

March 5, 2013

7:30, Upper Level Mtg Room

Members Present: Ms. Roberts, Mr. Rimsky, Ms. Gager, Mr. Frank, Ms. Jahnke

Members Absent:

Alternates Present:

Alternates Absent: Mr. Osborne, Mr. Carey, Ms. Bishop-Wrabel

Staff Present: Ms. Hill, Ms. White

Also Present: Mr. Bedini, Mr. Charles, Ms. Purnell

Ms. Roberts called the Meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Seated: Ms. Roberts, Ms. Jahnke, Mr. Frank, Mr. Rimsky, Ms. Gager

Consideration of the Minutes

The Planning Commission considered the minutes from the 2-5-13 regular meeting.

Motion:

To accept the February 5, 2013 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Planning Commission as submitted,

by Mr. Frank, seconded by Mr. Rimsky, passed by 5-0 vote.

The Planning Commission considered the minutes from the 2-19-13 special meeting.

Motion:

To accept the February 19, 2013 Special Meeting Minutes of the Planning Commission as submitted,

by Mr. Rimsky, seconded by Ms. Jahnke, passed by 5-0 vote.

New Applications

There were no new applications to discuss.

OTHER BUSINESS

Plan of Conservation and Development

Meeting with Heads of Schools:

Mr. Rimsky stated that he, Mr. Frank and Mr. Looney, Planning Consultant, met with the heads of schools. Each private school in the Town had a representative at this meeting and Pat Cosentino, Superintendent of Region 12 also attended. He expressed that he was surprised to find out that the private schools are experiencing similar demographic declines in their day student population. Mr. Rimsky noted that most of the educational institutions are located in residential zones and must follow the zoning regulations for the residential zone. He stated that the heads of schools believe that this constrains the development of the institution and makes updating facilities difficult.

Mr. Rimsky noted that there was a conversation regarding the institutions tax relationship with the Town. Mr. Frank stated that most of the schools pay a certain amount in lieu of taxes. Mr. Rimsky said that the school representatives discussed the residential rate of certain buildings used for private residential purposes.

Mr. Rimsky felt that the schools are reacting positively to the economic component of the POCD. The school representatives discussed working cooperatively with the Town for special events and discussed their potential to contribute to the Town. There was a brief discussion regarding the possible uses of the institutional facilities.

7:45 pm – Ms. Gager arrives and is seated.

Mr. Frank stated that the school representatives also expressed a concern for the lack of housing available for their staff. The Commission briefly discussed housing.

3/5 Meeting with Mr. Looney and Mr. McDermott

Ms. Gager stated that she, Ms. Roberts and Ms. Hill had met today with Mr. Looney and Mr. McDermott of Milone & MacBroom, POCD consultants and discussed the modification of the format of the revised POCD. She stated that each section would start out with an introduction, and then focus on the issues, goals and strategies. She stated all of the detail would be in the appendix at the back of the document for reference. Ms. Gager noted that all of the maps would be changed and improved with updated information and the strategies would include specifics.

Ms. Gager stated that all of the drafts would be put in this new format and submitted to the Planning Commission for review by the April 2, 2013 meeting. She noted that after discussing the formatting of the revised POCD they all agreed that a June deadline would be difficult and they are now considering a September-October deadline.

The Commission discussed how they would be reviewing the content of the newly formatted drafts after they are submitted.

Mr. Rimsky asked if there was any discussion about public outreach meetings.

Ms. Gager replied that Mr. Looney had open office hours today in which he met with some people but they did not discuss meetings in the other villages. She noted that they mainly discussed the format of the reports at this meeting.

The Commission discussed referencing the previous POCDs.

Mr. Frank stated that since the Planning Commission is called upon from time to time to determine whether a proposed action is consistent with the POCD, he believes that the revised POCD document should be consistently formatted in a way to enable the Planning Commission to state clearly the basis for its decisions.

Ms. Gager responded that the revised POCD would use the data from the previous POCDs as a baseline and factor in the new data. She stated that the old data would be in appendix format.

Mr. Frank noted that the Consultants have proposed that the Depot Study be incorporated by

reference in the revised POCD. He believes that it was never a part of the POCD and should only be incorporated to the extent that the Commission believes that it should be part of the Plan going forward.

Ms. Gager responded that they must mention in the cover letter anything that they want incorporated into the POCD otherwise it is not a part of the plan. She stated that it would be as specific as, for example, creating a line item in the budget for an economic development person as well as the steps that follow.

Mr. Frank noted that the contract with the planning consultants there is a section regarding public outreach and consensus building and asked how the Commission would determine whether this is being fulfilled.

The Commission discussed public outreach meetings.

Mr. Rimsky stated that he does not think that the Town website is the public access document in the way the Planning Commission would like it to be. He feels there could be a better way to direct the public to the information more efficiently.

The Commission discussed the need for focus groups during the revision process as well as after the POCD has been updated as a means of receiving public input.

Other POCD Discussion:

The Conservation Commission is working with the planning consultants on the Sustainability draft. There was a brief discussion regarding sustainability.

The Planning Commission discussed Mr. Hileman's email outlining his views on the POCD's role in addressing the Region 12 crisis. They agreed that Region 12 facilities would be addressed in the revised POCD.

Mr. Bedini, member of the Board of Education, was present and requested that he have the opportunity to clear up some of the misinformation that is circulating about changes in Region 12. He stated that the crisis in Region 12 is the declining enrollment, which is something that is happening all over the State of Connecticut.

Mr. Bedini discussed the options that are being considered by the Board of Ed. Long Range Planning Committee and stated that it is not true that the Superintendent is looking to tuition out the kids in the High School.

The Commissioners and Mr. Bedini discussed the monetary components of the options for Region 12. Mr. Bedini stated that the L.R.P. Committee would present these options to the Board of Education and then they would vote on which one to send to referendum.

There was a discussion regarding a referendum and how important it is to get the right information to the public so they are informed what they are voting for.

The Commission and Mr. Bedini discussed the Region 12 facilities and the need to consider modern technology because of the unique land-based challenges.

Ms. Roberts requested that the Commissioners continue to read through the existing drafts, not concentrating on the format, and provide feedback for the next regularly scheduled Planning Commission Meeting on April 2, 2013.

Ms. Roberts urged the Commission to stay positive through this process and provide constructive criticism when needed.

Adjournment

Motion:

to adjourn by Mr. Frank, seconded by Mr. Rimsky.

Ms. Roberts adjourned the meeting at 9:35 pm.

SUBMITTED SUBJECT TO APPROVAL:

Shelley White, Land Use Clerk