

SHELTON PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

June 26, 2014

The Shelton Planning and Zoning Commission held a Special Meeting on Thursday, June 26, 2014 Shelton City Hall, Room 303, 5:00 p.m., 54 Hill Street, Shelton, CT 06484.

Commissioners Present: Chairperson Ruth Parkins
 Comm. Anthony Pogoda
 Comm. Nancy Dickal
 Comm. Virginia Harger
 Comm. Frank Osak
 Comm. Jim Tickey (arrived 5:50 p.m.)

Staff Present: Richard Schultz, P&Z Administrator
 Anthony Panico, P&Z Consultant
 Karin Tuke, P&Z Recording Secretary

Tapes (1), any correspondence and attachments on file in the City/Town Clerk's Office and the Planning & Zoning Office and on the City of Shelton Website www.cityofshelton.org.

CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Parkins called the P&Z Special Meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and a roll call of members present.

Mr. Panico stated that he and Rick Schultz have been trying to get an idea of some of the tax generation, potential values, and some of the issues that a developer might face in developing this property. He indicated that he'd be hop scotching all over the place because they haven't totally digested it in any understandable form yet.

Mr. Panico indicated that he called a couple of people who are very familiar with development issues in the City of Shelton. He tried to get his arms around what some of the values and issues might be and one of the things that they need to discuss is the rock up there. He asked to what degree that was going to be a negative impact on the development of the property. He stated that he's found out that it could be anything from a major asset to a negative depending upon the quality of the rock. If it is very good rock, people will pay to take the rock out because they can crush it and reuse it, etc. If it is poor quality rock that has no use for that then they are really limited to using it onsite as fill material, etc. He added that until they find out more about the nature of the rock and the quality of the rock, they aren't really going to know if these heavy cut and potential rock issues will be pluses or minuses.

Comm. Harger asked if they could determine that through test borings.

Mr. Panico responded well, test borings, geological surveys and things like that are a little premature for them to get involved with at this point in time.

Comm. Harger commented OK and added that it would be the process though.

Mr. Panico stated that they need to understand that it could be one or the other. He continued that he spoke to some people about residential units and the values of sites that are approved or approvable for residential units and multi-family rental units and they do range anywhere from that \$30,000 to \$50,000 per unit for the raw land. A lot of it depends upon the quality of the site but also a lot of it depends upon the location features. He found out that the closer it is to the Corporate Center – Commerce Drive and the whole corporate corridor – the higher the values are.

Mr. Panico indicated that condos, if there were a market, and nobody is really sure if there is a market today for condos, but they would probably be somewhere in that \$50,000 unit value in a good location.

Mr. Panico stated that an accessible economic development site which could be for a variety of uses from multi-family to offices or whatever could go as high as \$500,000 to \$800,000 an acre, if there are basic zoning approvals in place.

Comm. Harger asked him to clarify what category that would be for.

Mr. Panico responded that it would be what he is calling an “economic development site,” for lack of a better term, the kind of development that is going to generate tax positives for the City. If there are sites in reasonably accessible locations, the value of that site could be from \$500,000 to \$800,000 an acre so a 10-acre site would be worth somewhere in the range of \$5M to \$8M. He indicated that what needs to happen for that is there needs to be basic authorizations so that if a developer is interested in buying, he’ll know that he can put “x” number of units on the property or build “x” number of square feet of commercial spaces or whatever it is.

Mr. Panico indicated that he took some of that information and started looking at their plan. He asked what would be the potential value of some of the sites that they were talking about if they had Constitution Boulevard in place and the utilities were brought up.

He added that in regard to utilities, Rick spoke to Tom Sym and the Sewer Department. Sewers would be brought up with the construction of Constitution Boulevard from Bridgeport Avenue. Sewer capacity is available down in Bridgeport Avenue. Rick was given a number of what could be allocated to this site but they need to know more from the Commission as to what the potential dwelling unit population is or what the square footage would be.

Mr. Schultz added yes, the range.

Mr. Panico responded yes, a range, and then they could get a more definitive answer but Rick was given a number of anywhere from 100 million to 200 million gallons a day – he added that he thinks that there is a factor of 10 incorrect in there somewhere because he took that number, and in knowing what he does about sewer design, etc., it could turn out to be well over thousands of units. He clarified that it wasn’t 1,000 units but thousands of units.

Comm. Osak asked what the factor was for a residential home and asked if it wasn’t about 125 gallons per occupant.

Mr. Panico responded that years ago they used to design based upon a 100 gallons per capita per day but the trend today is more like 120 or 125 gallons.

Comm. Osak commented that offices were 25 or 30.

Mr. Panico commented yes, right.

Comm. Osak stated that even if you divide 200 into 2,000,000 – it is mind-boggling.

Mr. Panico responded that he thinks that it is too and added that there was something wrong with that number.

Mr. Schultz agreed that the number was off.

