

**PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**  
**March 30, 2016 Special Meeting Minutes**

*These minutes are not official until approved at a subsequent meeting.*

Commission Members Present: Alan Gannuscio, Jim Szepanski, Alexa Brengi, and Cindy Cooper (Alternate)

Commission Members Absent: Vincent Zimnoch, Mike Forschino, and Pat Sayers (Alternate)

Town Staff Present: Jennifer Rodriguez (Town Planner)

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**I. Call to Order**

Chairman Gannuscio called the meeting to order at 6:38 pm.

**II. Roll Call**

Commission roll call was taken. Chairman Gannuscio seated Cindy Cooper for Mike Forschino.

(Note: Mr. Forschino resigned his seat at the commission's last meeting; however, his resignation is not official until the Town Clerk receives something in writing from him to that effect. Ms. Cooper stated that as of last week Mr. Hamel had not received anything from Mr. Forschino.)

Chris Kervick, First Selectman, addressed the commission. He complimented the commission and Ms. Rodriguez on being pro-active and being ahead of other towns in creating overlay zones, studies, and surveys. He then spoke about the sale of the Montgomery Building and the fact that the company is aggressively moving forward with their plans. Next he discussed briefly an act passed by the state that allows the formation of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts. He respectfully asked the commission to place this item on the agenda for the next regular meeting. He explained that implementing a TIF district has to be done with the advice and consent of the town planning agency.

It was **MOVED** (Gannuscio) and **SECONDED** (Szepanski) and **PASSED** (Unanimous, 4-0) that the Planning and Zoning Commission adds this item to the agenda for the April 11, 2016 meeting.

(Ms. Brengi left the meeting at 6:57 pm.)

**III. Plan of Conservation and Development (Review of 2007 Goals and Objectives)**

Ms. Rodriguez had a power point presentation of the 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development which she used for discussion purposes. The first two sections, the **Introduction** and the **Area of Influence**, do not have goals or policies. They are just telling the story of Windsor Locks. She would like to focus on the area of influence but also build some character into that. What is the town's character and history--what has it been, what is it now, and what would you like it to become?

Section III, **Population and Housing**, also has demographics. Community description, types of housing units, household pictures, and population information are included in this section. There are no goals or objectives. Ms. Rodriguez asked if the commission wants to have any visualization in this section. She said she has been taking photos of various neighborhoods of the different types of architecture and lot size, and she would like to add that component into this year's plan so there is a visual picture of what housing looks like in Windsor Locks.

Section IV, **Natural Resources**, has goals and objectives. There is not a lot about agriculture or food resources in this section. Windsor Locks isn't necessarily known as an agricultural town--it was an industrial town--but it's worth having a section that talks about what agriculture is left remaining. There are about 16 or 17 properties. This can be an added category.

The following Goals and Objectives in italics are from the 2007 POCD.

Section IV--Drainage Basins and Watercourses (p. IV-4)

*Goal: To maintain and improve, as needed, the quality and functions of the Town's watercourses and protect them from ongoing development activities.*

*Objectives:*

- 1. Perform an inventory of each of the Town's major watercourses to evaluate their health and open space opportunities. **We don't have any formal study that has done this. Should we leave this in here? Response: Yes.***
- 2. Involve school groups and other organizations in an education program about the importance of the Town's watercourses. **Should we enhance this or leave it the same? Mr. Gannuscio noted that Spring Park used to be a field trip for the schools. Ms. Rodriguez commented that Spring Park is mentioned in the TOD study to be a central location for developing a more formal trail and education area for environmental learning.***
- 3. Seek other opportunities to create additional public open spaces around the Town's watercourses to preserve their functions and create connectivity of the Town's open spaces. **Underway.***
- 4. Consider opportunities for public paths and trails along open space corridors, along the Town's significant watercourses, as a unique recreational amenity and educational opportunity for Town residents.*
- 5. Strengthen land use regulations to require Stormwater Management Plans to improve water quality discharges within the Town's Stormwater drainage systems. **This objective is being taken care of now.***

Section IV--Wetlands and Floodplains (p. IV-7)

*Goal: Continue to identify and protect, for future generations, the Inland Wetland soils and floodplain areas of the Town of Windsor Locks.*

