

**TOWN OF CROMWELL  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

**PUBLIC HEARING AND SPECIAL MEETING**

**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2006  
7:00 P.M.**

**ROOM 224 CROMWELL TOWN HALL, 41 WEST STREET**

**MINUTES AND RECORD OF VOTE**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Peter Hanson called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL:**

Present: Peter Hanson, Al Diaz, Joe Cardillo, Rob Townsend, Tom Madden, alternates Barry McGuinness and Linda Duren (arrived at 7:10 p.m.).

Absent: Mark Corvo, Jeffrey Polke, Michael Cannata, Peter Keithan and alternate Phil Halibozek.

**3. SEATING OF ALTERNATES:** Alternates Barry McGuinness and Linda Duren were seated by general consent.

**4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

The agenda was approved by general consent.

**5. PUBLIC HEARING AND POSSIBLE ACTION:**

- a. Application #06-102: New Plan of Conservation and Development. Planning and Zoning Commission, applicant.

Mr. Hanson gave a brief introduction and went over the meeting outline. He said the purpose of tonight's meeting was to review the Plan as presented by the POCD Committee. The Plan is intended to be a road map and direction for the town, based upon the collected wishes of the community.

Town Planner Craig Minor said the Connecticut General Statutes require that municipalities prepare and adopt a new plan every ten years. It should provide guidance for short and long-term decision-making. It should address what kind of community we are now and what kind of community we want to become. It will be used by land use and other town boards. It will guide the Planning and Zoning Commission when they make changes to planning and zoning regulations.

Tom Madden, Chairman of the POCD Committee thanked the committee members, Mr. Minor and the Consulting firm, Peter J. Smith and Co. He said the committee has produced a first-rate document because of the quality and diversity of the committee members. He said the Committee made valid efforts to listen to the community and they feel a committee should remain in place to ensure the document is upheld. He introduced Jocelyn Gordon, of Peter J. Smith and Co.

Ms. Gordon gave a Power Point presentation of the Plan, which included the following:

- **Definition of a POCD**-long term community vision, goals and objectives, policy statements, ensuring quality of life, rationale for Town zoning ordinances, prioritizing improvements
- **Steps taken to prepare the Plan**-working with the POCD Committee, attending Committee meetings, inventory and data collection, random community survey, focus group sessions, interactive public input session, draft product preparation
- **Items in the POCD** -building up the tax base with new commercial and industrial development, developing the riverfront, developing historic downtown Main Street, park and recreation and trail development, a sidewalk plan, enforcing stricter land use regulations, and addressing the needs of the growing senior population
- **Public Input Issues Map**-areas of possibility identified by the public
- **Proposed Future Land Use**-map and plan
- **Future Potentials Plan**-smart growth solutions, business park development, preserving rural character, connecting downtown with waterfront.
- **Recommendation highlights**-update land use regulations, develop urban design plan, prepare a business park and marketing plan, prepare and open space and trails plan.

Mr. Hanson introduced the POCD Committee members and asked for public comment on each of the areas outlined in the meeting plan.

#### a. Objectives

**Marvin Selsky of 82 Willow Brook Road** referred to the “Land Use” policies on page 8 of the Plan. He said a sixth policy should be added stating “protect the character of residential neighborhoods.” He said “Circulation” policy 29, “Encourage mixed-use development in close proximity to or along transit corridors” should be eliminated. He said part of the agreement with Lowe’s states that they will not ask to change the zone on the remainder of 27 Coles Road as long as the other houses between 27 Coles Road and Berlin Road remain zoned residential. If the zone were changed to mixed-use as indicated in the Plan, it would eliminate that guarantee.

**Ann Reiner of 82 Willow Brook Road** asked how the “Open Space” policy 11, “Promote the development of an interconnected system of parks, trails and open spaces” would be fulfilled.

Ms. Gordon said the Town should put together a comprehensive plan to purchase land and easements as they become available.

