



City of Shelton
Planning & Zoning Commission
Shelton City Hall, 54 Hill Street, Shelton CT
Special Meeting– February 7, 2006

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

P & Z Commission Chairman Allan Cribbins called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 P.M. All those present rose and pledged allegiance to the flag.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Chairman Allan Cribbins
Vice-Chairman Anthony Pogoda
Virginia Harger
Jason Perillo
Daniel Oraziotti
Leon Sylvester
Karen Tomko-McGovern (arrived at 7:30 PM)

Also Present:

Plan Update Committee Members:
Frank Osak
Peter DiCarlo
Tom Harbinson
Jim Tate
Rick Schultz, P&Z Administrator
Glen Chalder, Planimetrics
Eric Barz, Planimetrics
Marianne Chaya, Clerk

Chairman Cribbins stated that tonight's meeting is a work session and the purpose is for the Planning & Zoning Commission members to become familiar with the 2006 Draft Plan of Conservation and Development. Eric Barz from Planimetrics will give an overview of the first 3 chapters.

Eric Barz said that before beginning he wanted to review the process. The goal is to get through 3 chapters tonight. The focus will be on the strategies, which is what Shelton needs to do to achieve the goals, and if they are aligned with the information that is presented in the plan. Eric began with Chapter 1 – Planning Context. The draft plan printouts had a little glitch that changed the page numbering. The page numbering starts with 2-1 in chapter 1 instead of 1-1. The plan that is available on the City web site should be correct. The purpose of Chapter 1 is to give a look at geographic, historic, physical and demographic background of the City. This gives a historic perspective as to what were the forces that made the City what it is today. Eric noted the breakdown of the demographics and the age makeup of past and the future. Chairman Cribbins made note that the 1992 plan showed that we anticipated a buildout of 55,000 people. This plan shows a buildout of approximately 45,000. Commissioner Perillo asked what changed to trigger a lower projected buildout? Glen Chalder said that it is not just Shelton. It's due to changing household sizes and the fact that people are living longer. The average household sizes now are way down. We now realize we should do projections based on the number of housing units in a community, not

the number of people. There was discussion of the projection of the number of units. Glen said that they would look into that projection. Eric also noted that due to the GIS system available currently they can accurately look at constraints such as steep slopes, wetlands, open space and flood plains. This technology was not available back when the 1992 plan was formed. Eric briefly discussed the section on the diversified and growing economy. There was discussion on the section of the Land Use assessment and the amount of land specified as dedicated and managed open space. Discussions of population household size projections based on the number of housing units that are physically possible based on the zoning today and assuming there are no major changes. It was questioned whether the style of housing affected the numbers and it was pointed out that it doesn't necessarily hold true – there are some large houses with only a couple of people living in them. The trend is now people prefer to stay in their large houses instead of downsizing. Commissioner Sylvester mentioned the number of students projected and Eric stated that figure came from the State – they didn't do their own analysis. Commissioner Sylvester asked if there is a prediction of the number of people based on the style of the housing and Eric said that they just averaged it out.

Frank Osak mentioned the trend in the age of the residents in Shelton is showing that the percentage of older residents is increasing.

Eric noted that the Plan Update Advisory Committee asked Planimetrics to do a study on the fiscal impact of the development potential. They ran three different scenarios – one is an optimized scenario where we tried to maximize the revenue potential of economic development. Another was sort of a do nothing approach showing what would happen and the last scenario is a worst-case scenario showing if development were to happen with no control. What they found was quite a significant difference between doing nothing or the worst-case scenario and what could be accomplished through the optimum scenario. The summary of the scenarios is shown on page 26.

Commissioner Sylvester said he particularly noticed the page where Shelton is ranked in expenditures compared to the neighboring communities. Chapter 2 – Community Issues. Eric stated that there were four public meetings/workshops and this chapter deals with the summary of those meetings. This reflects what the residents who attended the meetings would like the plan to accomplish in terms of various issues. Pages 30-32 in this chapter list the comments made at the workshops. The last page lists the initial theme and strategies that help guide the plan. Based on the results of the workshops Planimetrics came up with a vision document with the Plan Update Advisory Committee. What they came up with is a document that group together like topics under the headings of Important Resources, Development and Addressing Community Needs, which are the three meaty chapters of the plan.

The first of the chapters mentioned is Protecting Important Resources. The chapter was organized based on the workshops of what the people felt were the most important up front. The first part of it details open space – preserving more meaningful open space. At the end of each section is a list of strategies. Hopefully everyone would agree on the strategies that PUAC has developed are supported by the information that has led up to this point and these are the most feasible and prudent options for addressing them. Eric discussed the vision statement and the goal of the contents of this chapter. The strategies are listed on page 8 of this chapter. Glen Chalder asked each Commissioner to take a look at the strategies to see if they agree on them.

Page 12 of lists the Agricultural Preservation Strategies. Commissioner Harger asked Planimetrics to expand on the strategy regarding encouraging ecotourism.

Tape 1, Side B

There was also discussion regarding the strategy that says to allow agricultural use of preserved open space resulting from CRD in the R-1A District. They asked to list an example, such as Orchard Park subdivision. Eric moved on to the section titled Preserve and Protect Important Natural Resources. The vision statement says to preserve and protect natural resources to ensure a healthy and diverse community. This deals with surface and groundwater resources natural resources such as wetlands, steep slopes that are fragile resources to protect. This also details wildlife and their habitat. Page 22 lists the 12 strategies that deal with each of the areas. It was questioned whether this section mentions protection of the Housatonic River. Eric said that it is mentioned in various places, such as in the section dealing with open space and giving priority to public access and it also is in the section dealing with water resources. He said from pages 3-13 through 3-18 every strategy ultimately all streams end up in the Housatonic River. After discussion Eric agreed that the plan should more explicitly address the Housatonic River.

