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ENFIELD PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES

THURSDAY MARCH 30, 2023 – 6:00 PM
ENFIELD TOWN HALL - COUNCIL CHAMBERS
820 ENFIELD STREET - ENFIELD, CT

Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Commissioner Petronella took the roll and present were Commissioners Lewis Fiore, Virginia Higley, 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 6:05pm.

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 DeGray; seconded by Commissioner Higley.

Chairman Fiore reviewed the changes that were made.

Motion to approve the March 9th regular meeting minutes as amended made by Commissioner Majmudar; seconded by Commissioner Higley and approved by a 7-0-1 vote. Commissioner Hilinski abstained.

- b. March 23, 2023

Motion to approve the March 23rd regular meeting minutes made by Commissioner DeGray; seconded by Commissioner Hilinski and approved by a 7-0-0 vote.

Town Attorney Report

None.

Public Communication

None.

Old Public Hearings – Discussion and Possible Action

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=>

Motion to take the Draft Plan of Conservation and Development off the table made by Commissioner DeGray; seconded by Commissioner Majmudar and approved by a 7-0-0 vote.

Chairman Fiore introduced Don Poland, POCD consultant who participated virtually. Chairman Fiore noted that the alternate commissioners are allowed to suggest changes and share input but cannot vote on the document.

Chapter 1: Introduction – The Plan of Conservation and Development

Motion to approve Chapter 1 as written made by Commissioner Petronella; seconded by Commissioner Hilinski and approved by a roll call vote of 7-0-0.

Chapter 2: Existing Conditions – Demographic and Economics-Demographics, Economics, Natural Resources now and in the future

Chairman Fiore recommended removing a statement regarding stagnant job growth.

Motion to remove the statement regarding stagnant job growth made by Chairman Fiore; seconded by Commissioner Higley and approved by a 7-0-0 show of hands vote.

Commissioner Majmudar noted that the figures on Table 3 need to be revised as the commas are in the wrong place.

Motion to revise commas in Table 3 made by Commissioner Majmudar; seconded by Commissioner Alaimo and approved by a 7-0-0 show of hands vote.

Commissioner DeGray requested clarification regarding the discrepancy between the total housing units on different tables. Mr. Poland explained that the discrepancy comes from the delay of information being released by the US Census Bureau regarding 2020's census data. Information like total population and total number of households have yet to be released. Commissioner Hilinski recommended noting this discrepancy with a footnote.

Motion to add a footnote to Page 19 explaining census data information made by Commissioner Higley; seconded by Commissioner Hilinski and approved by a show of hands vote of 7-0-0.

Motion to approve Chapter 2 as amended made by Commissioner Petronella; seconded by Commissioner Majmudar and approved by a roll call vote of 7-0-0.

Chapter 3: Enfield's Cultural Landscape-How the community sees and values its options

Chairman Fiore recommended changing the vision statement to the version from 2011. Commissioner Hilinski opined that there was a portion of the 2011 statement that was inaccurate as it called Enfield the employment center of the region. The commissioners all agreed to leave the 2023 vision statement. Chairman Fiore recommended an edit to the first two sentences.

Motion to amend the first two sentences of the vision statement made by Chairman Fiore; seconded by Commissioner Higley and approved by a show of hands vote of 7-0-0.

Chairman Fiore recommended changing the verbiage regarding the town's historic district. Ms. Whitten discussed adding the 2011 chapter on the historic district as an appendix to the 2023 POCD.

Motion to add a statement referencing the appendix to the historic resources made by Commissioner Majmudar; seconded by Commissioner DeGray and approved by a show of hands vote of 7-0-0.

Motion to add the 2011 appendix in the 2023 POCD made by Commissioner Hilinski; seconded by Commissioner Majmudar and approved by a show of hands vote of 7-0-0.

Motion to approve Chapter 3 as amended made by Commissioner Petronella; seconded by Commissioner DeGray and approved by a roll call vote of 7-0-0.