*Objectives:*

1. *Seek to update the Town's Inland Wetland Regulations consistent with the latest CT DEP model regulations. **Taken care of, but need to change all references to DEP to DEEP.***
2. *Consider the establishment of increased regulated areas in the Town wetland regulations particularly associated with the Town's major watercourses and their associated wetlands. **Looking at this again might make sense.***
3. *Establish a no net loss policy of inland wetland soils as the result of new development. **The wetlands regulations do hint at that but if it were stated in a document like this that there is now a no net loss policy, that would have more weight.***
4. *Seek opportunities with the Conservation Commission and the Parks Department and possibly with the Board of Education to provide educational markers and signs along significant wetlands and other natural features within the Town Parks and Open Spaces. **Has been talked about a little bit and sometimes it has ended up in a budget discussion about who is going to include it in their budget. Still think it's worthwhile to do.***
5. *Encourage the dedication of open space in new residential development to preserve and protect the town's wetland systems. **Implemented.***

Section IV--Aquifer Protection Area (p. IV-10)

**This section may change. We don't have the same statutory protection of that area now because those wells have been abandoned and it's no longer drinking water. The goals and objectives will change to more of a preservation effort versus an aquifer protection area.**

*Goal: Support the intent of the State law which is to protect the drinking waters of the State of CT.*

*Objectives:*

1. *The Aquifer Protection Agency should proceed to adopt regulations based on the State model regulations.*
2. *All land use agencies should review their regulations to ensure that they provide the maximum protection to aquifer areas.*
3. *Work closely with the CT Water Company to protect the existing aquifer area in Windsor Locks.*

Section IV--Topography and Slopes (p. IV-11)

**In Section 417 for flexible residential, the steep slope area cannot be computed as part of a useable acre in density requirements, so if the requirement is so many units per acres, the acres that you're using to compute that cannot include steep slopes. There could be better language, so there is room to take this section further, but it was introduced into the zoning regulations.**

*Goal: Protect areas of steep slopes and leave them to the extent possible in their natural condition to minimize adverse impacts to surrounding natural systems.*

*Objectives:*

- 1. Develop specific regulations in the Zoning and Subdivision regulation to protect slopes over 15%.*
- 2. Monitor new development plans to avoid impacts on the town's steep slopes and seek to preserve them in their natural state.*

Section IV--Natural Diversity Data Base (p. IV-13)

**There is a new map that the state provided which will be referenced. The map on page IV-14 will be updated for the next plan.**

*Goal: Support the protection of the Town Natural Diversity areas as identified by the State of CT.*

*Objectives:*

- 1. Review the Natural Diversity Data Base maps with all new development proposals and seek State DEP assistance if development impacts such areas.*
- 2. Make the Natural Diversity Data Base map for Windsor Locks publicly available to prospective developers and property owners within Windsor Locks.*
- 3. Adopt amendments to the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations that places such a review into the required review process. **Some language could be added here.***

Section IV--Open Space (p. IV-17)

*Goal: To establish permanent Greenway open space corridors within the community where opportunities exist that serve the multiple roles of natural resource preservation, wildlife corridors, and recreational opportunities.*

*Objectives:*

- 1. Initiate planning efforts with Suffield and the State of CT to move forward with the implementation of the Windsor Locks Canal State Park. **Implemented.***

2. *Initiate planning efforts to discover potential extensions and preservation of the Kettle Brook Greenway.*
3. *Initiate planning efforts to discover potential extensions and preservation of the Merrigan Brook Greenway.*
4. *Work with the Connecticut Water Company to preserve the existing 225 acre wellfield site, containing Waterworks Brook, on South Center Street. If the company determines that a sale of the site is in its best interests, the Town should seek open space funding opportunities to permanently preserve the site as an addition to the Town open space system. **Implemented.***
5. *Amend the Windsor Locks zoning and subdivision regulations to strengthen the open space provisions by increasing the minimum amount of required open space with new development to a minimum of 20%. Also seek to encourage the preservation of open space greenways as lands within these corridors are proposed for development. **This is still at 10% for subdivisions but for multi-family and flexible residential it is 20%.***
6. *The Town should seek to establish a formal Open Space Land Acquisition Fund. This would be funded by annual appropriations from the Town's budget and from "fees-in-lieu of open space" contributions from new development. **This fund has been established and is just under \$20,000 right now.***
7. *Form a planning group within the Town to plan, and seek implementation and funding methods, for potential greenways in Windsor Locks. This group should consider using the "Integrated Natural Resource Values Analysis" to identify high value areas for preservation efforts. **The conservation commission has agreed to take on this task. Over the last couple of years they have been asking for an inventory, and the inventory that they have so far is specifically for agricultural properties and then will be expanded to include all open space or vacant space. They are considering a ranking scale but that ranking scale is geared more towards agricultural spaces and will need to be expanded. As part of the new POCD there will be a preservation plan that is developed.***

Section V--Traffic and Transportation (p. V-9)

*Goal: To provide for the safe and efficient movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic within the Town of Windsor Locks.*

