

# PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

## Regular Meeting Minutes

October 4, 2018

**Present:** Claire Frisbie, Angela Hammond, Frederick Knous, Chair:  
Thomas Malecky, Alternate

**Absent:** Wayne Martin, Sharon Peters, Frank Winiski, Alternate

**Others Present:** Susan Bransfield-First Selectwoman, Ralph Zampano-BOS, Jim Tripp, BOS:  
Bernice Zampano, Parks & Recreation; Elwin Guild

### 1. Chairman Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Frederick Knous called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. in the First Floor Conference Room in Town Hall, located at 33 East Main Street, Portland, Connecticut.

### 2. Roundtable with Invited Town Officials

Chairman Knous introduced discussion about the strategic element plan and noted that some priorities have shifted over the past year.

### 3. Discuss and review the 2016-2026 Plan of Conservation and Development

Susan Bransfield distributed a handout of focusing on priority issues and reviewed the five items noted in the Focusing On Priority Issues section of the Implementation Element of the 2016-2026 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) for Portland.

- A. Strengthen the Town Center
- B. Promote Appropriate Development of Elmcrest,
- C. Continue to Enhance the Riverfront
- D. Address Industrial Zoning
- E. Establish the Airline Trail

#### A.1 Strengthen the Town Center

A.1.2 Encourage the establishment of a critical mass of activity with the Town

- Halloween on Main Street: annual event
- Memorial Day parade
- Tree lighting parade
- Town wide tag sale

A.1.4 Encourage housing in and near the Town Center

- Brainerd Place will have 238 apartments near the Town Center

A.1.5 Consider participating in the activities of the CT Main Street Center

- Currently not implemented

A.1.7 Work with CT DOT to improve intersection of Routes 17, 17A, and 66 to accommodate pedestrians, bicyclist, and vehicles

- Received DOT grant in 2015 to study this area, summary report on file
- Complete Streets group asked DPT to recommend traffic improvements at the intersection in 2016. DOT suggested changes were rejected by BOS in 2016—minor striping to Main Street near Post Office was accepted and implemented.
- Brainerd Place traffic plan (which includes some changes to intersection) has been submitted to Office of State Traffic Authority (OSTA), awaiting approval, expected in November.

A.1.8 Identify and Establish gateways

Not yet implemented; suggestions from committee:

- Improve intersection of RT66
- Signage or map of town, banners
- U.S. flags and decorative flags

### **A.3. Humanize the Streetscape**

#### **A.3.1 Encourage the creation and maintenance of a pedestrian-friendly streetscape**

- Sidewalk Improvement Project started in summer 2018
- Town received \$200,000+ grant from Community Connectivity Program, to be implemented in Spring/summer 2019

A.3.2 Create a master streetscape vision for Main Street to guide public and private improvements to sidewalks, parking, lighting, etc.

- Not yet implemented; Carol Johnson Main Street Streetscape plan from 2003 would be a starting point

A.3.3 Undertake improvements to the pedestrian environment along Main Street (sidewalks, street furniture, landscaping, etc.)

- Garden Club and Grounds Department have adopted a plan for landscape improvements to Main Street area next to the BIS play area. Some work has started but is not completed

A.3.4 Invoke sidewalk ordinance, if needed to complete sidewalk improvements

- Current Sidewalk Improvement Project does not require adjacent homeowners to pay for 2018 Sidewalk Improvements Project. Need to establish Sidewalk Inspection Program
- Will need to be vigilant about communicating with homeowners to let them know about restrictions (e.g., vehicle weight restrictions, tree plantings, etc.) and that they will be responsible for damage they cause to new sidewalks in accordance with the ordinance.

#### **A.4. Improve Vehicular and Parking Amenities**

##### A.4.1 Simplify and enhance design and function of Main Street (traffic and parking)

- Complete Streets group asked DPT to recommend traffic improvements at the intersection in 2016. DOT suggested changes were rejected by BOS in 2016—minor striping to Main Street near Post Office was accepted and implemented.

##### A.4.2 Maximize shared parking opportunities

- Complete Streets group asked DPT to recommend traffic improvements at the intersection in 2016. DOT suggested changes were rejected by BOS in 2016—minor striping to Main Street near Post Office was accepted and implemented.