**John Putnam of 2 River Park Drive** said an objective should be the design of additional entrance ramps to the Town. The Town needs as much access as possible in and out of town. More grant opportunities should be sought from the State. Rocky Hill has wisely developed its southern plank with commercial businesses; the northern plank of Cromwell should be developed as well.

**Michael Millane of 34 Field Road** said the Plan states the “Goals and Objectives must be reasonable and realistic”; in his opinion there are serious flaws in the Plan.

**Dick Coughlin of 19 Glenwood Terrace** the concept of an office park next to the highest residential tax generators does not make sense. He also has concerns about the downtown business district because the flood plain needs to be addressed.

**Jay Salvador of 7 Heatherwood Green** said the Plan calls for environmentally sensitive business parks. Is that possible? There must be specific zoning requirements or we could end up with something unattractive.

**Myron Johnson of 16 Pleasant Street** asked how much of the riverfront is available for commercial use.

**George LaCava of 6 Summer Wind** said when zoning land as industrial to drive development, they must be sure that the land is economically feasible. To dismiss mixed-use zones is a mistake; it allows for well-designed development.

**Sal Morello of 20 Iron Gate Lane** said he owns a business in downtown Main Street and currently the mixed-use zone is not working well. Downtown is a great area for business, but not residential.

**Jonathan Beatty of 9 Bellaire Manor** said that some of the proposed mixed-use zones on the map were changed back to residential at the last POCD meeting.

**Marvin Selsky** said all mixed-use should be eliminated; otherwise some residential property is protected while others are not. P & Z can waive a zoning regulation when it's warranted; don't infringe on residential areas.

Ms. Gordon replied that a mixed-use zone ensures the Town can achieve a higher quality of development. Mr. Hanson asked her about funding for entranceways into the Town. Ms. Gordon said the Committee could add that as a policy.

**Nick Demetriades of 23 Meadow Road** said that policy is included in “Circulation” policy 25, “Coordinate with state and regional transit providers to ensure access...” and policy 26, “Coordinate with regional and state agencies ...the development of access management strategies”.

Ms. Gordon said this document could be used as a funding tool when applying for grants.

#### **b. Population-Housing-Economy Profiles**

**Michael Millane** said the existing land use map in the document has many mistakes; a lot of the land is misclassified.

Mr. Hanson said there are some errors with the open space as well.

**David Beauchemin of 78 South Street** asked for clarification of the Agricultural Protection District.

Mr. Minor said during the development of the Plan there was a suggestion to keep Cromwell's connection to agricultural land. This would be a compromise that allows development while keeping a sense of Cromwell's agricultural traditions. The Agricultural Protection district that appears in the draft POCD has been eliminated by the Committee, because they did not feel it was realistic.

**Mike Weidler of 512 Main Street** said agricultural land should be protected; it would be nice if the community could grow some of its own food.

**Ann Halibozek of 7 Christian Hill Road** asked how a premier office park would impact residential property values.

**Mike Gengler of 5 Forest Road** we need to preserve the balance between commercial and agricultural land. We need smart commercial use surrounded by open space.

**George LaCava** said we must remember the land being discussed is privately owned. If the citizens are not willing to buy it, we cannot mandate that it remains agricultural.

Mr. Minor said the zoning regulations would encourage the type of development we want; density bonuses could be made so as not to burden the landowners.

#### **c. Traffic Circulation-Infrastructure-Utilities profile, findings, recommendations**

**Marvin Selsky** said there should be more stop signs on roads. West Street and Franklin Road is dangerous and needs stop signs.

**Michael Millane** said a road-rebuilding plan should be incorporated into the POCD.

**John Putnam** asked about improvements to Nooks Hill Road.

**George LaCava** said 30-foot roads in residential areas are at odds with traffic calming techniques. Narrower roads slow down traffic; the road specs should be updated.

**Eric Parham of 367 Main Street** said people slow down on narrower roads because they're so much more dangerous. The Town should make better use of its existing entranceways and there should be a rotary on West Street for easier access to the downtown business district.

