



**Joint Meeting
of the Planning & Zoning Commission
and Board of Aldermen
Shelton, Connecticut
Special Meeting– January 24, 2006**

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

P & Z Commission Chairman Allan Cribbins called the meeting to order at approximately 7:05 P.M. All those present rose and pledged allegiance to the flag.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

Chairman Allan Cribbins
Vice-Chairman Anthony Pogoda
Virginia Harger
Jason Perillo
Leon Sylvester
Karen Tomko-McGovern

BOARD OF ALDERMEN:

Aldermanic President John F. Anglace, Jr.
Alderman Jack Finn
Alderman Stanley Kudej
Alderman Joseph Lanzi
Alderman Randy York
Alderman Ken Olin
Alderman John P. Papa
Alderman Chris Panek

Also Present:

Tony Panico, P&Z Consultant
Rick Schultz, P&Z Administrator
Glen Chalder, Planimetrics
Eric Barz, Planimetrics
Marianne Chaya, Clerk

Chairman Cribbins offered special thanks to the Plan Update Advisory Committee. Frank Osak headed the committee, and also in attendance is Peter DiCarlo, Fred Musante, Anthony Pogoda and James Tate. Tom Harbinson was not able to attend. We also want to acknowledge Michael Adanti, who passed away in July of 2005. The meeting tonight will be an overview of the plan. The statute was recently changed to now require that once the public hearing has been held and the approval from Planning & Zoning, the plan is to be handed off to the Board of Aldermen for their review, comments and approval. The Plan Update Advisory Committee had a lot of help from Planimetrics. Tonight we have with us Glen Chalder, the principal from Planimetrics and Eric Barz who will be giving the presentation, or overview to us. The process we are going to do is tonight we will listen to the presentation of the plan and over the course of the next month the P&Z Commission will go through this in a lot more detail. We have scheduled February 7 and February 21 to meet with Planimetrics. When we are through and satisfied with the data in the plan we will then schedule a couple of public hearings to get some additional content to review and modify if

needed, and then we will present it to the Board of Aldermen. This is the beginning of the acceptance process. There are a lot of facts and figures in the plan, and what we really want is for everyone to have an open mind and to come to an agreement of the facts and figures, we can begin to have meaningful dialog about where we go, how we use it, and how we implement it. That, I think, has been the Plan Update Advisory Committee's intention all along with putting this together.

Eric Barz from Planimetrics began his slide show presentation of the 2006 Draft Plan of Conservation and Development. This is a brief overview of what is contained in this plan.

Eric started out by explaining what this plan is all about.

What is a plan? A plan is intended to be a guide to addressing the issues and to develop strategies to address those issues. It is intended to be an advisory document. It's not a regulation; it's intended to be visionary and flexible, and update as needed in the future. We also hope that it's implement able and maintainable. We want this document to be a living document that the Boards and residents will embrace and look towards for guidance in the next 10 years and beyond. The plan's intent is to evaluate where we are, identify where we want to go as a community, and provide the strategies that we think will get us where we want to be.

The plan is divided into three main sections. There is an introduction covering what the plan is all about and the context, i.e., what is Shelton, the history, the demographics, the economics of how we got here. There is also a chapter on community issues. We held a number of workshops throughout the process to try and get input from the residents to help us create the strategies contained in the plan. The main body in the plan contains three chapters. There is also a conclusion that includes three chapters, a Future Land Use Plan, which is a very critical chapter, implementation and the conclusion.

A summary handout was provided that is an outline of the presentation and is as follows:

Overview

The 2006 Plan of Conservation and Development will become a tool for guiding the conservation of important resources and the future development of Shelton. It establishes a common vision for the community's future and recommends strategies and action steps that will help attain that vision when implemented.

PROTECTING IMPORTANT RESOURCES

Preserve More Meaningful Open Space

- Increase the quantity and quality of open space
- Continue to pursue grants and fund the purchase of open space
- Continue the success of the greenway system
- Encourage conservation residential developments

Preserve Agricultural Resources

- Preserve existing farmland
- Encourage and support current farming activity

Protect Important Natural Resources

- Relate development intensity to the character of the land
- Minimize habitat loss and protect endangered species
- Protect surface water and groundwater resources

Preserve Historic and Scenic Resources

- Encourage historic and scenic preservation through regulatory, fiscal and other policies
- Update/create historic scenic resources inventories
- Investigate village districts in Downtown and in Huntington Center

GUIDING APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT

Protect and Enhance Community Structural Elements

- Protect and enhance Downtown as the civic, cultural and commercial center.
- Protect and enhance Huntington Center as a neighborhood center.
- Protect the rural character of White Hills
- Protect and enhance the function of suburban office/industrial nodes