Mr. Panico stated that there is something wrong with that number and indicated that he takes an average sized household in Shelton which is 2.58 today. If they were to use 2.58 people per household with those gallons he mentioned, it doesn’t come anywhere near what he is saying is available. He indicated that they will find out more about that number.

Mr. Panico indicated that assuming that they had some zoning in place that establishes some development entitlement of different sites, that lower density site that they discussed in the upper right hand corner – he put the map out that they have been using showing Bridgeport Avenue, the new road, Old King’s Highway across the northerly site, and the Mas piece. He pointed out the area up in the corner which is sort of an extension of Sunwood and adjacent to the single-family residential neighborhood and it has some difficult topo barriers. He recalled that it had been discussed that it was probably OK for a multi-family, condo-type low density, garden

apartment style type of development as opposed to the Talbot-style. Based upon that, he thought that site could be worth somewhere in the range of \$2.5M for 7 acres. He said that he calculated it on the basis of per unit apartments that might be put up there which might be worth a little bit over \$2.5M. He approached it from the point of thousands of dollars per acre and used the \$400,000 an acre figure to come up with \$2.8M. He stated that they are looking at a probable value of somewhere between \$1.5M to \$2.5M, if there was zoning or authorization for it in place.

Mr. Panico pointed out an area on the map of roughly 10 acres and commented that for a high density site for the time being and if they approved it for something in the range of 20 units per acre, a couple of hundred units using a value of \$30,000 per unit, that site is worth \$6M or more. He added that it was comparable to saying \$500,000 or \$600,000 an acre for the 10 acres. He commented that they approach it from different places but they come into the same general ballpark figures.

In looking at the pink outlined site on the map which is 10+ acres, he said that if that were developed as units instead of commercial, it would have a value of somewhere around \$7M to \$7.5M. If it was priced upon the basis of acreage using \$650,000 an acre, it is about \$6.5M. He added that they are talking about sites that have values in the millions of dollars.

Mr. Panico stated that brings up another issue that they are trying to get a handle on about how expensive this road would be. He commented that he has no idea and he's hoping that maybe the City Engineer can help them with that.

Mr. Schultz commented that the City Engineer just came back from vacation today.

Mr. Panico responded that he wasn't looking for a hard number but he'd like to know the ballpark. He asked if it would be a \$5M road, \$10M, or \$20M...he reiterated that he did not know.

Comm. Pogoda stated that would be a basic start for them to know that and to consider what they are putting up there.

Mr. Panico commented that without designing the road, they are never going to know what it is.

Comm. Dickal agreed.

Comm. Pogoda indicated that they have to have some idea to know what they can put up there to make it cost effective for whatever developer is going to do it.

Mr. Panico stated that they want to make it worthwhile for a developer to come in but they also don't want to give it all away either.

Comm. Pogoda agreed.

Comm. Harger asked about the cost of Constitution Boulevard South.

Mr. Panico responded that it was built so long ago and it was built by a private contractor. It wasn't a City project.

Comm. Osak commented about the contours and stated that it has bad vertical curves.

Mr. Panico agreed and added that the alignment wasn't the greatest either. The cuts on it were only severe when it got towards River Road and had to go downgrade.

Mr. Panico indicated that he began to do a better analysis of the information that was provided to them in concert with the Talbot proposal and the Hawk's Landing proposal. Both proposals provided economic studies and market studies and he's trying to see what can be generated from them. He stated that in the Talbot proposal he concluded that the cost of education is going to be about \$1,260/year per unit; cost to municipal services was going to be a little over \$600/unit – so the total cost of municipal services were going to be something in the range of \$1,880 per unit.

The projected tax revenue estimated that it was going to generate is \$3,268 per unit in taxes so they have a net positive tax impact projected from that development of approx. \$1,388 per unit without including motor vehicle and personal property. At a density of 20 units per acre that translates into a positive tax impact of about \$26,500 an acre. He clarified that what he was saying is that if they want to compare that development to industrial or office development and assuming that industrial and office have a minimal impact on municipal services than they have to compare the \$26,500 per acre to whatever the alternative development would give them. He mentioned that Rick has the numbers for some of the facilities that they know about already.

Mr. Panico stated that from the Hawk's Landing proposal, he was able to glean that the positive fiscal impacts that they came up with was more like \$4,600 per unit based upon the average density of 3.7 units per acre. It resulted in a positive fiscal impact translated into acres of just over \$17,000 an acre. He indicated that between these two developments, they have one saying in excess of \$26,500 but that is all multi-family; and the other one says a little bit over \$17,000 but it has a mix of houses and condos rather than rental. He commented that they are in a very positive area with the numbers.

By comparison they were provided, as a part of the Hawk's Landing proposal, an industrial analysis. He commented that at the Honey Cell facility, on an acreage basis, it generates about \$5,600 a year in taxes – that is their positive tax impact. It is relatively low because they are on an almost 9-acre site in a relatively modest building. He continued that further up the road at 32 Long Hill Cross Road, there is a more intensive development on 2 ½ acres and it generates about \$63,500 in taxes per year so on an acreage basis, it generates about \$28,222 an acre.

