

ENFIELD PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
**DRAFT MINUTES FOR COMMISSION CONSIDERATION**  
THURSDAY, September 24, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.  
Virtual Meeting

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**Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Nelson called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

**Roll Call**

Commissioner Szewczak took the roll and present were Commissioners Virginia Higley, Richard Szewczak, Frank Alaimo, Ken Nelson, Linda DeGray and Alternate Commissioner John Petronella. Absent were Commissioners Charles Ladd, Mary Scutt, Vinnie Grillo and Dane Thorogood.

Also present were Laurie Whitten, Director of Development Services and Elizabeth Bouley, Recording Secretary.

Chairman Nelson seated Alternate Commissioner Petronella.

**Approval of Minutes** – September 10, 2020 Special Meeting

**Motion:** Commissioner DeGray made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Higley, to approve the minutes of the September 10, 2020 Regular Meeting as amended.

The motion passed with a 6-0-0 vote.

**Votes: 6-0-0**

**Other Business**

**Motion:** Commissioner Szewczak made a motion, seconded by Commissioner DeGray, to move the Introduction of Don Poland from Goman+York to discuss the update of the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) and Zoning Regulations up on the agenda before the discussion regarding the proposed Lake Overlay District text amendment language.

The motion passed with a 6-0-0 vote.

**Votes: 6-0-0**

- a. Introduction of Don Poland with Goman+York to discuss the update of the POCD and Zoning Regulations

Ms. Whitten introduced Don Poland to the Commission and went over the criteria that was used to choose Goman+York. She described Mr. Poland's qualifications and prior experience.

Mr. Poland stated that Goman+York is the right firm for this project and they are excited to be involved. He provided the Commission with an overview of his qualifications and went over the workplan for the POCD and Zoning Regulation update.

Mr. Poland provided the names of his team members that will also be working on the project, stating that he will be the front person that the Commission will be interacting with.

Mr. Poland went over the schedule for September 2020 through January 2021. He outlined the plan for community engagement, including a series of informational podcasts, focus groups and community conversations.

Mr. Poland showed the Commission a socioeconomic and demographic graphic, informational handout and survey that he had created for the Farmer's Market.

Commissioner Alaimo asked if the riverfront will be included with the Thompsonville section. Mr. Poland stated that he can discuss this with Staff and look into it. Commissioner Alaimo stated that the riverfront should be included, and the Town Council is looking at it for future use.

Commissioner Szewczak agreed, stating that the riverfront should be preserved and plans for it should be geared toward more recreational development than commercial development. Commissioner Alaimo stated that the riverfront is not currently accessible to the residents and is mostly private property only accessible to people who live there. He suggested that the riverfront should be opened up so the general public can enjoy it.

Ms. Whitten stated that Thompsonville is definitely part of the plan to review and comment on, both in the POCD and the regulations. Commissioner Alaimo stated that the riverfront would be a great asset to the whole community if they can figure out a way to get access to it.

Chairman Nelson stated that they have to work with the Town Council to find out what their direction is. He stated that unless the Town Council is willing to purchase the riverfront property from willing sellers, there is nothing they can do to change it. Chairman Nelson stated that he does not want any part of putting restrictions on someone's land, thereby deeming it value-less, if the town does not want to buy the land. He pointed out that South River Street is still for sale and that before they deem land un-buildable, they need to find out the direction of the Town Council.

Commissioner Szewczak stated that they should not change the regulations dramatically, but rather they need to put forth a plan with the future vision for the town of Enfield. He stated that it might be in the town's best interest to buy some of these available properties that are not yet developed.

Commissioner Alaimo stated that they have to look at North River Street as well as South River Street. Chairman Nelson reiterated that the Commission cannot put restrictions on property to make it value-less unless the town is willing to put up the money to purchase it. He stated that the Town Council should be involved in the beginning stages of this to say whether they are looking at purchasing any of these properties.

Ms. Whitten stated that the Commission needs to decide on a steering committee. Chairman Nelson asked if there are any council liaisons, to which Ms. Whitten replied that she is not aware of any. Commissioner Szewczak stated that there should be someone from the Conservation Commission as well as someone involved in agriculture. Chairman Nelson stated that each Commission should appoint two members in order to keep it from being political; Commissioners DeGray and Higley agreed.

Chairman Nelson asked if any members' terms are up this year, to which Ms. Whitten replied that she is not sure.