**Myron Johnson** said there is a big problem with traffic at the West Street exit from Route 9.

**Ann Reiner** said the Town's infrastructure has to be dealt with before we put in big-box stores.

**Steve Beck of 42 Franklin Road** said we need sidewalks. We could eliminate a lot of buses if children could walk to school safely and people should be able to walk around town.

Ms. Gordon said the POCD includes budgeting for the implementation of a comprehensive sidewalk plan. The Town should prioritize the plans outlined in pages 22-24.

**Tony Varricchio of 6 Kowal Drive** said the Plan calls for additional sidewalks on Nooks Hill Road. There are already sidewalks on one side of the road. It is more important to link the schools with sidewalks. That should be the number one priority.

**Marvin Selsky** asked for the total cost of all the recommendations in the Plan.

**Alice Kelly of 47 Willow Brook Road** said the total cost for years 1-3 is \$1,470,000; years 5-10- \$1,595,000.

Ms. Gordon said some of that is for developing specific plans; the rest is for actual projects.

#### **d. Waterfront and Downtown including Civic Center & Commercial (Southeast)**

**Michael Millane** said mixed-use areas need a population to support it. A lot of the land being proposed for mixed-use is owned by Cromwell Growers.

Ms. Gordon said the Plan recommends changing it to mixed-use if and when Cromwell Growers leaves.

**Alice Kelly** said when zones change it puts existing businesses at a disadvantage, because they have to get exceptions to add-on to their existing buildings. Changes must be done carefully or it can impact a person's ability to make a living.

**Marvin Selsky** agreed and said the Plan calls for a "complete redistricting of much of the town". That wording should be changed.

Mr. Hanson asked why they chose that location for a community center. Ms. Gordon said it would add critical mass and would enhance the downtown area. Mr. Hanson asked if the infrastructure is in place. Ms. Gordon said the next step would be to determine that.

**Myron Johnson** asked how much of the riverfront is developable.

Mr. Hanson said the flood plains could be dealt with by engineering-it would not be easy, but it is workable.

#### **e. High Density Residential, Mixed-Use and Industrial (Southwest)**

**Michael Millane** said all of Main Street should be mixed-use. It would improve overall design. Mr. Hanson said with mixed-use, comes issues of compatibility and sprawl.

Ms. Gordon said it depends on how the uses are designed.

**Marvin Selsky** said there is a basic conflict between people trying to protect their neighborhood and large landowners who want to sell their land for higher profits.

**Alice Kelly** said the area being discussed already has mixed-use; you can't dismiss mixed-use where it is most appropriate.

**George LaCava** said Route 99 is ideal for mixed-use. Design control would have to be overseen by a committee of people who have expertise with building and design. It should not be built up helter-skelter.

**Steve Beck** asked if the area by Washington Road would be rezoned for mixed-use.

Mr. Hanson said the Plan recommends rezoning a few houses in that area.

**f. Business Park (North)**

**Michael Millane** said his family owns a 50-acre parcel east of Route 99. The land east of the pond should remain residential. Mixed-use is appropriate for the land west of the pond. **Diane Weigert of 75 Geer Street** said she lives across from Gardner's fields. The proposed business park with the agricultural overlay is a good, sound plan. How does removing the agricultural overlay affect it?

Mr. Hanson said regardless of the agricultural overlay, the definition of a premier business park would include open space to preserve an agricultural feel. Ms. Gordon said the Town could create design standards to ensure high quality.

**g. Regional Commercial/ Mixed-Use and Industrial (Southwest)**

Mr. Hanson briefly discussed the issue at 27 Coles Road.

**Ann Halibozek** said it is prohibited to create a driveway to a commercial lot that is between residential lots. By renaming the zones, you are attempting to circumvent state statutes.

Mr. Minor said it is a policy of P & Z to not allow commercial driveways between residences.