He commented that he doesn't expect them to grasp all of this today. He stated that he and Rick are going to organize this into a more understandable form. He commented that he wants to let Rick explain the work he did with the info from the Assessor's Office. Rick was able to get some tax information concerning the data center up on Ivy Brook Road, the newest hotel on Bridgeport Avenue, The Hyatt, Chili's, Longhorn so that they could get an idea of what that type of development throws off. He also got the two Avalon complexes – Downtown Avalon, high-density, multi-family, structured parking on a very compact site and the Avalon Huntington development which is a more suburban site with a lower density, more garden apartment style.

Comm. Harger asked if there was any development in town that had a negative tax impact.

Mr. Panico responded that none of them do.

Comm. Harger asked for clarification that he was saying that nothing in this town draws on City services more than it pay in taxes.

Mr. Panico responded that's correct.

Comm. Osak commented single family residential.

Comm. Harger responded yes, but she means development.

Mr. Panico stated nothing that they are looking at. The ones that draw more in City taxes than they pay are single family residential.

Comm. Harger responded yes, OK, but everything else is good.

Mr. Panico stated that as soon as there is a form of development that puts children into the school system, they are looking at anywhere from \$7,500 to \$10,000 per year net costs to educate the child.

Chair Parkins asked Rick if he had information for the Commission.

Mr. Schultz referenced the handout he provided to the Commissioners regarding annual taxes. He asked the Commissioners to ask Staff if they have any other sites in mind. He mentioned Aspetuck Village, 455 dwelling units and that they really hadn't done an analysis on that one. He added that he can find out the number of school aged children too.

Mr. Panico stated that he's hoping to get for them is Heritage Point. If they can't get an overall number then they can look up a half a dozen individuals to get an average per house in that development and do their own arithmetic. He commented that they would do the same thing on Four Winds, if they can't get an overall figure, they'll get it individually and multiply it out. He mentioned the 10-unit apartment construction at the corner of River Road and the Laurel Heights road because that is relatively new, just a few years old. He also wants to get Renaissance because it is a combination because the parking is over in the garage. Rick has gotten the Sierra Suites, now Hyatt...

Chair Parkins stated that she would like to know about the Ramada or the Courtyard by Marriot now because they are really the only ones with banquet facilities in town.

Mr. Panico commented that their banquet facilities are relatively modest.

Comm. Harger responded that they are a good size; she's had dinners there.

Comm. Dickal agreed that it was a good size facility.

Chair Parkins commented that they could get about 250 people in there.

Mr. Panico asked if they were talking about the hotel that used to be the Ramada.

Comm. Dickal responded yes. Mr. Panico commented OK.

Mr. Schultz stated that it was also the town's first hotel.

Mr. Panico asked about the hotel on Old Stratford Road.

Comm. Harger stated that was the Hilton Gardens, it has small rooms that are more like meeting rooms.

Comm. Pogoda stated that he thinks that they can open them all up though.

Mr. Panico commented that if they are thinking along the lines of the Hilton as to what they should be looking for up here then that would give them a feeling for it. He stated that he thought that they were looking for something more ambitious than that.

Comm. Pogoda agreed and stated that if they are going to put up another hotel...

Mr. Panico commented that from a tax point of view, more facilities aren't really going to generate that much more in taxes because that is pretty cheap space to build.

Comm. Pogoda asked if he was referring to the hotel.

Mr. Panico responded no, expanding on the convention aspect of it.

Comm. Pogoda commented OK, the conference center.

Mr. Panico indicated that expanding on that space is relatively cheap space by comparison to hotel rooms.

Comm. Pogoda stated that he would want a conference center that would draw people in to start, using other local establishments such as restaurants for food, staying around town for a couple of days in the area. He understands about the hotels but a conference center would bring in quite a few people.

Chair Parkins commented large scale like the State Democratic and Republican Conventions.

Comm. Pogoda agreed about large scale where they can have 1,000 or 1,500 people. He commented that he didn't know if that would fly around here or if there is a call for it. He added

that he thinks it something that has to be looked into and asked if it was something positive for this area.

Chair Parkins stated that there is nothing like that around.

Mr. Panico commented that there is the Trumbull Marriot.

Chair Parkins responded that they were talking larger than the Trumbull Marriot.

Comm. Pogoda indicated that they have a very big ballroom; he had been there for New Year's Eve.

Comm. Dickal stated that they have had parties there for Bridgeport Hospital and there were a lot of people – not a thousand, but there were a lot of people.

Comm. Osak commented that for dining, they have about 350 seated. The maximum was 350-400.

Chair Parkins stated that they are looking at something like 500 to (inaudible)...

Comm. Dickal agreed about 500 to 750, somewhere around there.