**Ms. Rodriguez commented that she would like to think that the next plan will include cycling also.**

*Objectives:*

1. *To continue to fund the town's Capital Improvement Program budget on a yearly basis to fund needed roadway improvements. **There have been many of those implemented.***

2. *To encourage the State of Connecticut and continue to seek grants to implement improvements as identified in the Bradley Area Transportation Study. **Do not have a draft plan yet just some rough conceptals but will have more updates soon.***
3. *To encourage, to the extent possible, the use of common driveways, interconnection of parking lots, and limits on the number of curb cuts along the Town's major streets. **There is some decent language in the zoning regulations, so this is partially implemented.***
4. *To plan for a safe and efficient street system to serve the town's business and industrial areas that does not impact on surrounding lower density uses. **This is implemented well through the application and development process.***
5. *To work with the Town's legislative body, the Economic and Industrial Development Commission and private property owners to investigate the possibility of re-establishing the King Spring Road connection to the North Street industrial area. **This was resurrected to some extent with the C&S application, and nothing has happened since then, but it's worth talking about to see if this objective is left in or if it is changed.***
6. *To require the construction of sidewalks along all business parcels during new construction or substantial reconstruction in order to begin a long term objective to form a connected sidewalk system along the town's busiest streets. **This is something that this commission regularly requires or asks for a deferred agreement. The sidewalk regulation could be more specific in certain circumstances, and if there is no draft to review within the year then this should be in the next POCD.***
7. *Review town land use regulations to require / encourage sidewalks construction for pedestrians within new and redeveloped business zoned parcels and between adjacent parcels and the adjacent street system.*
8. *Continue to develop and adopt a set of standards for the construction of Windsor Locks roads and other public improvements. **Implemented. We now have a public improvement manual.***
9. *Establish bus shelters at logical locations along Route 75 and seek funding through the assistance of CROG. **Finally implemented!***
10. *Work with State and Amtrak officials to achieve an improved rail facility in Windsor Locks, either a reuse of the historic rail station or a new facility at the current rail stop. **Not on the ground yet, but now acknowledged by the state that the station will be relocated. It's beyond 15% design—it's at final draft. We have funding for the roof and for the building itself (interior). The contractors cannot do the work because we can't get an easement/okay from Amtrak. The Town Attorney has modified the 70-page document they sent us and we are waiting for a response from the state, which will hopefully be within a few weeks.***
11. *Actively promote the concept of a full commuter rail service in the Springfield, MA / New Haven corridor. **Taking place.***

Section VI--Economic Development (p. VI-9-10)

*Goal: To continue to support a strong Business and Industrial sector of the Windsor Locks economy which provides job creation, needed local services and tax revenues to the community.*

*Objectives - Industrial:*

- 1. Investigate if the Town owned parcel on Old County Road, now used as a leaf dump, could be put to more productive industrial use. **The idea has been floated but no proposals yet.***
- 2. Review the zoning pattern along Old County Road from Halfway House Road south to determine a zoning district pattern that best reflects current uses and the most appropriate future uses. **Implemented, but this could always be discussed.***
- 3. In a coordinated effort with the Board of Selectmen, Town Attorney and affected property owners, seek a reasonable and effective method to extend King Spring Road from its present apparent terminus to the industrial area north of Northgate Drive. If this is not possible, the Planning and Zoning Commission should revise the permissible uses in the remaining industrial district on North Street to exclude high traffic, and heavy truck traffic, uses. **Talked about this in the other section.***
- 4. Consider methods, such as tax incentives, to encourage owners to maintain the value of older industrial buildings so that they are kept productive and marketable into the future. **Not something formal.***
- 5. Consider ways to increase code enforcement efforts particularly for the older commercial and industrial areas of town. **Have introduced the blight ordinance.***

*Objectives - Commercial:*

- 1. The Planning and Zoning Commission should establish clear policies on what improvements are expected for new commercial development and redevelopment in the Town's business districts. **In the regulations it says that the existing property should be brought proportionately up to standards, so the language could be improved. Maybe it's worth having the Town Attorney review this section. If the language is okay the way it is, it does provide some flexibility and gives the commission a chance to ask for some improvements that are reasonable.***
- 2. Improved commercial development site plan design standards affecting lighting, landscaping, reasonable signage, circulation, proper driveway cuts, and pedestrian circulation should be continually researched and incorporated into the town's land use regulations. **All of that, except for pedestrian circulation, has been addressed, and pedestrian circulation has been addressed in the MSOZ. Implemented.***
- 3. Pedestrian sidewalks should be a mandatory improvement expected with new development, particularly along Route 75 and within and among commercial uses. **Taken care of/Implemented.***

