

PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

Special Organizational Meeting Minutes

September 13, 2018

Present: Claire Frisbie, Angela Hammond, Frederick Knous, Wayne Martin, Sharon Peters, Frank Winiski-ALT, Thomas Malecky-ALT

Others Present: Susan Bransfield-First Selectwoman, Ralph Zampano-BOS, Mary Dickerson-Economic Development/Land Use Administrator

1. FIRST SELECTWOMAN CALL SPECIAL ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING TO ORDER

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield called the special organizational meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the First Floor Conference Room in Town Hall, located at 33 East Main Street, Portland, Connecticut.

2. NOMINATE CHAIR

Claire Frisbie nominated Fred Knous to serve as committee Chair. Sharon Peters seconded the nomination.

Wayne Martin nominated Angela Hammond to serve as committee Chair. There was no second.

Claire Frisbie made motion to close nominations, seconded by Sharon Peters. A vote was taken on Fred Knous to serve as Chair:

AYES: Claire Frisbie, Frederick Knous, Wayne Martin, Sharon Peters

NAYS: none

ABSTAINED: Angela Hammond

Motion carried.

3. SET MEETING DATES

The meeting dates for calendar year 2018 will be Thursday October 4, 2018 at 7:00 PM and Thursday December 6, 2018 at 7:00 PM, location TBD.

Motion made by Wayne Martin, seconded by Sharon Peters to set the above meeting dates for calendar year 2018. Vote unanimous, motion approved.

Chairman Knous requested a recording clerk for the meetings.

4. DISCUSS COMMITTEE'S CHARGE AS GUIDANCE AND OVERSIGHT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2016-2026 PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The committee reviewed the following documents:

1. August 2, 2017 Resolution creating the committee
2. EDC Report

In preparation for the next meeting on October 4th the Committee members will review the POCD and identify their top 5 priorities. The Committee also requested a summary of Town projects. Susan Bransfield and Ralph Zampano will attend in October and be available for any questions/comments.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Each Committee member provided a brief summary of their background and interests on the POCD.

Elwin Guild, Middle Haddam Road and EDC Chair, offered his assistance and encouraged the Committee to invite Town Staff and members of various boards and commissions to attend their meetings. He stated the Committee is the "cheerleader" of the POCD's implementation.

Ralph Zampano, Carousel Drive and Selectman, stated he would provide a summary of Parks and Recreation projects for the next meeting.

6. ADJOURN SPECIAL MEETING

Claire Frisbie made motion to adjourn the special meeting, motion seconded by Sharon Peters. The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Susan S. Bransfield, First Selectwoman

RESOLUTION
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Town of Portland, Connecticut

August 2, 2017

**RESOLUTION CREATING A PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT
IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE**

WHEREAS, the 2016-2026 Plan of Conservation and Development, and the Portland Board of Selectmen recognize the need to appoint a committee of citizens to collaborate on the implementation of the Plan of Conservation and Development; and

WHEREAS, the Committee will be providing guidance and oversight to the project; and

WHEREAS, the following tasks will be accomplished:

- a) Shall meet two to four times annually;
- b) Establish priorities and guide implementation of the Plan's recommendations;
- c) Assess the status of specific recommendations;
- d) Suggest new implementation techniques
- e) Prepare implementation schedules and/or develop an annual implementation program of issues to be addressed by boards and commissions

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Selectmen, pursuant to Sec. 405 (5) of the Portland Charter, hereby creates a Plan of Conservation and Development Implementation Committee (hereinafter the Committee) consisting of five (5) regular members and two (2) alternate members; and be it further

RESOLVED that, the Land Use Administrator, one member of the Board of Selectmen and one member of the Planning and Zoning Commission, shall be ex-officio *non-voting* members of the Committee with all the rights, duties and responsibilities accorded ex-officio members; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Board of Selectmen retains the right to decide whether to replace any members who may resign or be removed for failure to participate in the work of the Committee, and if such members are not replaced, the actual number of members shall be those members serving at any given time; and be it further

RESOLVED the Committee shall adhere to all aspects of the Freedom of Information Law dealing with public agencies and Roberts Rules of Order; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Committee shall continue to function until such time as the work called for in this resolution is completed, at which time the committee shall notify the Board of Selectmen, and the Board of Selectmen shall disband the Committee.

