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ENFIELD PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY MARCH 23, 2023 – 6:00 PM
ENFIELD TOWN HALL - COUNCIL CHAMBERS
820 ENFIELD STREET - ENFIELD, CT

Watch the meeting live on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aVf4AYdiHs>

Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Commissioner Petronella took the roll and present were Commissioners Lewis Fiore, Virginia Higley (remote), John Petronella, Kiran Majmudar, Francis Alaimo, Linda DeGray and Alternate Commissioners Christian D'Antonio and Nicles Lefakis. Absent was Alternate Commissioner Grillo.

Alternate Commissioner Lefakis arrived at 6:04pm.

Also present were Laurie Whitten, Director of Planning, Matt Davis, Assistant Planner, and Rebecca Jones, Recording Secretary.

Approval of Minutes

- a. March 9, 2023

Motion to approve the March 9th regular meeting minutes made by Commissioner Higley; seconded by Commissioner Majmudar.

Commissioner DeGray noted an error on the motion to close the public hearing for PH# 3054 – 117 North Street. The correct motion should read “Motion to close the public hearing made by Commissioner Higley; seconded by Commissioner DeGray”. She also requested a language revision on page 4 to read “map books will be provided...”.

Motion to table the approval of the March 9th regular meeting minutes made by Commissioner DeGray; seconded by Commissioner Alaimo and approved by a roll call vote of 7-0-0.

Town Attorney Report

None.

Public Communication

None.

Bond Release(s)

None.

Chairman Fiore explained there was an error in the legal ad for the public hearing and by law, the public hearing will not begin until 6:30pm.

Motion to move New Business up in the agenda made by Commissioner DeGray; seconded by Commissioner Hilinski and approved by a unanimous vote of 7-0-0.

New Business

- a. **CGS 8-24 – 5 Taylor Road** – Referral from the Town Council for the conveyance/transfer of the Nathan Hale School property; Town of Enfield, owner; Map 110/Lot 4; R33 Zone

Ms. Whitten gave a brief overview of the referral. There is a remaining balance owed by the Town of Enfield for approximately \$102,000.00 and the Town Manager and Superintendent are applying for loan forgiveness through the School Construction Office. There is also an EPA Brownfield assessment being done on the property at no cost to the town. A prospective buyer is interested in creating an Indoor and outdoor basketball courts and some residential component in future phases. Chairman thanked the Town Manager for the in-depth information provided in the memo. Commissioner Hilinski asked about the likelihood of loan forgiveness.

Motion to approve CGS 8-24 made by Commissioner Petronella; seconded by Commissioner Hilinski and approved by a roll call vote of 7-0-0.

Motion to move Item 19 – Receipt of Applications up made by Commissioner DeGray; seconded by Commissioner Majmudar and approved by a unanimous vote of 7-0-0.

Receipt of Applications

- a. **FLD# 45 – 25 Hazard Ave** – Application for modification of drive-thru lanes, installation of freestanding canopies & installation of grassed parking medians; Amy Souchuns, Esq, applicant; Paramount Commons at Enfield LLC, owner; Map 45/Lot 8; BR Zone
- b. **PH# 3063 – 25 Hazard Ave** - Application for modification of drive-thru lanes, installation of freestanding canopies & installation of grassed parking medians; Amy Souchuns, Esq, applicant; Paramount Commons at Enfield LLC, owner; Map 45/Lot 8; BR Zone
- c. **PH# 3060ZA – 242, 274 and 284 Brainard Rd** – Application for a zone change from R44 to MFHD; Washington Associates of Enfield LLC, applicant/owner; Map 62/Lot 319; Map 77/Lot 68; Map 77/Lot 67; R44 Zone
- d. **PH# 3061 – 242, 274 and 284 Brainard Rd** – Application for multi-family housing with 42 single-family detached dwelling units on a new private road; Washington Associates of Enfield LLC, applicant/owner; Map 62/Lot 319; Map 77/Lot 68; Map 77/Lot 67; R44 Zone
- e. **PH# 3062 – 40 Conlin Dr** – Application to expand an existing non-conforming garage; Roger & Debra Russell, applicant/owner; Map 66/Lot 436; R33 Zone
- f. **PH# 3064 – 561 Hazard Ave** – Application to install 48 sq ft pylon sign in a BL Zone less than 3 acres; CT Sign Service, David Hemming; applicant; O'Reilly Automotive Stores, Inc, owner; Map 110/Lot 387; BL Zone
- g. **PH# 3065ZA – 113 Brainard Rd** – Application for a zone change from R33 to BR Zone; Fast Track Realty LLC, applicant; John & Patricia Ferreira, owner; Map 36/Lot 237; R33 Zone

