

**PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**March 18, 2019**

**Present:** Claire Frisbie, Angela Hammond, Frederick Knous, Chair; Thomas Malecky, alternate (non-voting); and Frank Winiski, alternate (non-voting)

**Absent:** Sharon Peters and Wayne Martin

**Others Present:** Bruce Tyler, Chair, and Chantal Foster, Planning and Zoning Commission and Norman Ward, Conservation Commission Chair

**1. Chairman Call Meeting to Order**

Chairman Frederick Knous called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. in the First Floor Conference Room in Town Hall, located at 33 East Main Street, Portland, Connecticut.

**2. Introduction of Board Clerk**

Chairman Frederick Knous introduced Marianne Calnen as the Committee's new Board Clerk.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Knous invited corrections to or a motion to approve the January 28, 2019 meeting minutes.

The following corrections to the January 28, 2019 minutes were noted: Ralph and Bernice Zampano and Elwin Guild were not in attendance at that particular meeting. Kathy Herron with the Complete Streets Group did attend.

A motion to approve the January 28, 2019 meeting minutes as amended was made by Claire Frisbie and a second by Angela Hammond. Motion carried unanimously. Frank Winiski did not cast a vote on this motion as he was not in attendance at the January 28, 2019 meeting.

Two alternate members of the Committee Frank Winiski and Tom Malecky were seated at the March 18, 2019 Committee meeting.

**4. Discussion with Town Officials and Policy Partners**

Chairman Frederick Knous acknowledged that First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield was present at the meeting and that Bruce Tyler, Chair, and Chantal Foster, member, of the Planning and Zoning Commission were in attendance to provide comments on the Plan.

Bruce Tyler shared the following comments regarding specific aspects of the Plan on behalf of the Planning and Zoning Commission:

**A.1, Action Item 6: Review Zoning Regulations** – it is a separate zone called the Village District. Planning and Zoning is looking at regulations that would allow for increased density. Setbacks present a challenge that will require a change in regulations to build up to the property line so that it will appear that the town looks more like a village than a residential zone with some conversions to commercial buildings. The Commission will probably keep the 35-foot maximum building height the same. A minor adjustment in the regulations was made regarding the Elmcrest/Brainerd Place property as long as the developer includes commercial properties on first floor of the buildings. The goal is to attract businesses to that area and zoning regulations allow for greater density, but do not attract the construction of new buildings. Chantal Foster noted that expanding the sides of the building does block access to parking areas behind the buildings.

**A.2, Action Item 5: Expand the “village district”** - Planning and Zoning is in favor of including Brainerd Place but not necessarily the remainder of properties on Route 66. The Commission is trying to create different types of business zones in Portland. The Route 66 area is not an historic district, but a village district which is more regulated than a regular business zone. Changing regulations is a complex process based on State laws. The property owners must want change and then Planning and Zoning can change the regulations. Planning and Zoning cannot force a property owner to change. The developer of Brainerd Place developed his site plan with the advice of Planning and Zoning.

**A.2, Action Item 7: Revisit building heights** - Planning and Zoning will keep building height regulations at 35 feet. The developer wanted 3 floors of apartments at 42 feet. Planning and Zoning advised the developer could only do that if there were commercial properties on the first floor of the buildings. The developer will construct both commercial and residential properties at the same time in two or three phases.

Frank Winiski asked if there would be a problem if someone on Main Street wanted to do the same thing as the developer regarding the 35 feet versus 42 feet restrictions. Bruce Tyler advised yes it would be a problem. The Brainerd Place permit is a special permit to afford the developer adjustments to the zoning regulations. Chantal Foster advised the land on Route 66 is graded from front to back about 36 feet. When viewing the building from Route 66 it will not look as tall because on the lower graded area there is a lower floor. Bruce Tyler noted we don't want one building to overpower another neighbor on Main Street.

**A.3: Humanizing the streetscape** - this is mostly the Town's responsibility as opposed to Planning and Zoning. Other Town Commissions are looking at what can be done in terms of this. Angela Hammond, a member of the Committee stated she is a co-chair of the Town Beautification Committee.

**A.4: Improve Vehicular and Parking Amenities** - this is a big problem for Planning and Zoning because while there is parking in the center of Town, it is mostly controlled by private businesses. In the Village District there are 656 parking places. The public parking lots are across the street from one another, behind medical building and on the side of the Police Dept. There is limited parking on the street. Brainerd Place will have 756 parking spaces for both residential and commercial purposes. It was noted that an option which could be proposed would address the loss of parking spaces behind commercial buildings whereby all the business owners would have parking behind their businesses shared across these lots with access at select points if the setback causes a loss of direct access to the parking lots. There is sufficient parking for most businesses on Main Street and the distance from the public parking lots is not significant. The perception of the parking situation is the problem, not the reality of the spaces and their locations. Do we expand parking and hope people come or wait for people to come and then create more parking?

Chairman Knous said the point about parking is we'd like to get the people there first. First Selectwoman Bransfield said we need to continue to expand on our niche businesses in Town. If you review the history of the work done in the '70s regarding the paving behind some of the buildings on Main St. There was a gentleman's agreement that parking could be used by the public based on the cost have been provided for by a grant. The Town has not pursued use of the property based on the verbal agreement. Planning and Zoning doesn't see an overwhelming need to expand parking at this time.