Approved by
Board of Selectmen

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A. 1. Directive: Strengthen the Town Center (EDC as Partner)

- **Policy: Encourage appropriate development and redevelopment within the Town Center.**
- Utilize the expertise of the contracted Village District Architects, Anchor Engineering, LLC, to promote appropriate renovation and redevelopment within the Village District with a goal to create a unique and attractive streetscape highlighting the architecture and history of Portland to benefit each business and property owner.
 - ***Contract for Town Center Design Consultant Services with Anchor Engineering renewed, May 18, 2018.***
- Edit the Village District Guidelines in an effort to make them more "welcoming" to potential users. Emphasize how the use of them provides benefit to business and property owners that are subject to them. Consider holding an event where those impacted could offer Guideline improvement.
 - ***Village District Forum held February 26, 2018.***
- Engage local lenders to offer low interest financing exclusively for Village District business and property owners to promote renovation and/or redevelopment.
 - ***Liberty Bank and Middlesex County Revitalization Commission have agreed to work to provide capital to a Village District Revitalization Program December 2017.***
- Continue the "Development Team" Program bringing Building, Zoning, and Planning and Land Use Officials, Chatham Health District Agent, Economic Development Consultant, and Public Works Director together to meet with prospective buyers and developers before a project begins to review municipal, state, and federal requirements, estimate costs, and establish a project timeline.
 - ***Development Team meetings are ongoing for prospective commercial and industrial project, June 2018.***
- Promote creation of a "Town Green" within the Village District for town events and community activities.
 - ***Promoting a Route 66 Bypass Proposal as part of the Route 66 Corridor Study to move pass through traffic outside the Village District area, August 2018***
- Develop strategies to draw those visiting the Brownstone Exploration & Discovery Park, Riverfront Park, golf courses, and hiking trails to frequent Village District businesses.
 - ***Ongoing events in the Village District and Riverfront Park draw local and out of town visitors and help introduce them to the local business community. Riverfront events direct traffic through the Village District to parking on Middlesex Avenue. Annual events include the Riverfront Concert Series (summer), Haunted Trail and Halloween Downtown (fall), and Music and Arts Festival (spring).***
- **Policy: Encourage the establishment of a critical mass of activity within the Town Center.**

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- *Ongoing events in the Village District and Riverfront Park draw local and out of town visitors and help introduce them to the local business community. Riverfront events direct traffic through the Village District to parking on Middlesex Avenue. Annual events include the Riverfront Concert Series (summer), Haunted Trail and Halloween Downtown (fall), and Music and Arts Festival (spring).*
- 5. Policy: Consider participating in the activities of the Connecticut Main Street Center.**
 - Contact the Connecticut Main Street (CMSC) Program to review the application process, discuss goals and establishing an organization in Portland.
 - Consider having CMSC provide the district with the best course of action in moving forward with revitalization.
- A. 5. Directive: Organize Activities in the Town Center (EDC as Partner)**
 - 1. Policy: Encourage and schedule more events and activities in the Town Center to improve its overall functionality and personality.**
 - Work with local business owners, town agencies, and community groups to create an annual schedule of Village District events and activities.
 - *Ongoing events in the Village District and Riverfront Park events include the Riverfront Concert Series (summer), Haunted Trail and Halloween Downtown (fall), and Music and Arts Festival (spring).*
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- B. 1. Directive: Promote Appropriate Redevelopment of Elmcrest (EDC as Partner)**
 - 1. Policy: Promote appropriate redevelopment of the Elmcrest site in ways that will contribute to and enhance the overall community.**
 - *Continue to promote the Elmcrest parcel and seek out developers that understand the “vision” of the VCI report and introduce them to the site and the property owners, ongoing 2016.*
 - *Engage RiverCOG staff to assist with negotiations with the property owner and developer regarding the Brainerd Place project proposal, January 2017.*
 - *Prepare strategies that will ensure ONLY mixed-use development of the site. Ongoing 2017.*
 - *Continue discussions with CT DOT regarding major enhancement of RT66 and 17A traffic management. (2017)*
 - *Tax abatement agreement between BRT General and Town of Portland signed March 2017.*
 - *Brainerd Place MUD Special Permit to allow 240 units of housing and 114,000sf of commercial development, approved February 1, 2018.*
 - *Brainerd Place Demolition Permit approved May 18, 2018.*
 - *Proposal to add brewery/brewpub/microbrewery to the Zoning Table to reflect current industry trends, September 2018.*