Chapter 4: Natural Resource Protection and Conservation-Floodplain, forests, and farm land, open space, stormwater management, septic systems and erosion control – what and how of preserving natural resources

Chairman Fiore noted that sensitive areas are being addressed specifically toward site development requirements. He also recommended adding the language recommended by the Conservation Commission regarding the 490 Open Space consideration. Commissioner Petronella confirmed that open space can be publicly or privately owned.

Motion to add language recommended by the Conservation Commission related to 490 Open Space on page 8 and 38 made by Chairman Fiore; seconded by Commissioner Hilinski and approved by a show of hands vote of 7-0-0.

Motion to approve Chapter 4 as amended made by Commissioner Petronella; seconded by Commissioner Higley.

Commissioner D'Antonio recommended adding language to the section related to community gardens.

Commissioner Petronella rescinded his motion and Commissioner Higley rescinded her second.

Commissioner D' Antonio also recommended adding an additional bullet point to encourage organic practices.

Motion made to add language related to community gardens and organic practices made by Commissioner Hilinski; seconded by Commissioner DeGray and approved by a show of hands vote of 7-0-0.

Ms. Whitten noted language should read “consider creating” instead of “create” in regards to a local right-to-farm ordinance.

Motion made to revise language to read “consider creating” regarding farm friendly regulations made by Commissioner Hilinski; seconded by Commissioner Majmudar and approved by a show of hands vote of 7-0-0.

Commissioner D'Antonio recommended adding a bullet addressing a climate action plan on page 42. Chairman Fiore confirmed this must also be added to the summary on page 9 as well.

Motion made to add language related to the creation of a climate action plan made by Commissioner Higley; seconded by Commissioner Hilinski approved by a show of hands vote of 7-0-0.

Motion to approve Chapter 4 as amended made by Commissioner Petronella; seconded by Commissioner Higley.

Chapter 6: Commercial and Industrial – Economic Development – Strengthening Enfield’s employers and climate of economic opportunity

Chairman Fiore recommended removing a portion of the sentence regarding removing barriers to investment. There was discussion amongst the commissioners about specifically including Thompsonville or expanding the area to the whole town.

Motion to change language from “Thompsonville” to include the entire town made by Commissioner Higley; seconded by Commissioner Majmudar.

After further discussion with town staff and Mr. Poland, the commissioners refined the statement to address all non-conforming properties.

Commissioner Higley rescinded her motion and Commissioner Majmudar rescinded his second.

Ms. Whitten read the revised text, to which all the commissioners agreed on the language.

Motion to revise language under “removal of barriers” made by Commissioner Higley; seconded by Commissioner Hilinski and approved by show of hands vote of 7-0-0.

Commissioner Majmudar discussed a language change regarding business attraction and retention through staff efforts. Commissioners, staff, and Mr. Poland discussed different variations of the desired phrase.

Motion to add new bullet point addressing economic retention to pages 52 and 10 made by Commissioner Majmudar; seconded by Commissioner Hilinski and approved by a show of hands vote of 7-0-0.

Commissioner DeGray opined that the commercial and development section should be revamped to focus on positive economic growth. Commissioner Petronella recommended removing the specific businesses that have left the area. The commissioners discussed different ways to restructure the paragraph.

Motion to take a 5-minute recess made by Commissioner Higley; seconded by Commissioner DeGray and approved by a show of hands vote of 7-0-0.

Mr. Davis shared a revised phrase, which encompassed all the commissioners’ desired changes. The commissioners agreed to add this to the end of the paragraph.

Motion to accept the changes in Chapter 6 made by Commissioner Higley; seconded by Commissioner DeGray and approved by a show-of-hands vote of 7-0-0.

Commissioner DeGray addressed the loss of population totals mentioned in this section. Chairman Fiore confirmed that approximately 2,500 people could not be counted during the last redistricting effort. Commissioner DeGray wanted a footnote added to address the steady loss of prisoners from 2010 to present. The commissioners agreed not to add this additional number as it is addressed in the figures provided. Commissioner Alaimo asked about the pre-application meeting proposed for MPOZ applications. Chairman Fiore noted that no commissioner can meet with a potential applicant alone and that this is specifically addressing MPOZs only.

Motion to accept Chapter 6 as amended made by Commissioner Petronella; seconded by Commissioner Hilinski and approved by a roll call vote of 7-0-0.

