that Should Be Added to the POCD to address Current/Future issues, recommendations in the 2008 POCD that Should be Continued, recommendations in the 2008 POCD that are No Longer Relevant/Should be Removed.

Historical Society – Presented a written statement that had not been received prior to the meeting for review by the Steering Committee.

Parks and Open Space Authority – Judy Miller an Authority member highlighted the mission, roles and responsibilities of the organization. The Authority has the task of preserving and maintaining the open space and park areas not acquisition of property.

Shoreline Greenway Trail – Judy Miller, Chair described a key strategy for the POCD Open Space is to create Greenway linkages. Natural Resources – An emerging issue is to protect Air Quality. The Shoreline Greenway Trail will be addressing these topics at the Infrastructure listening session.

Historical Society – Representative spoke stating that a written summary report had been submitted.

Select Committee on Open Space (SCOSA) – Bill Horne, Chairman highlighted the written comments submitted including updating the 2005 open space plan, interconnectivity of protected open space areas, update the open space plan, introduce more zoning incentives and a list of criteria for evaluating possible open space acquisitions and .

4. **Steering Committee discussion of Briefing Booklets**

Glenn Chalder reviewed the Conservation Booklets with the Steering Committee including #4A – Natural Resources, #4B – Open Space, #4C- Coastal Issues, #4D - Community Character, #4E – Sustainability – Resiliency. Discussion was focused on the following issues:

- Protection of water quantity and inland flooding issues including property rights versus FEMA/NFIP requirements.
- Local Commissions should continue to take leadership roles and be aware of State and Federal jurisdiction.
- Establish a framework for addressing Sea Level Rise along with issues with infrastructure implications. Outlined possible new strategies for the POCD that might include protection of coastal resources; maintaining and enhancing coastal access. The Coastal Resiliency Plan will be added to the POCD update.
- 2005 Open Space Plan mapping needs to be updated before POCD Plan update and annual updates of database/map.
- Removal of suggestion to expand the Design Review Board to outside the established Town Center and Stony Creek Village Districts.
- Discussion of way-finding system so that visitors to Branford can easily find their way around. LED signage with changeable messages was not positively received by the Steering Committee or those in attendance.

The Steering Committee noted that the review approach and presentation was reasonable for the Conservation Element Review and other Listening Sessions.

5. Open Discussion (including public)

Jeff Clark ,Harbor Street– Noted that the minutes from the last Steering Committee meeting were not posted and submitted e-mails were not acknowledged or receipt submitted. It was noted that comments concerning sidewalks on harbor Street were discussed at the last meeting and that comments and summary reports should all be posted on the website

Matt Radulski - President of the Historical Society noted that he is concerned about new homebuyers moving into designated historic structures listed on the town historic residential survey. Homeowners should attempt to blend in with the existing community character of the district rather than attempt to tear down.

Meg Kilgore, Turtle Bay – Brought up concerns of storm drainage with prospects of increasing storm events associated with future sea level rise, pesticide use on lawns creates water quality problems, ordinance to ban plastic bags should be considered, promote more green energy technology (solar and geothermal) for new construction for commercial and municipal buildings. Attempt to incentivize the use of solar or

Lauren Brown, Stony Creek – Noted the landscaping and streetscape condition of West Main Street on Branford Hill in terms of improving Community Character. Recommends the POCD update include strategies and policies to halt the proliferation of unsightly look of commercial corridors. She also noted that the Stony Creek Village District Architectural Review Board has not been in existence long enough and is untested.

Kate Galampos , condominium north part of town– Noted the importance of maintain and increasing the habitat for butterflies and bees including reforestation of areas for milkweed habitat. More education is needed concerning over fertilization of yards and dangers of pesticide components and banning plastic bag use in commercial establishments.

Robin Comey, RTM & Member Short Beach Association – Brought up an equity of services issue along the coastal district due to population differences, property values when creating framework for targeting critical coastal issues.

Jeanie Hughes Noted key issues involving community character especially in term of nassing of municipal buildings in mixed use and residential areas where they appear out of character for the setting.

Heather Wells Sweeny - Noted need for better ways to encourage more pervious surfaces/incentives for the built environment.

The steering committee instructed the consultant and staff to create a better tracking system for submitted comments and e-mails all to be grouped and logged on to the POCD website.

Meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Assistant Planner, Rich Stoecker