Motion to take a 10-minute recess made by Commissioner DeGray; seconded by Commissioner Lefakis and approved by a unanimous vote of 7-0-0.

New Public Hearings.

- a. **Draft Plan of Conservation and Development**, <https://www.enfield-ct.gov/DocumentCenter/View/22796/CT-Enfield---Plan-of-Conservation-and-Development---Final-Plan-01-05-23---For-Consideration?bidId=>

Commissioner Petronella read the legal notice into the record.

Motion to include seventeen documents into the record made by Commissioner Petronella; seconded by Commissioner DeGray and approved by a roll call vote of 7-0-0.

Chairman Fiore noted that these are all the public comments related to tonight's hearing.

Ms. Whitten read a memorandum into the record containing staff comments, clarifications, and considerations for potential changes to the Draft Plan of Conservation and Development (referred to the POCD hereafter). Chairman Fiore reviewed the ground rules for the public hearing.

Nikki Price, 1324 Enfield Street, addressed the Commission. She shared thoughts about open space and parks. She shared portions of East Hartford, Wethersfield, and Vernon's POCD regarding parks, open space and recreation goals. Both towns share the open space inventory within the document. She asked the Commissioners to reject the POCD.

Mary Ellen Diluzio, 1330 Enfield Street, addressed the Commission. She expressed concern that the historic district only has a few sentences mentioned in the document. She recommended keeping the description from the last POCD, which also provides some history of Enfield. She recommended ranking zones by density levels, similar to Suffield and marking the historic district of Enfield as very low density. She also recommended historic credits be provided for private homeowners within the historic district.

Ann Marie Dalgenzi, 1330 Enfield Street, addressed the Commission. She suggested keeping the portion of the current POCD that has the list of the different zones and their uses. She expressed concern regarding the housing study referencing urban planning and affordable housing. She urged the Commission to keep the public hearing open as the last POCD had 3 public hearings.

Patrick Thibodeau, 20 Cora Street, addressed the Commission. He agrees with most of the POCD. The front section should be read by all for a concise quantitative analysis on the town. Affordable housing should not be a burden on the town. He spoke about the politics surrounding the Felician Sisters project. He opined the neighbors are not in touch with the reality of the housing crisis. He recommended forming focus groups at places like Eppendorf to discuss what they need for a labor pool. Hostility related to multi-family housing seems to be unfair and feels like it is excluding older adults. Losing population is a huge problem. Approximately 2,000 jobs lost since 2016 and are not being replaced with equal caliber.

Lori Longhi, 1427 Enfield Street, addressed the Commission. She shared guidelines from the state which include the 12 items all plans shall consider. The town meets the affordable housing requirements and the language that states that Enfield's housing stock lacks in diversity should be removed. The open space and agricultural percentages are the same from the 2011 POCD and need to be revised. Goal #10 of state's guidelines shall consider open space be prioritized and that is not clear in our POCD. She recommended revising the housing table to include higher-income housing. She recommended removing the word "certain" from the document and replace it with the word "clear". She expressed concern about the lack of public participation while creating this document.