Chapter 7: Community Facilities – Public Buildings, Parks, Playgrounds & Other Facilities

Chairman Fiore recommended that an additional bullet be added to address a comprehensive park development and maintenance plan.

Motion to add an additional bullet to add a comprehensive park development and maintenance plan made by Commissioner Hilinski; seconded by Commissioner DeGray and approved by a show of hands vote of 7-0-0.

Commissioner Alaimo wanted something added under the facilities section for elderly residents. Ms. Driver noted that the appropriate term for elderly is 'older adults'.

Motion to add 'older adult needs' on pages 10 and 56 made by Commissioner Alaimo; seconded by Commissioner Higley and approved by a show of hands vote of 7-0-0.

Motion to approve Chapter 7 as amended made by Commissioner Petronella; seconded by Commissioner Hilinski and approved by a roll call vote of 7-0-0.

Chapter 8: Infrastructure – Transportation, mobility, and connectivity

Commissioner DeGray addressed the new EV law. Chairman Fiore noted it was on page 61. Commissioners D'Antonio and Lefakis made note of grammatical errors. Commissioner D'Antonio proposed adding a fourth sub-bullet adding bicycle path networks.

Motion to add a sub-bullet adding bicycle path networks made by Commissioner Hilinski; seconded by Commissioner Higley and approved by a show of hands vote of 7-0-0.

Motion to approve Chapter 8 as amended made by Commissioner Petronella; seconded by Commissioner Higley and approved by a roll call vote of 7-0-0.

Chapter 9: A Sustainable and Resilient Enfield – Withstanding stress and rising to opportunity by design

Chairman Fiore recommended removing the mention of a list of properties mentioned on pages 11 and 73. Ms. Whitten recommended an alternative phrase.

Motion to change verbiage on pages 11 and 73 to remove mention of a list made by Commissioner Majmudar; seconded by Commissioner Higley and approved by a show of hands vote of 7-0-0.

Motion to approve Chapter 9 as amended made by Commissioner Petronella; seconded by Commissioner Hilinski and approved by a 7-0-0 roll call vote.

Chapter 10: Thompsonville – Competing for Investment

Commissioner DeGray made reference to regulation changes for the Thompsonville village that have yet to be implemented. Town staff opined its better to leave it in for future uses. Commissioners D'Antonio and Lefakis made note of grammatical errors.

Motion to approve Chapter 10 as submitted made by Commissioner Petronella; seconded by Commissioner Higley and approved by a 7-0-0 roll call vote.

Chapter 11: Strategic and Target Investment Plan

Chairman Fiore recommended removing any reference to TIA-E special development and map on pages 81 and 85.

Motion to remove reference to TIA-E special development on pages 81 and 85 made by Commissioner Higley; seconded by Commissioner DeGray and approved by show of hands vote of 7-0-0.

Motion to approve Chapter 11 as amended made by Commissioner Petronella; seconded by Commissioner Hilinski and approved by a roll call vote of 7-0-0.

Chapter 13: Consistency – State and Regional Plans

Commissioner DeGray pointed out grammatical errors.

Motion to approve Chapter 13 as written made by Commissioner Petronella; seconded by Commissioner Hilinski and approved by a roll call vote of 7-0-0.

Chapter 5: Residential – Housing and Housing need

Chairman Fiore recommended removing a statement specifying the types of housing Enfield will be focusing on in the future.

Motion to remove statement made by Commissioner Higley; seconded by Commissioner DeGray and approved by a show of hands vote of 7-0-0.

Chairman Fiore noted an error leaving BL zones out on page 9. Chairman Fiore asked the commissioners their opinion about removing multifamily housing from the I-1 zone. There was further discussion regarding the definition of affordable housing vs workforce housing. Commissioner Alaimo asked about the potential for tiny house subdivisions.

Motion to remove the I-1 zone from statement on pages 9, 48 and 94 made by Commissioner Higley; seconded by Commissioner DeGray and approved by a show of hands vote of 7-0-0.