Guide Appropriate Economic Development

- Optimize economic development
- Ensure compatible economic development

Guide Appropriate Residential Development

- Reduce the intensity of rural/suburban development
- Encourage conservation development patterns
- Provide for housing diversity in appropriate locations
- Ensure continued elderly housing options

ADDRESSING COMMUNITY NEEDS

Maintain and Enhance Community Facilities and Services

- Address municipal facility and service needs
- Address long-and short-term education facility needs
- Address emergency services needs
- Ensure adequate maintenance and staffing of community facilities
- Implement a Capital Improvement Program

Maintain a Safe and Efficient Transportation System

- Relate road design to function and desired land use
- Facilitate capacity and safety improvements to the road network with emphasis on the Route 8/Bridgeport Avenue Corridor and Huntington Center
- Complete Constitution Boulevard
- Encourage alternative forms of transportation

Provide for Adequate Utility Services

- Ensure adequate public utilities in appropriate locations to support desired growth
- Minimize environmental and other impacts of public utilities

The last section of the plan contains the Future Land Use Plan (FLUP). FLUP shows the most desirable use of land, from agricultural and open space to commercial and industrial land. What we tried to do is to balance all the different elements in the plan that is synthesized together in one plan that will help Planning & Zoning in their decisions in evaluating land use in the future.

Eric showed and explained via a sequence of slides that showed how they synthesized the Future Land Use Plan map.

Eric went on to explain about the implementation and maintenance chapter. This section highlights the main strategies, who are the main agencies responsible for implementation, and a priority is given for each strategy. There is also a strategy for maintenance of the plan. Rather than waiting every 10 years to update the plan as the State Statutes require, Shelton could undertake a program where they could revisit the plan on an annual basis, maybe taking on one chapter each year to aid in the next 10-year plan.

Eric briefly reviewed the summary of the plan and discussed the conceptual schedule of the forthcoming events/meetings before adoption of the plan.

Chairman Cribbins stated that he wanted to allow Frank Osak, Chairman of the Plan Update Advisory Committee, a chance to make some comments.

Mr. Osak stated that we started this process about 18 months ago and many thanks to all the members. At the very beginning we all had differences of opinions, and as humans, we sometimes arrived at a conclusion and then went looking for supportive facts. Then we decided to sit down and focus on gathering facts. When you look at this 180-page document it is about 80% fact. The theory was if we all got around the table and we all have differences of opinions and pre-conceived notions without supporting facts, we would talk about where we should go but never get there. The important thing here is for P&Z to really look at what's in here as fact. Another thing that struck all of us is that we all have sat around town for many years, some of us for the last 40 years and were always looking at the green space and all the stuff to be developed, and suddenly we are here in 2006 and we only have about 11% of the City left to develop. What struck us is we are running out of options. My personal opinion and wish is to enhance the Grand List. If you don't have money to pay for things, the quality of life doesn't get any better. Over the last 20 years, the amount of Grand List makeup has changed. The amount of commercial/industrial is slipping. The 2004 Grand List, which is what we are now paying taxes on, 85% of the Grand List is made up of residential. Looking back to the early 80's residential was about 68 or 70%. We have about 280-300 acres of non-residential left to develop. We have to really look at this closely because we don't have a lot of options left. We have to get an enhanced addition to the Grand List all the time; we can't squander that. If not, the money won't be available in the future to improve the quality of life. One idea in the plan is that if there is a proposed zone change that disagrees with the adopted Plan of Development, before you hear of the zone change you have to go back and change the Plan of Development. We feel that would be a stop-gap and should be considered. The committee members feel we are committed to help in any way we can. We have to get on with this with some diligence. I don't want to see the same thing happen that happened in 1988 where it took 2 ½ years to get it adopted. I will ask the community people that come to the public meetings to give the Planning & Zoning Commission an opportunity to go into this before you get too critical. We still have a long way to go and a lot of work to do. We'll all work together and it will come out ok. Thank you.

Chairman Cribbins asked Board of Aldermen President John Anglace if he would like to say a few words.

Mr. Anglace stated that he appreciated all the work and effort put into this document by the Plan Update Advisory Committee. I think that this is a marvelous group of people who come from all walks of life. I can't agree more with Frank when he said to give Planning & Zoning the time to look over the plan before being critics. He is just asking for a fair opportunity.

Chairman Cribbins agreed that the committee is a group of special people who really do like our community, and they have to like our community to put in 18 months of planning to come up with a document like this. I really do appreciate their efforts.