Lori Parker, 105 Cottage Road, addressed the Commission. She stated that the plan as presented should not be passed. Excluding public hearings on site plans is gravely concerning. It would take away the opportunity to intervene or bring in any experts. She is concerned about the push for multifamily dwellings and noted that Enfield already meets the affordable housing requirements. She opined that the document is very lean on historical preservation. Another issue is that the grassland conservation maps need to be added. Full-sized maps would be helpful to be included. Comparisons to East Hartford and Manchester seem to be moving towards Anytown, USA and we should keep the uniqueness of Enfield. She also recommended GIS upgrades.

Ellen Martin, 6 Patricia Circle, addressed the Commission. She thanked Chairman Fiore and Ms. Whitten for addressing concerns at the last PZC meeting. She is glad that the request for larger maps will be addressed and asked to honor the protected areas highlighted therein. She referred to many concerns from the Town Council public hearing that were not included in Ms. Whitten's memo. Residents of Enfield and the surrounding towns treasure the small-town feel. Many residents don't want to lose what kept them in Enfield so long. If the Town aims to increase population, what is the total increase? She submitted the vision statement of 2011 for the record. There were not many focus groups for this draft.

Gretchen Pfeifer Hall, 4 Somers Road, addressed the Commission. She had concerns related to open space issues, maps and public hearings. Maps should be more legible. Farms in the state farmland preservation program should be in a separate map in Chapter 4. Preserved land should not be included in the TIA for open space. Any maps carried over from the 2011 POCD should be reviewed for accuracy. There needs to be clarification regarding the national historical preservation areas as they are regulated differently than municipal historical districts. Eliminating public hearings is very concerning. Reducing parking requirements is concerning as there is a currently off-street parking shortage, especially in Thompsonville for residential is concerning. Multifamily housing should not be allowed in an I-1 zone.

Angela Foss, 16 Crescent Beach Drive, addressed the Commission. She asked that the POCD be rejected as written Town Council rejected the document. It is full of development with no conservation. She is very concerned about the zoning surrounding Crescent Lake changing from R88 to a "special development".

Zachary Zannoni, 6 Howard Street, addressed the Commission. He expressed concern about the ambiguity of the current draft. He felt that it needs to have higher standards as to community growth. Ensuring that the POCD is more in depth so that staff can plan better. He recommended that the PZC implement a Design Review Advisory Committee so residents can enhance and preserve character in town. He also shared ideas to upgrade the GIS maps to include software to keep track of notable development projects. This would help residents stay informed. He shared the waiver necessary to delay acceptance of the POCD. By delaying acceptance, it will give time to implement changes or reject the document.

Christina Lang, 90 South Road, addressed the Commission. She expressed concern about lack of affordable housing. She has lived in Enfield in different capacities for most of her life. She wanted to sell and find something workable and accessible but there is nothing available. The residents are not all from Enfield Street and need affordable housing for aging residents. Children and grandchildren have left because there is nothing for the younger generation.

Melissa Everett, 2 Post Road, addressed the Commission. She opined that the POCD has good bones but doesn't have a lot of muscle. The points that many have made are valid. The document is lean for readability and has a structure that is clear. There needs to be a series of work sessions that negotiate things in a reasonable way. She appreciated the expertise from the residents at the public hearing.

Jeffrey Foss, 16 Crescent Beach Drive, shared the beautiful nature of Crescent Beach.

Donna Dubanoski, 23 Betty Road, addressed the Commission. She opined that Enfield is still a farming community. Every time the POCD is being written, administration presses the development side while residents press the conservation side. Enfield does not have the retail appeal of Manchester and should not be compared to that community. She reviewed Enfield history and its development. She noted residents are not afraid of change, but the change needed in town is not to grow into a big city. She recommended adding parks to existing open space as to provide alternatives to team sports while encouraging children to get off their electronics.

Karen LaPlante, 166 North Maple Street, addressed the Commission in her capacity as Chairperson of the Conservation Commission. Ms. LaPlante read a letter from the Conservation Commission regarding their comments on the POCD. The Commission is requesting a PA-490 Open Space resolution. She read a portion of Section of the Connecticut General statutes regarding where it should be identified in the POCD. When a PA-490 Open space resolution is created, the state requirement for which part of the town is eligible would already be in place and the town would not have to wait until the next POCD to implement such a resolution.