Motion to add “BL” to the zones listed on page 9 made by Commissioner Higley; seconded by Commissioner DeGray and approved by a show of hands vote of 7-0-0.

The commissioners discussed the multifamily parking strategies. Commissioner Higley opined that without mass transit, residents need more parking spaces not less. Commissioner DeGray agreed. Ms. Whitten noted that the figure could be reduced in the Thompsonville village area. There was discussion amongst the commissioners about the required off-street parking number throughout town. Commissioner D’Antonio shared his opinion about parking minimums and parking maximums. The commissioners agreed to a more generalized statement as prepared by Mr. Davis.

Motion to revise statement under multifamily strategies to include a new sentence as recommended by town staff Commissioner Higley; seconded by Commissioner DeGray and approved by a show of hands vote of 7-0-0.

The commissioners next discussed the acreage requirement under multifamily strategies. As proposed, it would reduce the multifamily minimum lot size to 5 acres. Currently, Enfield has a 60-acre minimum currently. The

commissioners all shared their thoughts regarding the minimum lot size. They reviewed different apartment complexes in town and their acreage for reference.

Motion to change minimum acreage requirement for multifamily units to 10 acres made by Commissioner Hilinski; seconded by Commissioner Majmudar and approved by a show of hands vote of 5-2-0.

Chairman Fiore proposed changes to the permitting process referenced on pages 9 and 48. Mr. Poland shared his opinion as to why special permits should not require public hearings.

Motion to remove language as recommended by Chairman Fiore made by Commissioner Majmudar; seconded by Commissioner Hilinski and approved by a show of hands vote of 7-0-0.

Chairman Fiore discussed accessory dwelling units on page 49. Commissioners shared their opinions about the section. Commissioner Petronella opined this has the possibility to devalue properties. Town staff recommended a simple language change.

Motion made to add “consider allowing” under accessory dwelling units made by Commissioner Higley; seconded by Commissioner Petronella and approved by a show of hands vote of 5-2-0.

Commissioner Alaimo asked about the table referencing household incomes. Mr. Poland explained the scale and how it relates to housing.

Motion to approve Chapter 5 as amended made by Commissioner Petronella; seconded by Commissioner Hilinski and approved by a roll call vote of 6-1-0.

Chapter 12: Implementation – Action Agenda, roles, and responsibilities

Chairman Fiore recommended change zones listed on page 94. Commissioner D’Antonio also recommended adding the climate action plan to page 93.

Motion to make changes as suggested to Chapter 12 made by Commissioner Hilinski; seconded by Commissioner Higley and approved by a show of hands vote of 7-0-0.

Commissioner D’Antonio recommended adding a box on page 95 to add bicycle path networks.

Motion to add box for bicycle path networks made by Commissioner Higley; seconded by Commissioner DeGray and approved by a show of hands vote of 7-0-0.

Motion to approve Chapter 12 as amended made by Commissioner Petronella; seconded by Commissioner Hilinski and approved by a roll call vote of 7-0-0.

Chairman Fiore recommended adding the 2011 map of parks and open space.

Motion to add 2011 map of parks and open space made by Commissioner Hilinski; seconded by Commissioner DeGray and approved by a show of hands vote of 7-0-0.

Ms. Driver recommended making a global change to the document to refer to elderly residents to “older adults”.

Motion to allow staff to make a global change to the POCD to change all references of elderly adults to older adults made by Commissioner Higley; seconded by Commissioner DeGray and approved by a show of hands vote of 7-0-0.

Motion to approve the 2023 POCD dated December 30, 2022 with a revised date of January 5, 2023 as amended on March 30, 2023 made by Commissioner Petronella; seconded by Commissioner Hilinski and approved by a roll call vote of 7-0-0.

Ms. Whitten noted that the Commission must now set an effective date and the consultant needs time to make the necessary edits. The POCD must be sent to OPM by May 30th, 2023.

Motion to make the effective date of the 2023 POCD May 30th, 2023 made by Commissioner Hilinski; seconded DeGray and approved by a roll call vote of 7-0-0.

Adjournment

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

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 PM.

Prepared by: Rebecca Jones

Respectfully Submitted,

John Petronella, Secretary