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2. **Action: Implement actions for redevelopment of the Elmcrest (site) that follow the design concepts contained in the final VCI study report that was endorsed by Portland's Board of Selectmen.**
 - *Continue to seek grants from the CT Trust for Historic Preservation and other funding sources that will assist the owner of the property with completing the necessary stabilization of the historic buildings identified as instrumental in successfully developing the site as per the VCI study.*
 - *Maintain contact with the State Historical Preservation Office to ensure compliance with CEPA requirements for those buildings on the Elmcrest site designated as part of the Marlborough Street Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places.*
 - *Request Portland's Building, Fire and Police Officials assistance in ensuring timely building stabilization activity.*
 - *MUD Special Permit to allow 240 units of housing and 114,000sf of commercial development including the adaptive reuse of three historic structures, approved February 1, 2018.*
- C. **Directives do not apply to the Economic Development Commission**
- D. **1. Directive: Address industrial zoning (EDC as Partner)**
 - **Policy: Ensure that appropriate industrial development is allowed, encouraged, and supported.**
 - Assist the Planning and Land Use Department promote uses of Industrial zoned properties in keeping with POCD Town Center goals and objectives.
 - *Development Team meetings are ongoing for prospective commercial and industrial project, June 2018.*
 - **Policy: Evaluate the appropriate strategy for the Planned Industrial district.**
 - Review the current uses of all sites designated as "Planned Industrial" as a basis for defining a strategy for future development.
 - *Economic Development, Technology, and Public Works staff created a project map and rough cost estimate to bring municipal water to Route 66 and the IP Zoned parcels Lots 31-0025 & 31-0019, May 2018.*
 - **Action: Review the zoning in the Industrial District.**
 - Review the Industrial Zoning Regulations in joint meetings with the Planning and Zoning Commission for the purpose of developing a strategy for expanding retail and recreational use of riverfront land.
- E. **1. Directive: Establish the Airline Trail (EDC as Partner)**
 1. **Action: Extend the Air Line Trail to the Town Center.**
 - Work with the Complete Streets and Airline Trail Committees to develop a negotiation strategy to engage the owners of the Jarvis Property at the intersection of Gospel Lane and Portland-Cobalt Road as they redevelop the site as "Portland Commons". They have expressed a desire to extend the trail onto the site and establish a new trail head as part of this commercial development.
 - Work with the Complete Street group to plot a route for the trail from the existing location to the Village District/Town Center.

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- *Airline Trail spur opened June 3, 2018 providing access from Cobalt to Middle Haddam Road.*
- *Continue to work on gaining access to 1,658 strip from Gospel Lane to William Street Extension, May 2018.*
- *Attend Regional Airline Trail meetings to continue to promote connectivity, September 2018.*
- F. Directives do not apply to the Economic Development Commission
- G. Directives do not apply to the Economic Development Commission
- H. Directives do not apply to the Economic Development Commission
- I. Directives do not apply to the Economic Development Commission
- J. **5. Directive: Preserve Other Character Elements (EDC as Partner)**
 - 1. **Policy: Promote local programs and events to raise Portland's visibility as a special place and add to the community spirit and character.**
 - Work with Portland businesses and civic groups that have a statewide and regional "reach" to promote their activities and help streamline the permitting process for events where applicable.
 - Partner with local agencies and community groups on events and programming that provide entertainment and promote cultural and historical awareness.
 - When applicable, make application for grant funding to build infrastructure and provide additional public amenities for residents, businesses, and visitors.
 - *Community Connectivity Grant application submitted, May 2017, to fund sidewalks to connect upper Main Street to the Village District. Application on hold due to funding freeze by State of Connecticut. Community Connectivity Grant in the amount of \$204,358. Awarded, August 2018.*
 - 2. **Policy: Maintain a community calendar on the Town's internet web site to inform people of upcoming events.**
 - An annual calendar of municipal and community events was established as part of the 175th Anniversary of the Town of Portland. The EDC should work to continue this calendar and offer assistance to the Town Technology Department in promoting and organizing events to be included.
 - *Community Calendar of Town and Town related events maintained by Town Clerk, Fall 2017.*
 - 3. **Policy: Encourage and support local organizations that help build community spirit.**
 - Partner with local agencies and community groups on events and programming that provide entertainment and promote cultural and historical awareness.
 - Work to build a better relationship between the Portland Public Schools and the local business community to better coordinate and promote events.
- K. Directives do not apply to the Economic Development Commission
- L. **1. Directive: Support Existing Businesses (EDC as Lead)**
 - 1. **Policy: Enhance support and encouragement of local businesses.**
 - Enhance the current menu of EDC services by conducting workshops/focus groups with business owners,
 - 2. **Policy: Establish and maintain relationships with local businesses and business organizations in order to understand issues and opportunities.**