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#### **B.1. Promote Appropriate Redevelopment of Elmcrest**

##### B.1.1 Promote appropriate redevelopment of the Elmcrest site in ways that will contribute to and enhance the overall community

- The site plan is approved. The OSTA response to the traffic plan is expected in early November 2018. The developer, BRT-DiMarco, will start demolition in early November 2018, with construction scheduled to begin in March 2019.

#### **C. Continue to Enhance the Riverfront**

##### **C1. Promote Riverfront Redevelopment**

##### C.1.1 Promote redevelopment of the riverfront to create a pedestrian-friendly environment with recreational amenities.

##### C.1.2 Work with private and public partners to promote redevelopment of the riverfront with recreational and limited mixed uses.

##### C.1.3 Implement actions plans to promote riverfront development

- Town is actively engaged in negotiations to purchase 5+ acres of land on the CT River on Brownstone Avenue. Purchase and Sale agreement signed by property owner and the town. Susan Bransfield noted that once the town acquires the property, a Brownstone commission will be established.
- The property is contiguous to the town-owned Riverfront Park and Brownstone Quarries. It is visited by more than 100,000 people annually and is a major regional tourist attraction. The town receives approximately \$350,000-\$400,000 annually in direct payments from the Brownstone Exploration and Discovery Park (BEDP). The town is in negotiations with BEDP to extend/amend the existing lease.
- The property is a brownfield property, not a superfund site, (primarily due to petroleum residuals). The town has been granted \$200,000 from the State to investigate and prepare a plan for cleanup of the land (Phase 2 and 3 Environmental Assessment). This has been completed and the cleanup plan is on file. The cleanup estimate as determined by the study, is \$750,000.
- The State awarded the town \$750,000 to implement the cleanup plan. The town must acquire the land before cleanup can commence.

- During a public hearing, and as part of the due diligence of the title search, it was determined that the property includes ownership of an underground pipeline. (The Phase 2 and 3 reports has previously noted the owner of the pipeline was Buckeye.) The pipeline is located on/under another private property (B&B Petroleum), as well as under brownstone Avenue (town property) =, and the current owner (PortOil, LLC).
- The owners/seller is decommissioning the pipeline. The oil has been removed and the pipeline was flushed by the seller in September 2018.
- Ground penetrating radar was conducted, and a map of the pipeline's location was prepared and is one file.
- The BOS has determined that a pressure test of the pipeline must be conducted. Town is currently in the process of obtaining three quotes for the work.
- Pending the outcome of the pressure test, a survey of the land will be conducted. Three quotes have been obtained for the work.
- A public hearing and a town meeting vote must be conducted prior to purchase.
- The State DEEP and DECD are assisting and advising the town on the project.
- The town is using Tighe and Bond as it environmental consultant.

## **C.2. Enhance Connections to the Town Center**

C.2.1 Maintain and enhance physical links between the town center and the Riverfront.

C.2.2 Continue to link parking area, public access points, and visitor attractions via an overall network designed to accommodate pedestrians and bicycles.

C.2.3 Enhance the pedestrian environment through street furniture, fencing, street plantings, pedestrian scale lighting, crosswalks, signage, and sidewalk improvements.

C.2.4 Consider turning Silver Street into a cul-de-sac with access only from Main Street in order to simplify and organize traffic circulation in the Riverfront area.

C.2.5 Implement actions to enhance connections to the town center.

## **C.3 Enhance the Riverfront**

C.3.1 Continue efforts to better integrate the riverfront into the overall fabric of the community.

C.3.2 Continue to acquire riverfront open space as opportunities present themselves.

C.3.3 Encourage the preservation of open space in areas prone to flooding (e.g., Wangunk Meadows).

- Wright Farms, a privately held entity, has recently acquired several acres of the Wangunk Meadows.

C.3.3 Implement actions to enhance the riverfront.

## E. Establish the Air Line Trail

### E.1 Establish the Airline Trail in Portland

- Completed 2.3 miles

### E.1.2 Establish connections from the Air Line Trail to the town center.

- The Air Line Trail Committee is exploring how to extend the trail west of its current location. Engineering students from CCSU are considering this effort as a senior project topic.