4. *The Planning and Zoning Commission should review and upgrade standards for new hotel construction in Windsor Locks. The market need for additional hotel rooms should be studied prior to new hotel development so as to avoid over saturation of this use throughout Town but particularly in the Route 75 corridor. **Have not done any formal study.***
5. *The Planning and Zoning Commission should continue to ensure that airport valet parking not overwhelm the commercially zoned areas of town near Bradley Airport. Regulations should require or provide incentives to have the frontage of these parcels presently used for valet parking along Rt. 75 used for traditional business purposes. **This was implemented to some extent.***
6. *The Planning and Zoning Commission in conjunction with the EIDC should seek funds for and complete a Strategic Master Plan for Downtown Windsor Locks. **Implemented.***
7. *Work with property owners to encourage the productive reuse of the Montgomery Building that minimizes traffic impacts on Routes 140 and 159, provides safe circulation by incorporating a new two-way access to Main Street, creates sufficient parking unencumbered by the flood plain, produces increased tax revenues for the Town, provides open space access to the CT River, and produces an asset to the downtown. **In a few ways this has been taken care of.***
8. *Consider Village District or Historic Overlay zoning in the Main Street commercial areas to encourage new development and redevelopment compatible to a downtown setting. **Implemented.***
9. *Encourage and support the successful reuse of the Main Street Historic Train Station. **Was discussed earlier.***
10. *Work with the owner of the Dexter Plaza to encourage redevelopment in a manner that encourages multi-use and multi-story development along the streetline in a traditional downtown development pattern. **Have had many conversations with them. The shop owners and management team have been very receptive.***
11. *Study and implement planning and zoning solutions for the best use of the commercially zoned land along the Route 20 corridor. **Implemented. There have been many conversations and the AIOZ does a good job of summarizing the types of uses and how that could be developed under a general plan of development.***
12. *The Planning and Zoning Commission should adopt strong architectural standards for all new business and industrial construction. The Town should consider the benefits of establishing a formal Design Review Commission that would be comprised of design professionals that would serve to advise both applicants and the Commission. **Partially been met. In the downtown there are those architectural standards but not a community wide design standard.***

Section VII, **Schools**, does not have goals or objectives. Ms. Rodriguez works with the schools often and tries to get their input and do student programs. The Meeting on Main has been hosted by the middle school. The history teacher comes with between 5 and 20 students, and they are very interested in being a part of the local government. Because of their new Pathways Program, which is less of a grading system and more of a self-evaluation, they are looking for ways for the students to be integrated and have done a lot of community outreach. This section will look a little different and will have examples of what's happening and what could happen in the future.

Section VIII--Parks and Recreation (p. VIII-4-5)

*Goal: To continue to provide a safe, convenient and enjoyable Parks and Recreation system for use by all Town residents.*

*Objectives:*

- 1. To continue to fund with the Town's annual Capital Improvement Program, on a yearly basis, the funds needed to properly maintain and improve the Town's park system. **In general, we have a very good park system with lots of parks in a lot of different neighborhoods.***
- 2. Seek any and all available grant opportunities to help fund needed improvements in the Town park system. **Ongoing.***
- 3. Establish a plan for consistent improvements to the Town park's system such as: establishing a new full length soccer field; establishing a new baseball diamond; a water park facility at Pesci Park; a skateboard park; and, a boat launch facility to the Connecticut River. **Some of these have been implemented.***
- 4. Extend and establish town Greenways along several of the Town's watercourses and connect these to the Town Park system with access points and trails. **This has not been established but a map was created to show what that would look like in concept. This can be spruced up and brought forward.***
- 5. If the Ct Water Company seeks to sell its wellfield site in the southeast corner of Town, look to acquire this site as a large Town passive park facility. **This has been acquired.***
- 6. Work with the Town of Suffield and the State of Connecticut to realize the Windsor Locks Canal State Park along the Connecticut River. **Implemented.***

Section IX, **Capital Improvements**. There is a list of projects but not goals. Some of these have been done.

Section X, **Existing Land Use and Future Land Use Plan**. This is where you would find your specific properties that you want to dive into and make suggestions for.

Section XI, **Planning Policies**. This is a summary of all of those sections and how you can affect and implement through a planning policy.

Ms. Rodriguez commented that it's good to see that a lot of things were implemented.

IV. **Adjournment**

It was **MOVED** (Szepanski) and **SECONDED** (Cooper) and **PASSED** (Unanimous, 3-0) that the Planning and Zoning Commission adjourns the March 30, 2016 meeting at 8:13 pm.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Debbie Seymour  
Recording Secretary*