Karen LaPlante, 166 North Maple Street, addressed the Commission as a resident. She is concerned with content in the new plan. State's plan of POCD should be the reference point. Maps are horrible. The TIA was never discussed the POCD Steering Committee The town should encourage and promote PA-490 to homeowners. Overall residential pattern needs to be reviewed and revised. People having so many issues with industrial in residential areas and multifamily housing should not be in an I-1 zone. Public hearings are important part of the land use process and must not be removed. Lead and asbestos removal incentives should be explored.

Nikki Price, 1324 Enfield Street, addressed the Commission for the second time. She submitted for the record a portion of Conservation and Development policies which addresses protecting open space. She recommended holding annual, biannual or quarterly workshops or hearings to address the effectiveness of the POCD.

Patrick Thibodeau, 20 Cora Street, addressed the Commission for the second time. He recommended focusing on the mall area and the surrounding industrial parks. He opined that having a mix of residential within the retail district will strengthen the town.

Karen LaPlante, 166 North Maple Street, addressed the Commission for the second time. She discussed a needs analysis for publicly owned recreational facilities from the 2011 POCD. Parks and open space need to be prioritized and focused upon.

Lori Longhi, 1427 Enfield Street, addressed the Commission for the second time. Public hearings are a necessary part of the public process. She recommended following the State's guidelines regarding parking requirements. Ms. Longhi discussed height restrictions in all residential zones. The POCD needs to include these restrictions. She recommended consistently defining "multifamily" throughout the document. Focus groups should be created to work through different issues with the document.

Mary Ellen Diluzio, 1330 Enfield Street, addressed the Commission for the second time. She noted that the zoning districts should be defined. There was no mention of other zoning districts, including residential or residential historic. Public hearings are integral to challenging information provided by applicants and town staff.

Gretchen Pfeifer-Hall, 4 Somers Road, addressed the Commission for the second time. She thanked all the residents who spoke, whether she agreed with them or not. She opined that the residents in the historic district are stewards of an important piece of our town and should be thanked for their dedication. Chairman Fiore thanked the residents for addressing the Commission. He explained that this process has been going on for several years and needs to be acted upon. The goal is to deliberate, and each chapter needs to be voted on with a 5 person majority vote. Alternates cannot vote but can share input.

Motion to close public hearing made by Commissioner Majmudar; seconded by Commissioner Hilinski and approved by a roll call vote of 7-0-0.

Commissioner Alaimo does not want to vote on the document until the maps have been revised and Town Council comments are addressed. The commissioners agreed to start next week's meeting at 6:00pm. Ms. Driver noted that staff has started a list of potential changes and considerations.

Motion to take a five minute recess made by Commissioner DeGray; seconded by Commissioner Petronella and approved by a unanimous vote of 7-0-0.

Chairman Fiore reviewed the ground rules for next week. He asked that the commissioners allow him to drive the bus and bring any changes or concerns to his attention. Commissioner Alaimo confirmed that document will be voted on as a whole as well as each chapter. Commissioner DeGray recommended that questions be written down before the meeting. Commissioner Alaimo ensured that the enlarged maps will be included in the final draft but will not be available at the next meeting. Chairman Fiore noted that the decision to make the POCD shorter was made by the previous PZC and this Commission is seeing the document through. Commissioner Petronella confirmed that the enlarged maps be provided online for best viewing. He also confirmed that the public was involved in the process, including a public meeting and a steering committee.

Old Business

None.

Other Business

None.

Enforcement Reports

None.

Correspondence

None.

Commissioner's Correspondence

None.

Director of Planning Report

Staff is working on the POCD.

Opportunities/Unresolved Issues

None

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner DeGray; seconded by Commissioner Hilinski and approved by a unanimous vote of 7-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Prepared by: Rebecca Jones

Respectfully Submitted,

John Petronella, Secretary