Comm. Harger stated that she thinks that they have to clarify what their interpretation of what a convention center is because there are some that are stand alone and others that are self-contained and provide rooms and restaurants so that type won't help other businesses in town.

Mr. Panico responded that it bothers him and he worries when they start talking about a standalone type of facility because it isn't far from a catering facility.

Comm. Harger agreed.

Mr. Panico indicated that catering facilities are nice but they don't pay a lot in taxes.

Chair Parkins commented that she was looking for a joint hotel/conference center type of thing.

Comm. Harger stated that there are different categories (inaudible)...

Comm. Pogoda commented that they want something together (inaudible)...

Mr. Panico indicated that he thinks they want (inaudible) hotel with an adequate of conference facilities along the lines of what the Hilton has but with much more space.

Chair Parkins commented something like a Marriot Copley with an entire floor of conference space.

Comm. Harger stated that there is a place she went to in Massachusetts for a one day meeting. She can't remember the name of the town but it was a factory; it had been totally gutted, renovated, with overnight accommodations on the upper level and the first floor had large rooms that could be adjoined and there were beautiful grounds. They didn't build it from scratch but it fits in with that particular location.

Mr. Schultz commented on that the first two pages of the handout and pointed out the annual taxes for the Data Center -\$462.993. It's a 22 acre site. They like to be secluded for security reasons.

Chair Parkins asked if that was based upon the personal property tax and the equipment that is in there.

Mr. Schultz responded that this is real estate.

Mr. Panico added that this is just real estate, not personal property and not motor vehicles.

Comm. Pogoda commented that there wouldn't be motor vehicles there anyway.

Mr. Panico commented that when you start talking about living accommodations rental apartments there is a significant component with motor vehicles.

Mr. Schultz stated that they just put another generator without any impact to the community.

Comm. Harger clarified that this was not including any of the contents.

Mr. Schultz responded right, it is real estate.

Mr. Panico stated that is a big number, almost a half a million dollars a year in taxes but it is also consuming 22 acres; the per acre generation is only \$21,000 an acre. A good quality development is going to generate at least that amount. He added that the burden on municipal infrastructure is minimal; they really don't provide any services.

Mr. Schultz agreed and said zero services. They have their own security. It is the perfect location right at the cliff.

Mr. Panico noted that the assessed value in terms of square footage of the building is only \$1.85 which isn't very high. He imagines that there must be a big chunk of personal property that goes with that because of all the computers and stuff – that is where the real value is. He asked Rick if he could find out about that.

Mr. Schultz responded yes, that was why he was asking what else the Commission wanted to see; he'll expand on the personal property.

Chair Parkins commented that even Wal-Mart is high because of their (inaudible)...

Mr. Schultz indicated that he has to sit down with someone in the Assessor's Office. This is a difficult time of year because of vacations but he wants to get this going. He commented that the Hyatt Hotel is the newest hotel that they have in town. He is also going to find out about the Courtyard by Marriot and the Hilton Garden.

Mr. Panico stated that he's going to find a significant difference. They know how strong that number – he stated that it goes back to what Frank was saying, if they could get development that has structured parking that occupies a small footprint then they've got a lot of value on a small piece of land and the values per acre go way up. He added that number ends up like \$141,000 per acre.

Comm. Osak indicated that was why the Scinto buildings with structured parking come in at \$2M an acre.

Mr. Panico responded that he was talking about the assessment. The taxes are generating \$140,000 a year and that is similar to the Avalon Downtown site. The Avalon Downtown site is generating \$105,718 per acre because it is a 4.4 acre site with 250 units on it and all the parking is structured. It is a postage stamp site with a lot of development packed on it.

Comm. Osak stated that is what you want.

Mr. Schultz asked if they wanted him to include density.

Mr. Panico responded he thinks that you need to know it.

Mr. Schultz indicated that he would expand on all of these categories.

Mr. Panico commented that the Hyatt Hotel would be beautiful if they could have facilities like that all around. He stated that Rick pulled the information on the two restaurants there and the bank.

Mr. Schultz stated that is all one together there.

Comm. Osak asked how that Hyatt was doing as a business enterprise.

Chair Parkins responded that they weren't doing well as the Sierra Hotel because it was a boutique hotel that didn't offer reward points for anybody; people will stay where they can get reward points. She added that she thinks that is why Hyatt bought it out. This Hyatt has a rewards program.

Mr. Panico asked if that was why it changed hands.

Comm. Dickal responded yes, they have to have perks.

Comm. Osak commented that it was not an inviting entrance, having to go through fast food operations to get to it.

Chair Parkins stated that once you get in there, it is a nice hotel.

Comm. Pogoda commented that it goes by the bank.

Mr. Panico indicated that it is not a driveway; it is like a private road.

Comm. Osak responded that he was just giving his impression but Tony is giving him an engineering analysis and that's different.

Mr. Panico stated no, it is a planning analysis.