Alderman Papa asked for a little more information regarding the historical district reference in Huntington, or the village district. What are the

advantages and disadvantages? Does it necessitate declaring that no changes can be done on their homes or property unless approved by a certain district? Eric responded that there are different levels of historic districts and different strategies that are suggested. No one strategy is mentioned as "the one" strategy to go forward with. Each has their pros and cons. There is a National Register Historic District in Huntington Center. That for the most part is an honorary designation. It can have some financial and infrastructure implications. For example, if the State comes through and wants to widen one of the State Highways that is adjacent to a National Historic property, they would have to consider that in the project of the upgrade and would affect their funding. There are also federal tax credits involved that could be a perk in being involved in the National Historic District. The next level up is a local historic district where the City appoints a Board of residents who would set up regulations to protect the historic character of the buildings. The inside of the house would not be regulated. The benefits would give you availability of grant funds for historic preservation programs. The tool I mentioned in the presentation was the establishment of a Village District. That would be something P&Z would adopt unilaterally and administers. This generally applies to commercial properties. This would give them the use of enforcing the character of the village on development and/or redevelopment.

Alderman Panek asked about the Capital Improvement Program. Did the committee rate this high on the priority list, in terms of doing short-term? Eric replied that this was the number one priority. They felt strongly enough about it to commission us to add this to the plan. It was a very important issue to the Plan Update Advisory Committee. Alderman Panek asked if this is something that could be done prior to the budget process or during? Eric said that it typically comes in on the onset of the budget process. Once the Capital Improvement Program is adopted it is forwarded to the Board of Aldermen to become the Capital Budget for that fiscal year. You'd like to have it done upfront, then that piece fits into the overall budget.

Chairman Cribbins asked Eric if they have a sample of a good Capital Improvement Plan from another town, either from Connecticut or in some other Northeast State that we could look at as a model? Eric said that he has some examples he could pass on.

Mr. Osak stated that generally this is a tool the planners have. It's in the Statutes in CT for that to happen, and in Shelton it is the charge of the Board of Aldermen; it's not a planning function. Capital Improvement programming doesn't just reside in the one-year budget setting cycle that you do on a yearly basis to set the mill rate. It really goes out 6-10 years. In order to do that you have to project your revenues for 6-10 years, which comes from the Grand List. The reason we wanted to put it in to this document is that it is the one thing that would sensitize people to being sure that they enhance the Grand List to the utmost. In other words, to get the maximum taxable property assessment per acre of land that could support it. If you look at it on a 6-10 year basis you can spot in when you'd need a school, when you'll need a fire truck, etc. Then you can program that and it's a continuing thing. A lot of town do it, we don't. We have what is known as a Capital Acquisition List. All the departments send to the chief Financial Officer their wish list. There is no attempt to project it against future revenue. If you do that you might be awakened as to the need to enhance the Grand List growth.

Glen Chalder mentioned that they had a chance to look at the town of Granby's budget estimating process. It was a compilation of the Board of

Selectmen, Board of Ed and Board of A&T to do financial planning on all their capital needs and budget growth. We can share this information with the Planning & Zoning Commission and the Board of Aldermen.

Eric Barz said that the town of Granby has put together kind of a dog and pony show where they will go to other towns and explain their program and how they have been successful.

Another thing Eric mentioned was that the Plan Update Advisory Committee has done all the "heavy lifting". They have sifted through the interviews and the workshops and all the data Planimetrics has put before them and put together what they believe is the best set of strategies for the City of Shelton to achieve it's goals and vision for the future. They also want to continue as ambassadors to this plan to help in any way they can. Hopefully you will take the plan as it's presented and move forward with it, for the most part, intact. We do expect changes, but they have put in a lot of time and effort into this and hope that some of the strategies that are very near and dear to them don't fall by the wayside.

A resident had a question whether or not they are going to take into consideration what the adjoining towns are doing, for instance things happening on Route 8 or work done by Derby on their riverfront? Eric responded that from a transportation standpoint this draft plan is in the hands of the Department of Transportation and the Valley Council of Governments. They will be looking at it from a regional and state-wide perspective. We also addressed several points in the plan to protect the water and utility resources, not only for Shelton, but also for the region.

Commissioner Pogoda MOVED to adjourn the Special Meeting. SECONDED by Commissioner Perillo. All were in favor, MEETING ADJOURNED at 7:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Chaya
Clerk

1 tape is on file in the City/Town Clerk's office

The 2006 Draft Plan of Conservation and Development is available on the City's web site and Shelton Libraries