The next section is titled Preserve Historic Resources. There was discussion of what a village district is and how it would give Planning & Zoning the ability to regulate the esthetics of development within that district in order to protect the unique character of a village. For reference the State Statute that addresses villages is 8-2j. The Commissioners reviewed and discussed the strategies listed on page 26.

The last section in this chapter is Preserve Scenic Resources. There are a lot of things that contribute to the scenic value of Shelton. The historic resources, the natural resources and the man-made environment come together with the scenic roads and scenic vistas. You want to try and protect these. Once you do a scenic resources inventory the other strategies can come into play.

Eric suggested being more creative with open space dedications. Look at the best use and location of the open space. Glen said that when they next discuss residential development strategies they would discuss ways that they think can help promote better development patterns. We've never met an applicant that doesn't want approval. When you regulate residential development by minimum lot size, they are trying to fit lots every way they can, but on the other hand, we're advocates for residential density type regulation which says to the developer this is the number of house sites you get; you can't "jerry-mander" to get any more. Now find the best house sites that you can. It is a wonderful change in the way residential development happens. More and more communities in the State are doing this and are happier with the results. That is the type of strategy we are going to recommend for you as well.

Commissioner Sylvester asked about how the process of this plan will work. Glen stated that under the Connecticut law, the authority and responsibility for adopting this document rests with this Commission. Shelton had the foresight to create the Plan Update Advisory Committee made up with residents with a lot of experience in different areas related to the plan. They worked diligently to collect the information, evaluate and put together recommendations that were brought to this Board for review. What this Commission's task now is to go through this document and see what and if any adjustments need to be made along the way. Once this has been done and changes made and then we would go to a public hearing with the draft plan. We will get comments and consider making revisions based on what the public has told us. That becomes the "proposed plan". The proposed plan then get forwarded to the Board of Aldermen for their review and comment. They have a 45-day window to provide comment. You can

accept their comments, consider them, reject them, or whatever. The final action for adoption rests with this Board.

Chapter 4 is titled Guide Appropriate Development. There are three main themes under this heading. One is community structure. If you think of the community as a human body this community structure is the skeleton. It's downtown, it's the river, it's Huntington Center, it's White Hills, etc. These are community elements that define the community and have character all their own and combine to create the character of the community. Then we are going to talk about ways to try and preserve these elements. Then we will go into more general discussions of economic and residential development. Eric discussed the vision statement for this section. He also touched upon the Community Structure and the corresponding map. On pages 13 and 14 of this chapter lists the strategies broken down into the downtown section, Huntington Center, White Hills, and the Suburban Office/Industrial Areas. The goal of this section is where Eric pulled some elements out of transportation, community facilities, historic preservation and other parts of the plan and pulled them all together and tried to address each of these important community structural elements in a comprehensive fashion. For example, you have address traffic downtown if it's to be a vital, successful location.

Chairman Cribbins asked if Planimetrics has received comment back from VCOG and DOT on the plan. Eric said he has not received comment as of yet. Chairman Cribbins said he would like to have input from them before they go to public hearing. Eric explained that ordinarily DOT isn't involved and VCOG isn't involved until they know that Planning & Zoning is satisfied with the plan. He said that he would talk with Mike Wilson at Barkan & Mess and the others to say that P&Z is moving along and would like their comment. Glen pointed out that they are under no obligation to do it but they may feel an obligation to do it at the public hearing. He said they would contact them.

Commissioner Oraziotti noted that in the Downtown section of the strategies listed he does not see any mention of parking structure. Peter DiCarlo said that the PUAC members didn't feel it was their purview to tell P&Z where they should put parking and how much. Commissioner Oraziotti said that it should be listed as a priority. Commissioner Cribbins said it may be part of the revitalization program and perhaps it could be spelled out. Peter noted that in chapter 7 where we address community needs, we set the parking as a priority. Commissioner Perillo noted that in terms of the downtown revitalization subcommittee is moving in the right direction but there are some specific complex questions that need to be answered and maybe we should enlist some help in answering the questions. Frank Osak said that the Shelton Economic Commission is leading the charge of the downtown revitalization. The Plan Update Advisory Committee kind of took the position of letting them do it.

The Commission members decided that they are not prepared tonight to really get into chapter 4. They would pick up on it again at the next workshop meeting that will be scheduled for February 21.

There was discussion again about including the Housatonic River as part of this plan.

Chairman Cribbins mentioned that the next scheduled meeting is February 14 and asked if there could be another night that week to meet.

Eric said that Fred Musante approached him and talked about his involvement in the Shelton Life publication that gets distributed to every household. He asked if Planimetrics could put together an executive summary of the plan prior to the public hearing, which would be about 24 pages, so the people could have an opportunity to read what the plan is all about. We spoke with Frank and Pete and realized that the PUAC is no longer involved and couldn't make that request and it needs to come from

Planning & Zoning. Chairman Cribbins asked Pete DiCarlo if there is any money left in the budget. Pete did say there are resources available but we need to see the cost. Chairman Cribbins asked Glen and Eric to submit the proposal.

Glen Chalder said that he has another project going on that would make it impossible for him to attend the Tuesday meetings but Eric would continue to come through the adoption of the plan.

Commissioner Pogoda MOVED to adjourn. SECONDED by Commissioner Perillo. A voice vote was taken; all were in favor, MEETING ADJOURNED at approximately 8:55 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Chaya

Clerk

2 tapes are on file in the City/Town Clerk's office