Comm. Dickal stated that she understands where Frank is coming from because she used to reside in Fairchild Heights. On a Friday or Saturday night there are a lot of rambunctious people coming out of the restaurants and if you're in the hotel, you're looking over a bunch of mobile homes in desperate need of repair. She added that the place is really going downhill.

Chair Parkins commented that it is more the mobile home park than the restaurants that are the detriments to (inaudible)...

Comm. Dickal stated that people coming in from out of town sometimes don't like the riff-raff when going to their cars because they worry about things like security. She commented that the hotel is nice inside but she agrees with Frank about the way in which you have to enter there. It is really not conducive to how nice it is inside and it is situated behind the restaurants with their dumpsters on the side.

Chair Parkins commented that if you've already made your reservations; it isn't like you're driving around looking for a hotel room.

Comm. Dickal agreed that she's sure if you've made your reservations and leave, the chances of coming back again – they might rethink it.

Chair Parkins stated that she stays in lots of hotels and she would feel better having those restaurants there, knowing that there are people around rather than being in a desolate area.

Comm. Harger added that there is a very convenient place to go and eat. Chair Parkins added yes, and you can walk there.

Mr. Panico stated that the restaurant/bank frontage development on that site is generating \$20,400 an acre in taxes.

Comm. Osak stated that the bottom line is that there is a whole mix of things that would work.

Mr. Panico agreed.

Comm. Osak stated that all you have to do is lay out the arithmetic for the Mayor so that he knows how to calculate the benefit to the community. All these things work. They want to have a net inflow of taxes for the expenses.

Mr. Panico commented that the other thing is to demonstrate that if someone has deep pockets, it is worth it to put the money into the road to create that value up there.

Comm. Osak stated that was true about the road but look at it another way. If they got the right development there then maybe the City should put some public money to help that road go in; it's just the bottom line has to work out. There are a whole bunch of combinations that will work.

Mr. Panico responded yes except, he thinks from the City's point of view their druthers would be to have someone else do it. The City doesn't go around building roads like this every day. It would probably cost 50% more for the City to do it than it would cost a private developer to do it.

Comm. Osak referenced Commerce Drive as a nice road that was a partnership in which three people built it and the City was one of them. It works if you can put it together. They didn't do the ditch digging but they put up the engineering money and some of the street departments in kind labor.

Mr. Panico commented that he didn't think the City had a big involvement in that.

Comm. Osak stated that they put a piece of it in.

Mr. Schultz clarified that they did, Kasper was the engineer and the City (inaudible)...

Mr. Panico stated that Main Street South did the bulk of it and on the other side of Commerce it was (inaudible)...

Chair Parkins commented that Main Street South built her condos.

Mr. Schultz indicated that they were the real estate arm of BHC (Bridgeport Hydraulic Co.). He added that it was Water Company land and then private.

Chair Parkins responded that explains a lot.

Mr. Panico stated that Vargas built Constitution Boulevard from Bridgeport Avenue to Rt. #110. He indicated that he fears pursuing State money to make the State do it. First of all, it won't be the same product and will cost three times as much money and nobody is going to be happy with it.

Mr. Panico stated that the important thing here is that they need to approach it from the point of view of being ready to accept something other than light industrial park development because light industrial park development just won't cut it. Even if the values were there, there is no market.

Comm. Osak commented that they could sit here and meet six more times to discuss all of this but in the final analysis, it is about 1 ½ pages that they give to the Mayor, who is the active agent for the City to sell the property, which essentially says make the income exceed the expenses and they've got a deal. They may want to use fancier words in which to say it but that is where they are.

Mr. Panico stated that he thinks that this group seems to be on the right track in terms of the willingness to accept a significant multi-family and support commercial component because he thinks that what stands the opportunity to make it work.

Comm. Osak responded that he would do that. He indicated that he didn't like the fetish they have for a lot of multi-family. As long as the birth rate stays where it is they are in good shape but who knows. He stated that to get Constitution Boulevard built is the big bogie here.

Comm. Pogoda stated yes that is the bottom line – getting Constitution built, having somebody do it.

Comm. Osak commented that they give something away for that. It is a quid pro quo.

Comm. Pogoda agreed.

Comm. Dickal agreed somewhat with Frank and commented that she has never seen so many multi-type apartment complexes coming in the last 7 or 8 years, and she has been living in Shelton for 36 years. She commented that she knows that it is about the market but her biggest fear is that in the future, after she is long gone, that they will have projects down the road. She reiterated that was her biggest fear.

Comm. Pogoda commented that you just don't know.

Comm. Dickal stated that she wants to be polite and does not want to categorize people but they have seen it happen in other towns.

Mr. Panico responded that they are also going through a catch-up process. They are a City of 40,000 people that had virtually zero rental apartments available unless you rented a flat downtown or rented a condo that somebody else owned.

Comm. Osak agreed that you need to have some of that as your housing stock.

Chair Parkins stated that they are the only ones in the area that are doing it.

