



City of Shelton
Planning & Zoning Commission
Shelton City Hall, 54 Hill Street, Shelton CT
Special Meeting– February 21, 2006

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

P & Z Commission Chairman Allan Cribbins stated that there is not a quorum present for the Executive Session scheduled for 6:30 P.M.

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
Jason Perillo
Leon Sylvester

Also Present:

Plan Update Committee Members:
Frank Osak
Peter DiCarlo
Fred Musante
Tom Harbinson

Rick Schultz, P&Z Administrator
Eric Barz, Planimetrics
Marianne Chaya, Clerk

Chairman Cribbins stated that tonight's meeting is a work session to continue reviewing the draft plan of Conservation and Development. Eric Barz from Planimetrics will continue with the review starting with Chapter 4.

Eric Barz began with Chapter 4 – Guide Appropriate Development. The vision statement is as follows. Guide appropriate and balanced development that maintains a healthy community and contributes to community character and quality of life. The first part that was discussed was the community structure. As Eric pointed out, there are some defining elements that help contribute to the character and help define the community, such as downtown Shelton, Huntington Center, the corporate/industrial areas along Route 8 as well as smaller neighborhood nodes in the White Hills and along River Road. We want to try and preserve the elements in the hopes of protecting the overall character of the community as well as the community as well as the important structural elements. In each case we put together a comprehensive look at each of the areas. Eric pointed out where the discussion is located for each of the areas in the chapter. Page 4-13 starts the list of the strategies. It was noted that there are a couple of strategies repeated in the list and Eric will make the necessary changes.

Commissioner Perillo expressed the concerns of traffic and parking in the downtown area and whether it's addressed comprehensively in the plan. Rick Schultz stated that the SEDC plan addresses those issues. After discussion Eric said he would insert a paragraph on page 4-7 that would back up the strategy listed in the strategies. Peter DiCarlo mentioned that

this also may be covered in the implementation schedule listed on page 7-16, item 1.

Commissioner Sylvester asked about the main street in Shelton, the fact that it is a State highway, and the constraints that Shelton operates under, and is it local or state decision making in regards to any expansions. Eric said that it is a partnership between the City and the State. Ultimately the State does have the final say but through the Council of Governments could propose streetscape improvements along the highway for approval by the State. You have the ability to work with them in that regard. Commissioner Sylvester said that since the main street is narrow and there are parking problems; does this plan address it? Eric said that there is reference to that issue in the plan.

Eric asked the Commissioners to review the Huntington Center, White Hills and suburban office/industrial area strategies. Chairman Cribbins said that they would carefully examine and discuss the future land use plan in regards to the White Hills area. Commissioner Perillo asked about enhancements to the zoning regulations to enhance the quality of the commercial and industrial development. Eric said that if you want to improve the quality of the development he would recommend that you incorporate design guidelines for those areas outside what ultimately might be a village district. That would address some of the esthetic concerns. As far as a commercial use versus an office use, there are some things that are currently in the regulations that could be tightened up and added to encourage the kind of development that you want to see happen in various locations. Eric gave some examples using the floor area ratio.

The next section discussed is Guide Appropriate Economic Development. This deals with making the best of what limited resources we have available to be able to afford the things the community is going to need down the road as residential development continues to occur. There are a number of strategies discussed on how to optimize economic development. Page 4-18 & 4-19 is a visual aid that tries to visually explain of development and what they generate in dollars in real estate property values per acre.

There was extensive discussion of the PDD uses.

The map showing the locations of the business types is on page 4-21. Page 4-25 lists the economic development strategies. The Commissioners reviewed and made no revisions.

Guide Appropriate Residential Development discussion starts on page 4-26. Eric discussed the vision statement and some of the strategies, such as the one to encourage conservation development patterns. Nineteen strategies are listed on page 4-34. Chairman Cribbins asked for clarification of the strategy concerning eliminating the requirement for preliminary conventional subdivision plans for PRD and CRD.

Tape 1, side B

Eric explained it in terms of density-based zoning.

Commissioner Sylvester asked about the protection of the multi-family homes that have been turned into higher density homes, primarily for investment purposes. Eric suggested looking at the regulations and determine what mechanism it is that is allowing this to occur. Is it the ZBA allowing this to happen where there is no legal or financial hardship? You will have to close off the mechanisms that allow this to happen. There was a bit of discussion of redevelopment of this type of housing. This will become an issue in regards to tear-downs. They also discussed zoning violation issues.

Commissioner Perillo asked Eric to discuss strategy #18 in regards to allowing a fee-in-lieu of providing affordable units to be placed in a housing trust fund to purchase, construct, or rehabilitate affordable units.

Chapter 5 is Address Community Needs. The vision statement for this chapter is to provide adequate, efficient, and reliable community facilities, transportation systems, and public utilities to meet community needs, maintain a healthy community, and enhance quality of life. The three main action themes are: adequately maintaining and enhancing community facilities and services; maintaining a safe and efficient transportation system; and ensuring adequate public utilities. Eric said that he would be adding the Sunnyside boat ramp to the list of community services and a strong statement of the value of the Housatonic River.

