



ESSEX PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, October 8, 2015
7:30 p.m.
Essex Town Hall – Meeting Room A

DRAFT MINUTES

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Call to Order and Seating of Members

Chairman Danyliw called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Seated for the hearing were Members Tom Danyliw, Carla Feroni, and Alan Kerr. Seated for Member Ralph Monaco was John Bairos, and seated for Member George Sexton was Bob Laundry. Also in attendance were First Selectman Norman Needleman, Town Planner John Guskowski, and several members of the public.

2. Public Hearing on Essex Plan of Conservation & Development, 2015-2025

Chairman Danyliw opened the hearing with a brief introduction of the draft Plan of Conservation & Development (PoCD), and then asked Planner John Guskowski to present an overview of the process and content of the Plan. John Guskowski reviewed the basis, statutory authority, history, content, and potential implications of the PoCD draft. He discussed the five guiding principles, focus on the development nodes, implementation matrix, and policy maps. At the conclusion of his presentation, Chairman Danyliw opened the floor to public comment.

A member of the public asked about the Plan's recommendations for revitalization of the Village centers, particularly in Essex and Ivoryton. John Guskowski and Chairman Danyliw led a brief discussion of the challenges and focus on encouraging intensification of development in the village centers. Paul Greenberg of Essex Land Trust stated that the Conservation map needed to be updated with new ELT holdings, and also raised a question about a future potential ELT easement acquisition relative to a future subdivision. Chairman Danyliw stated that the Commission would discuss that question at an upcoming meeting. Chet Arnold of ELT discussed the Conservation map and recommended the use of a broader, corridor-based priority approach rather than a parcel-by-

parcel approach. The Commission and the public had a general discussion about the purpose of the Conservation map, which included the basis of an Open Space Tax Abatement policy, and the relative merits of parcel-by-parcel identifications and corridors. There was general agreement that a broad approach would be helpful for potential funding support, but there was a challenge of drawing lines that left properties outside. Jim Denham of ELT suggested that the PoCD should mention the State's goal of 21% preserved land. The Commission had a discussion about conservation targets. Paul Greenberg suggested that the map be allowed to be readily updated.

John Guskowski stated that he would work with the Land Trust and come back with an updated map approach for the next meeting. Carla Feroni stated that she was strongly in favor of including priority conservation corridors. Chairman Danyliw questioned the value of delineating corridors in favor of a broader, more opportunistic approach that would not bind policy or acquisition. The Commission agreed that combining a Tax Abatement policy map with a priority Conservation corridor map could be problematic, and would consider a different approach more focused on textual criteria. Representatives of the ELT, Conservation Commission and First Selectman agreed with a contextual approach versus map.

Jeff Lovelace of the Conservation Commission stated that partnerships between the Town and the Land Trust were critical and useful to land protection in Town. Chet Arnold stated that the sources of the maps, which included PA-490 and the 2000 Open Space Plan, developed in a different economic time, also created confusion. First Selectman Needleman discussed the prior approaches toward encouraging open lands instead of development, which may not be the same focus in a different economic and demographic circumstance. He also emphasized that any open space acquisition or requirement of the Town should be useful and meaningful. John Guskowski stated that he would work to update the map, perhaps combining the conservation and development policy maps, and emphasizing text criteria. Chairman Danyliw noted the letter of commentary on the PoCD from Torrance Downes of RiverCOG, and requested that it be entered into the public record and copies be distributed to the Commissioners.

Motion to close the Public Hearing by Bob Laundy, **seconded** by Carla Feroni. **Motion carried unanimously.**

The Public Hearing was closed at 9:06 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING

1. Call to Order and Seating of Members

Chairman Danyliw called the meeting to order at 9:06 p.m. Seated for the meeting were Members Tom Danyliw, Carla Feroni, and Alan Kerr. Seated for Member Ralph Monaco was John Bairos, and seated for Member George Sexton was Bob Laundy. Also in attendance was Town Planner John Guskowski.

2. Approval of Minutes: September 10, 2015

Motion to approve Minutes of September 10, 2015 Planning Commission meeting by Bob Laundry, seconded by Carla Feroni. Motion carried unanimously, with John Bairos abstaining.