Mr. Panico commented that until recently the City didn't want to talk about apartments.

Comm. Dickal stated that she doesn't want them to become drenched with them and that is her concern.

Comm. Osak stated that the big thing about multi-family units is the occupants have to have the well-being to satisfy their own needs without depending upon public assistance. He commented that you can create a ghetto and it doesn't require it to be a person of one different color, it is an economic condition and that is what they have to worry about.

Comm. Dickal responded yes, that is what she was trying to imply.

Comm. Osak stated that the buildings will look nice but what the occupancy economics are - those are the things that they have to be fearful of.

Comm. Dickal agreed that was her concern.

Mr. Panico responded that it is also something that they have no control over except to mandate the quality product that mitigates against a negative occupancy happening.

Comm. Pogoda added that they would have to put out a product which they couldn't afford – it isn't about color, just economics. He clarified that he wasn't degrading anyone in a lower economic group but they have to keep the structure high enough that they aren't going to be able to afford it.

Comm. Dickal commented that they also have to be mindful as they move forward about the economic implications of global warming and finding people who are going to be able to afford living there. She stated that the people who own those facilities see that residents can't afford it then naturally they will start bumping costs down because they have to survive. She clarified that she wasn't saying that this housing wasn't needed but she is afraid of them being drenched with it.

Comm. Pogoda responded that for a while it was condos, condos, condos and now they are really starting to flood with this and now in an area like this they are talking about multi-family. He

asked if they have thought about the total population of Shelton. He asked if they have thought about it and if they want to go to 42,000.

Mr. Panico stated that this Commission, at one time, several years ago, concluded that there was potential to absorb 1,200 units of multi-family housing and it was going to be allocated with roughly half of it downtown and the other half elsewhere. This was 8 or 10 years ago, probably before their time but if he goes back into old literature he can probably find it because (inaudible)...

Comm. Osak stated that they used to say that the town had a capacity under the land use that existed at the time and this goes back to 1981 or 1982 of about 55,000 people and that is if all the single family owned occupied land got filled up with a reasonable amount of open space set aside. He commented that that number keeps coming back but with what they are doing now, it will be in excess of that.

Mr. Panico responded that it was not because (inaudible)...

Comm. Pogoda commented that he hopes not.

Mr. Panico stated that other things have happened which have reduced that.

Comm. Tickey arrived 5:50 p.m.

End of Tape 1A 5:51 p.m.

Comm. Osak asked what those things were.

Mr. Panico responded that a lot of land has been acquired as open space that would otherwise have fallen into development for one thing and the projections today and the household sizes have gotten smaller; the population figures are not moving that rapidly at all. They have a lot net out migration from the State of Connecticut which isn't helping matters.

Comm. Dickal commented that he's saying that it is getting smaller but she sees another aspect. She commented that she works in Labor & Delivery and statistically they are outdoing numbers of births over the last five years. She commented that couples aren't having two children anymore but four children and people in their 40's having babies.

Comm. Osak responded that the statistics don't reflect that though.

Comm. Dickal stated that Bridgeport Hospital has statistics.

Comm. Osak clarified that he was talking about the maximum number of people in a large area. She is describing a very localized event.

Comm. Dickal stated that Yale New Haven and Greenwich are seeing the same numbers. Eventually these children are going to be raised here and go to an area with good schools and low taxes and things for their families.

Comm. Pogoda commented that they were 40,000 right now. He asked if they want to see 55,000.

Mr. Panico responded no, you won't see 55,000 (inaudible)...

Comm. Pogoda commented that he wasn't throwing those numbers out; Frank mentioned that a long time ago they talked about the City being able to absorb 55,000.

Comm. Osak clarified that was a theoretical capacity that's all - nobody said that they wanted that.

Comm. Pogoda responded OK, they weren't saying they wanted it.

Mr. Panico indicated that if they have 1,000 apartment units then you have 2,500 people – that's it. He commented that they need to keep it in perspective.

Comm. Pogoda commented OK, 2,500 but they haven't even finished Downtown yet. They know what is coming up, what has been projected to us and that is just downtown. It is just a figure but he asked how far the City wants to go. He added that he didn't think it was really up to them.

Mr. Schultz responded that the last figure was 45,000.

Comm. Osak stated that it is up to them.

Comm. Pogoda commented that he doesn't want to see it – he's right, it is them but some people think the more the merrier. He asked if they wanted a big city style and to lose every single piece of (inaudible)...

Mr. Schultz stated that at 50,000 you get two high schools.

Comm. Pogoda responded that is a lot. He added that they'll need a full time fire department. They need to start taking those things into consideration. He asked where the breaking point was with the Fire Department.

Comm. Dickal added that they'd need a bigger police force too.

Comm. Pogoda stated that it is up to them to get those facts and figures.

Mr. Panico indicated that they could go back and look at their last update of their Comprehensive Plan of Development and look at its extrapolation of population. He added that they don't come anywhere near it.