Ms. Gordon discussed the plan to improve the Berlin Road corridor.

**Jonathan Beatty** said the main issue is to come up with good design criteria.

Mr. Hanson agreed and said mixed-use is used to sustain businesses. Ms. Gordon said there are different types of mixed-use. Mr. Hanson said mixed-use could be a mixture of different types of businesses, for example, big box mixed with smaller retail.

**Stan Stachura of 47 Geer Street** said everything would have to go before the Planning and Zoning Commission; they will have the final say on how everything is zoned.

**Alice Kelly** Route 372 looks terrible; we need design standards in the regulations.

**Joyce Heidorn of 9 Coles Road** asked if the five homes between 27 Coles Road and Route 372 would remain residential.

Mr. Hanson said maybe; nothing in the Plan is binding. P & Z has to consider all rezoning.

**Tom Grant of 52 Missionary Road** said there needs to be a change in design specifications for businesses.

#### **h. Residential (Town wide)**

Mr. Hanson said there has been discussion about requiring lower density for the remaining residential areas.

**George LaCava** said larger lots add to sprawl. Large lots are not necessarily wanted. Conservation and cluster developments are more desirable.

#### **i. Trails and Open Space**

**Myron Johnson** asked about the land behind the firehouse on Coles Road.

Mr. Minor said the Fire District owns it. Mr. Hanson said large portions of land actually owned by the Town do not appear on the maps in the Plan.

**Alice Kelly** said there is a parcel of land behind Evergreen that is owned by the Town, and it should be researched.

**George LaCava** said the proposal for Hoffman Farm should be checked. The grant used to purchase the land may not allow for any development on the property. Also, the Town may not have to purchase property to expand the trails; it can be done through obtaining right-of-ways.

**John Putnam** said a proposed trail next to the river shown on the Plan should take a left onto Nooks Hill Road and join an existing trail in River Highlands State Park.

**Marvin Selsky** said the grant to purchase Hoffman Farm states that only passive recreation can take place on the land. A building dedicated to passive recreation or picnic tables may be allowed.

**Steve Beck** said Hoffman Farm would be a great place to bring back the agricultural feel to the Town.

Mr. Hanson asked if the Committee is recommending holding onto all current open space or turning some of it over for industrial development. Ms. Gordon said the recommendation is to keep all current open space.

**Myron Johnson** said it is the sentiment of many of the citizens that Hoffman Farm is being underutilized. It costs a lot to maintain, and citizens feel like they bought into something and received something different.

#### **j. Other**

**Sal Petrella of 558 Main Street** said we shouldn't confuse agricultural use with open space. We want open space, not agricultural use. We must keep in mind the tax benefits versus the benefits to the citizens of the town. When you change zones while you have existing uses, you create non-conforming uses. For example, a construction company that exists on Main Street does not fit in with this plan; how will we get rid of that use? The question becomes who is going to spend a lot of money to revitalize an area if you can't get rid of what you don't want. The Plan calls for reducing existing industrial development to

Sebethe Drive. Can Sebethe Drive handle more development? Why would we want to get rid of all industrial development when the demand for it exists? We already have a Planned Office Development zone by Route 9. We have not had one application come forward. Planned Office is doomed to failure and should be rezoned commercial. If there is to be development in the river area, we have to deal with the flood plain issues. Also, there are several polluted properties down there. Who is going to buy those properties? The Plan should include incremental specifics on how to meet the goals of the Plan. **David Putnam** said once you start changing zones, you create non-conforming uses. The Town will have to appoint a committee which looks into acquiring target properties.

Ms. Gordon said the goal is to direct business park development instead of piecemeal industrial development.

A **motion** was made by Rob Townsend, **seconded** by Barry McGuinness and it was *unanimously* approved to **table** Application #06-102 until the December 5, 2006 Planning and Zoning meeting. *Motion passed.*

**6. ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned by general consent at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly Spurlin  
Clerk

12/01/06