Mr. Poland requested that the Commission put some trust and faith in his team. He stated that they will learn more about the riverfront and then roll out a number of scenarios. Mr. Poland stated that he is a strong property rights advocate and will not put forth a plan that involves using eminent domain to take the whole riverfront. He concluded that the Commission should trust in Goman+York to explore and get the information back to the Commission.

Commissioner Alaimo stated that there has been a lot of interest by the Town Council and past Town Councils as they have spent a lot of money on plans and consultants for this area. Chairman Nelson stated that they can spend money drawing up plans, but until they own the property nothing can be done. He suggested that an accessway to the river could be purchased by working with homeowners and then the town would just have to purchase parking areas. Chairman Nelson stated that everyone wants the riverfront but they need to figure out how to make it happen without taking people's land.

Ms. Whitten stated that the riverfront has been front and center for the entire two years she has been working here.

Chairman Nelson stated that the mall is a more pressing issue and he hopes the developer is on board with the town to get something going. Ms. Whitten stated that she had spoken with the mall owner earlier today and they are still working toward filling the mall. She stated that they also need to look at Mass Mutual, which will never have employees in it again. Mr. Poland stated that he is currently working on two mall sites, and his team has expertise on both the developer/owner side and the municipal side.

Commissioner Alaimo asked if the POCD is mandated by the state, to which Mr. Poland replied that it is. Commissioner Alaimo stated that it is only used to argue with and asked if it can actually have teeth.

Chairman Nelson asked how many solar farms they want in Enfield as the land looks atrocious on Broadbrook Road with no screening. Commissioner DeGray stated that they had no say in the solar panels; Ms. Whitten stated that it was the under the jurisdiction of the Siting Council.

Mr. Poland utilized a graphic to illustrate the purpose and intent of the POCD. He stated that it is not regulatory but is advisory.

Chairman Nelson stated that he is glad Goman+York was selected as they are local and know the needs of the town better than a firm from out of state.

Commissioner Szewczak stated that it is good to have someone local who understands the town. Commissioner Alaimo stated that it is a shame to have a community of over 40,000 people and only 50 can go to the river.

b. Discussion regarding proposed Lake Overlay District text amendment language

Ms. Whitten stated that she did not have a chance to review what the Assistant Town Planners had put together, so she is not comfortable discussing the numbers at this time. Discussion took place regarding the duties of the Assistant Town Planners and how they will divide the work of Ms. Pacacha, who will be out on medical leave for the next three weeks.

Chairman Nelson stated that he is still concerned that if all of the setbacks on a rectangular 11,000 SF property were removed, there may not still be 25% left in the center that is buildable. He stated that they are not passing the correct regulation if everyone has to go to ZBA for this. He stated that they need to know how much land is left after all of the setbacks have been taken out. Ms. Whitten stated that Staff will do some diagrams on this.

Chairman Nelson stated that the Commission can make the regulation, but if it does not fit any of the other Commissions it is a waste of time.

### **Commissioner's Correspondence**

Commissioner Alaimo asked if there is a fee to the town if a business increases the size of the outdoor dining tents. Ms. Whitten replied that she does not believe there is unless it is a Building Permit fee.

Commissioner Alaimo stated that the Fire Departments need to be notified as the outdoor tents are now being heated due to colder weather. Chairman Nelson stated that this has nothing to do with PZC and is a Building Department and Fire Department issue. Discussion took place as to whether any of this is under the jurisdiction of the Commission.

### **Town Planner Report**

Ms. Whitten stated that Winstanley is still outstanding in the court. She stated that they are trying to have a winter Farmer's Market and they will hear within the week where that may be located.

Chairman Nelson asked if the town will have the Jack O'Lantern Festival, to which Ms. Whitten replied that she does not know but she will ask.

### **Applications to be Received**

- a. **PH# 2982** – 10 Duff Drive – Special Permit and Site Plan Review application for the expansion of a non-conforming structure to allow a garage addition; Brian Embacher, owner/applicant; Map 68/Lot 9; R-33 Zone.

Chairman Nelson asked if this was on the agenda for the last meeting, to which Ms. Whitten replied that it was and it needs Wetlands approval. Commissioner Higley stated that it passed Wetlands approval at the last Wetlands meeting.

**Opportunities/Unresolved Issues**

- a. Discussion – Combining Planning & Zoning Commission and the Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Agency

**Adjournment**

**Motion:** Commissioner DeGray made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Alaimo, to adjourn.

The motion passed with a 6-0-0 vote.

**Votes: 6-0-0**

Prepared by: Elizabeth Bouley

Respectfully Submitted,

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Richard Szewczak, Secretary