Comm. Pogoda stated that they are talking about the projects that they are bringing into light but yes, the last time they updated it. He asked how many years ago that was – five years. He commented that they've put a lot in over the 5 years.

Mr. Panico commented that they could go back to the update prior to that one. He reiterated that the numbers, Shelton's numbers, just don't grow that fast because household size has been coming down. The number of households are increasing but – he commented to Comm. Osak that one time when they did the first plan of development they had a household size of over 3.

Comm. Osak responded 4.2 – it was over 3 but a new subdivision coming in – they tracked a couple of them that were at 4.2 people.

Mr. Panico stated that it is still healthy but probably not 4.2 anymore but on average the household size in Shelton is down to 2.58.

Comm. Pogoda commented that it isn't so much the size as number of people, it is a desirable location. People are coming in and places are selling. He added that there may be homes that have been on the market for 6 months; maybe they are overpriced or they're trying to get too much for them but whatever they are putting up, they are filling up. He commented that the statistics are right on Avalon Downtown that it is 90% filled – somewhere around 90%.

Mr. Panico responded that is because there has been a void in that component of their housing stock. There has been a big void in rental apartments.

Comm. Osak commented that getting back to what is on the table he wanted to make the comment again that what he and Rick are doing is fine and all this data is very good. He added that he thinks that they all understand it. Before they publish it, if they asked what he would see, this is what he would expect to see. He commented that they need to put together a couple of pages of text that says, in some simple words, that they could essentially take anything that brings a net income to the City, that the road gets finished and other than some undesirable uses

like a chicken slaughterhouse, it would work. He stated that they aren't going to do much more than give somebody a policy statement.

Mr. Panico indicated that he doesn't think that they are ready to nail down, and he doesn't think that they want to, or ready to the specific type of use but they can talk about the categories of use such as the moderate density residential, the high density residential.

Comm. Osak stated that you in your own good conscience will know when you have to say no. It will take care of itself.

Chair Parkins commented that she thought that the Mayor was really just looking for what they envisioned going up there and what the economic benefits of what they envisioned would be and to give him some sort of guideline as he starts negotiating with people. She stated that having some idea of what it will cost to put the road in is very valuable. She commented that she thinks that they are all kind of on the same page as to what they want to see up there. They don't want to see gas stations and grocery stations.

Comm. Pogoda stated that he is asking for the things she mentioned but he also thinks it would be helpful to him if they could explain the financial benefits of some things over other things. It is up to them a little bit to give him that information.

Chair Parkins stated that they aren't ready to start rezoning.

Comm. Pogoda responded no, they aren't ready. They don't want a chicken slaughterhouse up there and there are many other things they don't want to see up there. He asked if they needed certain things like movie houses – no, they're gone, gas stations – no, there are enough of them...

Chair Parkins stated that in terms of commercial - some nice restaurants, not the typical Subway...

Comm. Dickal agreed and added no little pizza joints.

Chair Parkins commented that if they are looking for some kind of conference center then something along the lines of Olive Garden or escalated from there and restaurants for people that are going to be there so that they don't have to go all the way down to Bridgeport Avenue. Bone Fish Grill would be perfect up there.

Mr. Panico stated that they could also include offices that render services to people whether it be law offices or medical offices.

Comm. Dickal stated that medical offices are a big thing.

Comm. Pogoda commented that he thinks that is starting to pick up now. They get medical buildings that are starting to come in now.

Chair Parkins stated that they have to be careful when they say medical because they don't want hospitals to build satellite offices that are non-profits that aren't taxable.

Comm. Pogoda referenced Scinto's building No. 4 that is strictly medical or No. 2 just professional offices.

Mr. Panico asked if there was anything under the category of retail that makes sense up there.

Comm. Pogoda asked if he was talking about department stores.

Mr. Panico responded anything that might be thought of as retail that makes sense or all retail.

Chair Parkins stated that they could put an Apple store.

Comm. Tickey commented that saying no unequivocally might be a bit drastic.

Chair Parkins stated retail, high end retail, something like Apple, the Black & White Market... Mr. Panico commented that high-end retail is still pretty broad.

Comm. Osak stated that he thinks that if it has structured parking in it that it would add a significant architectural component to the rest of the buildings but if they just say retail which is 4 cinderblock walls, open (inaudible) roof and cash registers then they will get nothing out of that.

Chair Parkins referenced the area in Milford where Whole Foods is located with all high end stores.

Comm. Pogoda stated that is a conglomeration of small stores because they aren't any big stores but it isn't like they are going to put a huge Macy's up there or something like that. It would have to be a whole bunch of smaller stores.

Mr. Panico asked if that type of retail is something that they would possibly envision over there.

Comm. Tickey responded that he would be agreeable to that here.

Chair Parkins commented that she would like to see that over at Crabtree.

Comm. Pogoda stated that is what they had proposed to them.

Mr. Panico commented that they were talking about small scale, stylized boutique type retail.