Commissioners Sylvester and Perillo noted that the Indian Well State Park is generally not a facility used by the local residents. Most of the use is from people from other communities and our residents are not inclined to use it. Chairman Cribbins stated that up until this chapter, everything that is in here is based on facts. In this chapter we go into certain things that are subjective, such as City Hall needs. This is based on information from department heads. I don't know if P&Z has purview over all of these things. Is that our role and responsibility in this community? In the instance where an 8-24 referral comes to P&Z from the Board of Aldermen saying they are going to put a school in White Hills, and we would look at that and say, does it make good planning sense? Is that the best place for it? Yes, we would have an input for that, but, what I'm reading in here is that it is saying we almost have to be the driver for all these things; whether it's for the library or parks and recreation and every other city facility. Do we, as Planning & Zoning, have to be the driver for all these other committees to make sure they get everything up to speed, so that we fully understand it before we can act? In the parts where a department head makes staffing comments, is that something that we would get involved with? Peter DiCarlo said that in Chapter 7, the implementation section is where you find for each of the considerations there is a designation of a City entity that has prime responsibility for looking into that aspect. We are not saying that P&Z should be responsible for any and all of this. Chairman Cribbins said that he feels he is not sure how the Board of Aldermen and Mayor will feel about this section because it is so broad, and they may just want us to stick to land use issues. Eric Barz said to go back to page P-2 where it states an excerpt from the CT General Statute – 8-23. It states the plan “shall” – and lists many bullet items, and it also says the plan “may” – and this section falls into this category. Every plan that Planimetrics has worked on, we have always included the “may” items. The table on page 5-17 that shows the 18 strategies for community and service needs has a corresponding set of table on page 7-20 and 7-21, where responsible parties are assigned each of the tasks. We are not asking P&Z to be ultimately responsible for these issues and we are not holding you accountable for them. Chairman Cribbins disagreed about being accountable. Because if we don't do it or somebody doesn't say, once a quarter, or semi-annually, someone has to say, so what have you done and where are you? They will never do it if no one is watching it. We would need a committee to force the implementation of this. Commissioner Pogoda said that before the PUAC members finished this draft they had discussed this – do we want to follow through or not? It was decided they want to participate in the implementation. Eric Barz said that the statute enables Planning & Zoning to do this and the steering committee did it and our hopes is that it survives this review process intact.

Tape 2, Side A

We were careful in the “verb” use so as not to dictate to the people who know better than we do how to do their jobs. We are passing along information that was presented to us. PUAC had me add discussion about the nature of some of this information; that it was provided through

interviews from various department heads and reflects their opinion. Frank Osak said that many department heads took the time to come in and talk to us. They volunteered their thoughts about their departments and it's shouldn't be a bad thing. If you are serious about the Capital Improvement program, someone in this City should think beyond the 2 years they are in office. If you are serious and you attack that revenue line and you attack the expenses associated with programming capital expenditures, you have to talk about what's left. What's left is fire, police, education, etc. The expense budget that we have in this town – you impact that. When you get an 8-24 from the Board of Aldermen triggered by the Board of Education, you have to reflect on something, and we don't. Eric Barz said that a lot of these different facilities and land acquisitions, etc., the communities don't have the ability to do this out of pocket. You are going to want State and Federal grants. In order to apply for those grants, there is a place on that form that asks, how does this proposal comply with the currently adopted plan of conservation and development? You are going to need the supporting documentation in this plan. If it's not in here, you are going to have to have a special meeting to quickly amend the plan. Rick Schultz pointed out that at the Office of Policy and Management, if there are two towns vying for a grant, and one town doesn't have a plan of development, they are the one that loses.

The Commission members reviewed the strategies on page 5-17 and 5-18.

The next section is regarding the transportation system and the information came from the transportation study done by Barkan & Mess. This section was a brief assessment of what the issues are and the recommended strategies.

Eric mentioned the press release regarding the plan that will go in the Shelton Life publication. Each member has a copy of it for review.

Ensuring Public Utilities was the next section discussed and the strategies mentioned on page 5-42.

Rick Schultz advised the Commission members that they are waiting for comment back from DOT regarding the traffic study done by Barkan & Mess. He also got a call from the staff planner at VCOG. They were supposed to have had their comments ready today to give to me but the director had some personal issues today and I should be receiving it tomorrow and I will forward it to PUAC and the Commission members.

Rick asked for full size copies of the future land use plan for each Commission member when this is discussed at the next meeting.

Eric asked the Commissioners to review the implementation tables before the next meeting and note if any priority needs to be modified or if the responsible parties needs to be modified.

The next workshop meeting will be Tuesday, March 21.

Commissioner Pogoda MOVED to adjourn. SECONDED by Commissioner Perillo. All were in favor, MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Chaya

Clerk

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