3. New Business

a. Code of Ethics Ordinance

Chairman Danyliw noted the information regarding the new Ethics Ordinance in the meeting materials and stated that each Commission was required to sign the statement. As Chairman, he was also required to have Commissioners fill out an agreement which he did not have with him, but would complete at the November meeting.

4. Old Business

a. Subdivision Application: Ed Cook, Hunter's Trail Extension, Map 76, Lot 011

John Guszkowski stated that the applicant's engineer, Bob Doane, requested that consideration of the application be delayed until November, as legal documentation was still pending, as was discussion between himself and Town consulting engineer Tom Metcalf. The Commission discussed the memo of commentary by John Guszkowski relative to their ability to revise its approach on this re-application. There was general consensus on the Commission that the cul-de-sac length issue was of particular concern, and attention should be paid to public safety/emergency access to this property. While Regulations could not be modified during review of the application, there was strong consensus that the Subdivision Regulations should be revised, perhaps in the definition of cul-de-sac or dead-end road, to ensure that this extended, daisy-chained cul-de-sac situation was not replicated in future. The Commission discussed the merits of private vs. public roadways and construction standards. John Guszkowski stated that he would work with the project and review engineers to assess emergency/public safety access to the subdivision.

Motion to table the deliberations concerning the subdivision application until November Commission meeting by John Bairos, seconded by Carla Feroni. Motion carried unanimously.

b. Plan of Conservation & Development – Adoption Discussion

John Guszkowski reviewed the input from RiverCOG, which included a recommended focus on the Gateway Conservation Zone and on climate change preparedness and adaptation. Carla Feroni noted that disaster preparedness should be strongly incorporated into the Plan. Alan Kerr raised the question of the Tax Abatement policy and what the Commission's approach should be relative to the mapping. The Commission had a general discussion about this matter, and decided by consensus that the map reference should be eliminated from the policy and base inclusion in the abatement program on text criteria. John Guszkowski stated that he would make these changes and work with the Land Trust

on updating the map in advance of a potential adoption of the PoCD in November.

5. Report of Committees and Officers

a. Report from Inland Wetlands Representative

The Commission has no active representative to Inland Wetlands

b. Report from RiverCOG Representative

Representative Alan Kerr stated that the COG presented an update on the Land Trust Exchange Conservation goals, and its Economic Development study which includes a number of outreach and forum events entitled GrowSMART Region.

c. Report from Economic Development Commission Representative

Representative Bob Laundry had no report.

d. Chairman's Report

Chairman Danyliw stated that he would be unable to attend the December 10, 2015 meeting, and noted that the Commission had no current Vice-Chair to conduct meetings in his absence.

Motion to elect Carla Feroni as Vice-Chair by Carla Feroni, seconded by Alan Kerr. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Danyliw proposed moving the December meeting to Thursday, December 17. By Consensus, the Commission decided to move the meeting to that date.

e. Planner's Report

John Guskowski stated that the Town was unsuccessful in obtaining a STEAP grant for Centerbrook streetscape improvements, but would re-submit the application this fall. Carla Feroni asked about follow-up on the Foxboro Point subdivision conservation easement question. John Guskowski stated that he had not received any written communication from Attorney Lomme concerning the clearing that had been done and a formalization of his verbal statement to the Commission that his client would coordinate with Town Staff (Guskowski and Budrow) prior to future landscape maintenance in the easement area. He will follow up with Attorney Lomme to acquire this written statement. The Commission requested the scheduling of a site visit.

Alan Kerr and John Guskowski led a brief discussion about the recent additions to Ivoryton, including the Tap Room above the Blue Hound Cookery and the Porky Pete's location in the Ivoryton Inn.

6. Correspondence and Invoices

Chairman Danyliw noted that there was correspondence from Connecticut Water and the monthly budget statement.

7. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Carla Feroni, seconded by Bob Laundy. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Guskowski
Consulting Town Planner

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
10/9 2015 at 11:50 A.M.
Yvonne M. Boyal
ESSEX, CT TOWN CLERK assist