Chair Parkins responded yes, high end retail.

Comm. Tickey stated that saying specialized is important because anything that might be wide ranging like an office supply store... (inaudible)

Comm. Osak asked Tony to start inventing some weasel words and put 2 or 3 pages together.

Comm. Pogoda commented about the structured parking and indicated that they aren't going to get that.

Comm. Osak responded that he was just saying that the only way that they get taxable real estate from retail is if it has structured parking; that is an indicator that they have more traffic than they could handle on the real estate that they have. It automatically translates into higher taxes. He clarified that was all that he was saying.

Comm. Pogoda commented that they would all love to see that in a lot of these places.

Mr. Schultz stated that this is not a flat piece of land.

Comm. Osak commented that retail in his house is on the computer. He and his wife buy everything online. They don't go shopping anymore; they just wait for the UPS truck to come.

Chair Parkins commented that you can't try things on that way though. Comm. Dickal agreed.

Chair Parkins added that she'd like to see something like a Brooks Brothers, high end retail.

Comm. Pogoda commented about a high end retail store like Nordstrom's.

There was further discussion about shopping malls, and other retail possibilities (comments inaudible)...

Mr. Panico asked that if they are going to envision the possibility of Nordstrom then how would they say no to a Target or Wal-Mart.

Comm. Tickey agreed that it was a box store.

Mr. Schultz stated that Staff will work on a draft statement and asked about possible dates for a July meeting.

Comm. Osak stated that they should write a preamble to a planning document but don't write the planning document.

Comm. Tickey stated that if they did have some sort of a plaza that had the stores that they just talked about; it might be nice to have some sort of café or eatery as well.

Mr. Panico stated that the difficulty is that fine line and where does it become strip retail, strip commercial. He thinks that if it is designed and it's about who the developer is.

Chair Parkins commented that Scinto had plans to do something similar, a boutique center up in Monroe but she doesn't think it materialized on Route 25.

Comm. Pogoda stated it was up by Swiss Army on Route 25, he has a huge property but they had a lot of problems with sewer development.

Chair Parkins commented about high end retail stores like Williams-Sonoma and that there is nothing between West Farm and Westport for those types of stores.

Comm. Osak commented that there is a Nordstrom in West Farm.

Mr. Panico stated that in that sense, the potential up here exists that they don't have anything else in Shelton to do that kind of thing. He stated that they can't do it Downtown and there is no place else to do it on Bridgeport Avenue. It would even be difficult to do it up here but they have the possibility of being able to do it up here.

Comm. Pogoda stated – because of the road.

Chair Parkins stated that she thinks it could be designed very nicely.

Comm. Dickal agreed and commented about what they did at Split Rock.

Chair Parkins commented that in downtown Westport they have all of those high end stores.

Comm. Dickal stated that they have busy traffic and walking traffic.

Comm. Osak added that they have discretionary, disposable income too.

Mr. Panico commented about the pink shaded area on their map being 10 or 12 acres to make something like that work.

Comm. Harger referenced a nice area on a cliff up in the Manchester area – Buckland Mall.

Comm. Tickey mentioned another area in Fairfield, the Brick Walk where Molto's is and the JoS.A. Bank – it is well done around the sides of two buildings all boutique shops.

Comm. Pogoda agreed that it was a small piece but it fits in well there.

Chair Parkins stated that is something, one of the things that you hear people say in Shelton – that there is no place to shop except TJ Maxx.

Mr. Schultz indicated that the next meeting, a public hearing would be on July 8th in the Auditorium. He suggested the 24th of July for the next Planning Meeting.

Mr. Panico indicated that after one more meeting that could agree on something to send to the Mayor.

Chair Parkins asked Mr. Panico if he would do some sort of draft for the next meeting.

Mr. Panico responded yes, he has an idea of how to make it come together. He commented that they can't get hung up on a bunch of other things, it is primarily on land use and it's on the presumption that if access is available and utilities are available, these are the kind of things that would work, these are the kinds of things that the Commission doesn't want to see happening and these are the areas where they could work.

Comm. Harger asked if he would be specific about stores.

Mr. Panico responded no and he doesn't think he would go that far. He stated that he thinks that if they get into too much detail they could potentially scare away a good proposal that they might otherwise find acceptable.

Comm. Osak agreed that they have to leave the windows open.

Mr. Panico stated that the thrust of it is going to be to accommodate the kind of development that is tax positive to the city.

Comm. Osak added – and a credit to the community.

Chair Parkins commented that if they have a conference center and hotel up there with high end retail, then people will go in and shop while they are here.

Mr. Panico stated that a boutique center won't make sense until Constitution Boulevard is all the way out to 110 because they need to draw beyond the City limits. They need to draw in White Hills, Monroe and that is how they will get them there – down that road.

The next planning meeting was scheduled for 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 24th.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Jim Tickey seconded by Virginia Harger, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karin Tuke
P&Z Recording Secretary