### E.1.3 Establish connections from the Air Line Trail to East Hampton, Middletown, and Glastonbury.

- East Hampton is currently working with a contractor to continue the trail from the end of the Portland Air Line Trail to the East Hampton portion of the trail. State grant funds are being used for this effort.

## 4. Discuss Town Projects

Susan Bransfield distributed map showing town owned properties and discussed possibilities for usage.

Ralph Zampano distributed an overview of the Portland Parks & Recreation POCA Implementation and revised the projects:

**RT 17 Park:** He noted the construction of retaining walls needed due to changes in elevation. Drains are in and hills will be seeded.

**Airline Trail:** The trail will be extended to the west. East Hampton is working on their segment as well. Eventually trail upkeep will become responsibility of Parks & Rec.

Chair Fred Knous expressed concerns about safety, particularly one spot near Penfield that has a relatively steep elevation. There is some concern about bicyclists speed. He suggested putting a rock obstruction to prompt dismounting and walking around. Ralph Zampano stated that could cause problem with ADA compliance. Bridges would be cost-prohibitive.

Elwin Guild suggested the possibility of using a kissing gate.

**Riverfront Park:** Ralph Zampano noted the accomplishments to date and the successes regarding usage. Participation numbers have been good over past year. Jim Tripp noted that they are in the process of building a 50-foot labyrinth. Bernice Zampano noted that there have been four wedding rentals this year at the pavilion. Church serves have also been held at the bandshell. Jim Tripp stated that there was a rental at the site nearly every weekend during the summer. All revenue goes back into park and there is no paid staff (overhead). Ralph Zampano stated that there is a need to establish consistent set of regulations across different parks. Susan Bransfield noted the town has received 1 million in State funds, which will be used for a new water main and new sidewalks (4-phase project).

**Riverfront Land Purchase:** Ralph noted that there will be a recreational element to it as we as economic development.

**Middlesex Avenue Renovation:** Ralph Zampano stated there has been a declining interest in softball, so the infield has been removed. The football/soccer field and football practice area are being renovated for soccer and general use. Ongoing work at the site. Part of strategy the strategy is to move out of Ingersoll and increase the number of fields available. He also noted that it is a gateway to the riverfront.

**Canoe/Kayak Launch:** Ralph noted the possibility of a property swap with the Exchange Club to facilitate access. Process just getting underway.

**Reservoir:** Ralph noted the two permits from the state and Public Health that enable usage for hiking. Bridges have been re-established. Permits for fishing. There has been some discussion about doing some work to enhance the attractiveness of the entrance area. There have been concerns from neighbors regarding parking dogs.

**Programming:** Sean coordinates with Mary Pont to help ensure success of events.

**Signage:** Old signs have been replaced with consistent signage and trails have been GPS mapped.

Susan: Biking trails have been identified.

Dog Park: discussion of creation of an exploratory committee, possible sites, cost.

## **Discussion**

The next regular meeting will be held on Thursday, December 6, 2018. Chairman Knous noted the need to determine a meeting schedule for 2019.

Chairman Knous discussed the PIC (Plan Implementation Committee). He noted that the committee has already been established. Need to determine scope of committee responsibilities as related to Airline Trail.

Chairman Knous asked the committee members if they agreed with the five top priority items (A-E) identified in the Focusing on Priority Issues section of Implementation Element and noted that they could include other items as desired.

Claire suggested that the goal of the committee should be to help ensure the overall focus of the plan. Chairman Knous asked for recommendations. Angela suggested putting items into a project implementation plan/schedule so determine if items are on task (e.g., add a percent complete status for project to help determine status and help keep project tasks moving).

Thomas Malecky expressed some concern that some opportunities could be lost if they go in a purely sequential fashion (e.g., open space opportunities).

Claire Frisbie suggested that the focus should be oversight of implementation and review of tasks to determine areas that may be under focused. Determine the status of all projects and tasks and identify areas that are not progressing as well as others.

There was discussion about the need to have all information available combined into Implementation Element document to reflect progress on action items to date.

**5. Public Comment:** None

**6. Adjourn Meeting**

Chairman Knous entertained a motion for adjournment, Thomas made motion to adjourn the meeting, motion seconded by Angela. The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon D'Arpino". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

Jon D'Arpino, Recording Clerk  
October 10, 2018

CC: Frederick Knous, Angela Hammond