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- Continue membership and participation in the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce.
- Continue active participation in Department of Economic and Community Development programs and presentations. Provide information and assistance to local businesses seeking loans and grants for business expansion, new construction, expanded employment, and working capital.
 - **Ongoing, 2016, 2017, 2018**
- 3. **Policy: Provide a Town staff-person for comprehensive businesses assistance.**
 - Request re-establishment of a permanent staff position responsible for economic development activities in Town Hall.
 - **Part time Land Use and Economic Development Coordinator hired 2017.**
- 4. **Policy: Encourage residents to "buy local".**
 - Review and expand the Community Partners Program guidelines.
 - Expand the EDC's presence in social media to promote local businesses.
 - **Updated the Business of the Month Program to on the spot Business Excellence Awards, April 2017.**
 - **Community Partners Program continues, Business of the Year and Entrepreneurs Award given March 2018.**
- 5. **Policy: Continue to allow for appropriate home-based businesses.**
 - Create a marketplace for home based businesses.
 - Provide networking opportunities for home based business owners.
 - Work with the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce to provide health, life, and property insurance, affordable business promotion opportunities, and networking opportunities to home based businesses.
 - **Working with the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce to coordinate the MEWS+ (Middletown Entrepreneurs Work Space) to work in conjunction with the Town Tech Program at Portland High School to establish a methodology and support system for young entrepreneurs. This coordination is ongoing. October 2017**
- 6. **Action: Establish and maintain a directory of local businesses. (EDC as Partner)**
 - Compile and update a searchable database of all local businesses.
 - **Completed July 2016, Revised 2017, Revised 2018**
- 7. **Action: Re-evaluate EDC programs designed to highlight local businesses.**
 - As a commission, review the Business of the Month, Business of the Year, Business Person of the Year, and Community Partners awards programs for ways to expand and better recognize businesses.
 - **Updated the Business of the Month Program to on the spot Business Excellence Awards, April 2017.**
 - As a commission, review the Welcome New Business Program for ways to better highlight and introduce new businesses to the community.
 - Develop metrics to better assess the impact of social media use.
- L. 2. **Directive: Address Business Zones, Locations, and Uses (EDC as Partner)**

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2. **Policy: Carefully evaluate the impacts of “big box” retail establishments since such uses may harm efforts to strengthen and enhance the Town Center and may contribute to the loss of Portland owned and operated businesses.**
 - Utilize resources of the Connecticut Main Street Center, Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments, and other regional expert resources in this analysis, both in a broad context and a case by case basis.
 3. **Action: Review zoning designations and regulations for the land along Route 66 (Marlborough Street and Portland-Cobalt Road).**
 - Develop an inventory of undeveloped and underdeveloped parcels along Route 66 to target areas for improvement or development.
 - For properties identified for development or expansion of use, review zoning regulations with respect to specific restrictions limiting full use or preventing development.
 - ***Business and Industrial Regulations under review by Town Staff, June 2018.***
- L. 3. **Directive: Attract New Economic Development (EDC as Lead)**
1. **Policy: Promote new economic development that is compatible with the overall character of, and vision for, Portland.**
 - Develop a list of businesses and services not currently available and desirable to residents that are in keeping with the POCD.
 - Attend conferences and trade shows to promote Portland and the business community.
 - Attend site selector events to introduce Portland to those responsible for seeking out new locations and markets for business.
 - ***Working with CT DECD Site Finder & Quick Tracts Programs to identify early interest in large scale vacant land, commercial and industrial buildings, May 2017, ongoing.***
 2. **Policy: Consider promoting other forms of economic development such as hospitality, lodging, age-related housing, and tourism.**
 - Attend hospitality industry conferences and trade shows to promote Portland and the business community.
 - ***Engaged Jeff Muthersbaugh, VP of the CT Lodging Association, to assist a Portland resident in establishing a Bed and Breakfast, May 2018.***
 - ***Actively working with developer of assisted living facility, August 2018.***
 3. **Action: Identify historic, recreational, and sporting attractions for the Town through signage and markers.**
 - Work with the Portland Historical Society, Inc., Brownstone Quorum, Portland Parks & Recreation Department and other municipal and civic organizations to identify and create a listing of places and attractions of interest.
 - Work with the Portland Public Works department to develop a plan for signage within the Town right of way.
 - Identify grant opportunities to fund the installation of signage and markers.
 - ***Working with the Colt Foundation of Hartford to include the Hart Jarvis House on the “Colt Trail” of locations important to the life of Samuel and Elizabeth Colt. July 2018.***