Additional items discussed related to parking and Main Street - the public parking signage is not particularly helpful at the Police Dept. and the Medical Building. The Beautification Committee concurs with Chantal's point, future use of the TD Bank building, and consideration of a median down the center of Main St. First Selectwoman Bransfield reported that the Town did investigate the option of installing a median but budget, public safety vehicle access, paving, and snow removal issues associated with a median are prohibitive.

**B.1: Promote Appropriate Redevelopment of Elmcrest** - Planning and Zoning noted action is complete. Demolition will be soon to be followed by construction.

**C.1, C.2, and C.3: Continue to Enhance the Riverfront** - Planning and Zoning stated that the Commission will be a partner on these items, but responsibility lied mostly with the Town. First Selectwoman Bransfield said she'd be responding to a number of the action items on these topics in her report.

**D.1: Address Industrial Zoning** - Planning and Zoning reported that there is no water or sewer in the industrial zone so attracting businesses there is difficult. Installation of water and sewer lines presents budget challenges. Planning and Zoning and the Town would like to develop business properties along the Connecticut River to offer increased recreation and entertainment opportunities.

Chairman Knous asked if there are any items of more importance that have presented themselves. Planning and Zoning referenced the Brainerd Park project and stated that the Town will have to provide oversight to ensure that the developer follows the elements of the special permit they were granted for the property.

**E.1: Air Line Trail** – Chairman Knous asked Chantal Foster who the Committee should meet with from the Air Line Trail Committee. She suggested that Rosario Rizzo would be the key contact for the Trail Committee. She gave a brief report on the status of the projects under way in association with the Trail.

First Selectwoman Bransfield suggested the Committee utilize the Sustainable CT excel spreadsheet format for tracking the elements of the plan and their progress.

Claire Frisbie asked with Planning and Zoning as co-owner of the Plan, does they have thoughts on how the Committee should function, what the outputs should be, how implementation might proceed? Bruce Tyler said progress reports that don't just exist but are published community-wide to demonstrate what is happening would be important and beneficial. Also discussed was the need for communication by the Committee and the Board of Selectman.

Norman Ward asked about the Committee's goals and purpose. Chairman Knous replied that one component is that we, while looking at the Plan of Conservation and Development, contact various Town Boards and Commissions to learn about where they are in terms of the elements of the Plan. We are taking their feedback and hopefully we will be summarizing that in the format to look at where we are in terms of progress on planning and the status of initiatives. Norman Ward commented that the Committee, through its work, has already done much to encourage communication and collaboration. Angela Hammond mentioned the Committee should champion the work Town Boards and Commissions are doing and be publicizing planning and achievements. First Selectwoman Bransfield agreed. She noted that often, things take a long time to get done, and the "Plan" provides guidance to citizens of the Town to inform them of the progress the Town is making. The Committee thanked Bruce Tyler and Chantal Foster for attending and for their input on behalf of the Planning and Zoning Commission.

## **5. Review the 2016-2026 Plan of Conservation & Development**

Chairman Knous introduced discussion about the Plan of Conservation & Development and invited First Selectwoman Bransfield's input on the Plan.

First Selectwoman Bransfield provided a document reviewing how the Town is focusing on priority issues.

Tom Malecky noted that the First Selectwoman's report format correlated well with the Plan. First Selectwoman Bransfield noted that it takes what is in the plan and presents it in a practical format that highlights what the Town is focusing on. She suggested that if each of the Town

groups could follow the same format it would be very helpful in terms of tracking progress on the Plan.

First Selectwoman Bransfield commented that the Committee's purpose and work is very important to the Town as a record of priorities, history, and planning and progress is being established and that is a tremendous asset for the Town. First Selectwoman Bransfield encouraged the Committee to communicate broadly about what is happening in the Town.

First Selectwoman Bransfield is talking to the new Portland IT lead about where the Town can post information about what is occurring in Town. Community Conversations is another idea the Town is implementing where residents are invited to an open meeting to talk about specific issues related to what is happening in Portland.

Chairman Knous referenced open space and stated that the Conservation Commission would address those items. Norman Ward, Chair of the Conservation Commission confirmed that the Conservation Commission items in the Plan have been completed.

First Selectwoman Bransfield did not address everything in the Plan as items involves other departments in the Town. She asked how her office might be helpful to the Commission.

Chairman Knous recommended that the Air Line Trail Committee leadership be invited to the Commission's April 15, 2019 meeting to seek their input on the Plan. Members of the Commission discussed the need to review a list of vital Town organizations who they would like to invite to future meetings to discuss the Plan. Chairman Knous also suggested the members review and discuss information that has been presented to the Commission over the past several meetings. Chairman Knous asked Tom Malecky to follow up with Michelle Ceppaglia in the First Selectwoman's Office about the Sustainable CT spreadsheet.

Angela Hammond suggested the Commission seek a replacement for member Wayne Martin who has not yet been in attendance at a meeting. Perhaps one of the two alternates could fulfill the potential open seats (Sharon is gone also) and then more alternates will be needed.

**6. Public Comment:** None

## **7. Adjourn Meeting**

Chairman Knous entertained a motion for adjournment. Angela made motion to adjourn the meeting, motion seconded by Tom. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Calnen, Board Clerk  
CC: Frederick Knous, Angela Hammond