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- L. 4. Directive: Support Economic Development Efforts (EDC as Lead)**
- 1. Policy: Support economic development opportunities as they arise.**
 - Continue the "Development Team" Program that brings the Building Official, Zoning Official, Planning and Land Use Administrator, Chatham Health District Agent, Economic Development Consultant, and Public Works Director together with prospective buyers and developers before a project begins to review municipal, state, and federal requirements, estimate costs, and establish a project timeline.
 - 2. Policy: Maintain Economic Development Commission to advocate on behalf of economic development opportunities.**
 - Actively promote the work of the EDC to ensure residents and community leaders understand its function and importance. Cultivate interest in serving as a member of the EDC to ensure that vacancies are promptly filled.
 - Recommend establishment of two Alternate Commissioners to better insure policy continuity and quorum attainment.
 - 3. Policy: Maintain and consider expanding economic development staffing/functionality within the Town. (Assigned to Town)**
 - Work toward the re-establishment of a permanent staff position responsible for business assistance activities in Town Hall.
 - *Part time Planning and Economic Development Coordinator hired 2017.*
 - 4. Policy: Promote the availability of tax incentives for businesses that choose to build new buildings in Portland. (EDC as Partner)**
 - Continue to lobby the Board of Selectmen for a Tax Abatement Program that requires a more stringent criteria and a clearly defined benefit that, when the stringent conditions are met, is automatically awarded to the applicant.
 - Continue to lobby the Board of Selectmen for the adoption of a Tax Incentive Financing (TIF) Policy as allowed by CT Public Act 15-57.
 - *EDC provided an overview and examples of TIF Policy to members of the BOS, August 2018.*
 - 5. Policy: Simplify the land use approval process when and where possible. (EDC as Partner)**
 - 6. Action: Implement actions to support economic development efforts. (EDC as Partner)**
 - Actively work to improve the process for land use approval.
 - Work toward the re-establishment of a permanent staff position responsible for economic development activities in Town Hall to act as a liaison between applicants for commercial and industrial land use approvals and Town and state agencies.
- M. Directives do not apply to the Economic Development Commission**
- N. Directives do not apply to the Economic Development Commission**
- O. Directives do not apply to the Economic Development Commission**
- P. Directives do not apply to the Economic Development Commission**
- Q. Directives do not apply to the Economic Development Commission**
- R. Directives do not apply to the Economic Development Commission**
- S. 1. Maintain and Enhance the Water System (EDC as Partner)**

Updated: Nov 2016, May 2017, Jun 2018, Sep 2018

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4. Action Item: Investigate expanding the sewer service area to promote economic development.

- Continue to lobby the Board of Selectmen for the adoption of a Tax Incentive Financing (TIF) Policy as allowed by CT Public Act 15-57.
 - ***Forwarded information on Public Act 15-57 and an invitation to attend the Portland East Hampton Division of the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce for a presentation on Tax Incremental Financing, September 2018.***
- Develop an inventory of undeveloped and underdeveloped parcels along Route 66 to target areas for improvement or development.
- **Policy: Ensure that appropriate industrial development is allowed, encouraged, and supported.**
- Assist the Planning and Land Use Department promote uses of Industrial zoned properties in keeping with POCD Town Center goals and objectives.
- For those properties identified for development or expansion of use, review the current use and potential uses with respect to the lack of municipal water and sewer service as it relates to restricting full use or preventing the development of those properties.
- Continue to review grant opportunities for expansion of municipal water and sewer services.
 - ***Economic Development, Technology, and Public Works staff created a project map and rough cost estimate to bring municipal water to Route 66 and the IP Zoned parcels Lots 31-0025 & 31-0019, May 2018.***

S. 4. Address Other Infrastructure Needs (EDC as Partner)

1. Policy: Work to make natural gas available in all areas of Portland.

- The EDC will continue to work with UIL Corporation and their Community Development Specialists to make existing and prospective businesses aware of the financial incentives UIL offers for new natural gas users and expanded natural gas use.