



The Planning Commission

Town of New Fairfield

New Fairfield, Connecticut 06812

Planning Commission Town of New Fairfield

Regular Meeting – Minutes

Monday, June 26 2023 @ 7:30pm

Community Room @ 33 Route 37

New Fairfield Conference Room

New Fairfield CT

Commissioners: Ms. Cynthia Ross-Zweig, Chair
Mr. Cory Neumann, Vice Chair/Secretary
Mr. Ernie Lehman
Mr. Jeff Morrell
Ms. Kirsten Bennett O'Rourke

Alternates: Mr. Dylan White
Ms. Olivia Micca

Guests: Glenn Chalder, Khris Hall

Call to Order: 7:31 pm

Pledge of Allegiance

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Minutes from the April 24, 2023 meeting – Mr. Ernie Lehman made a motion to approve the April 24, 2023 meeting minutes as presented. Mr. Jeff Morrell seconded the motion. **(5-0-0)**

Motion approved.

Minutes from the May 22, 2023 meeting – Mr. Jeff Morrell made a motion to approve the May 22, 2023 meeting minutes as presented. Mr. Ernie Lehman seconded the motion. **(3-2-0) Motion approved.**

CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS - none

PUBLIC COMMENT - none

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion with Glenn Chalder – initial materials to set the state for a general discussion of the POCD - Glenn Chalder introduced himself. His goal tonight is threefold – first to say hello,

second introduction of an overview of the scope of work, and lastly go over questions about the current plan's strengths and weaknesses.

Glenn Chalder went over the POCD Primer (see enclosure). He would like the booklet to be available online for all townspeople to view. Glenn Chalder suggested a public meeting or an online survey in September. Cynthia Ross-Zweig asked if there was a possibility to do both a public meeting and an online survey. Glenn Chalder stated that he does not think that both a public meeting and a survey are needed. Glenn Chalder stated that the public meeting and or survey could be started earlier, late August, to include townspeople that are only in New Fairfield in the summer. A discussion was held on the timing of a public meeting or survey. Jeff Morrell inquired about a town-wide mailer, the cost, and how to have access for all to the online survey. Olivia Micca stated that the QR code could be put on the mailer. Ernie Lehman asked if there could be an option for a mailed survey by request. Cynthia Ross-Zweig inquired on the cost of bulk mailing. Glenn Chalder stated that he was unsure of the exact fee. An idea was given to use the phone system of the town. Khris Hall stated that the alert now system is for emergencies. She gave options of using the town newsletter or an alert on the top of the town webpage. Cynthia Ross-Zweig inquired about using the flashing road signs. Khris Hall suggested the use of tent signs outside of town buildings. The survey would need to be less than 40 questions. It would begin with basic questions, end with demographic information, and 30 questions in the middle to identify the issues. Cynthia Ross-Zweig raised a concern about the possibility of one person doing multiple replies. Glenn Chalder discussed prioritizing the top 20 issues and then get the input of the other town boards. A discussion was held on how past POCD were not acted upon. Glenn Chalder stated that the POCD can be configured in ways to make it more meaningful and actionable. Glenn Chalder stated that updating the issues that are important to the community can help keep the POCD updated and fresh in an ongoing manner. Jeff Morrell stated that working with everyone will be key. He gave an idea of putting it in a newsletter or the newspaper so that everyone gets a copy. The issue with this is that it would have to be manually tabulated which would take a lot of additional time. Glenn Chalder stated that he thinks the best type of survey is a telephone survey. Cory Neumann asked about handing out a flier or handout to voters on election day. The survey would consist of specific questions as well as open-ended questions. Glenn Chalder stated that there is still time to get ready for a survey in September. Cynthia Ross-Zweig stated that meeting in July would be key for getting the survey out in September. Cory Neumann suggested that the survey be kept to as few questions as possible. Glenn Chalder suggested posting on the town's various social media sites to help alert everyone to the survey. Jeff Morrell inquired about the status of current buildings in town and it being part of the POCD. Glenn Chalder stated that the POCD looks at the status of current buildings and what is sustainable. The community workshop survey slated for September. The preliminary information will be looked at in the fall. The first draft of the plan January to February of 2024. The unknown is the situation of continued funding. Glenn Chalder stated that the current funding looks to run out around February 2024. There may be a time where the progress will have to be halted until the next round of funding is approved.

Glenn Chalder asked about the 2014 POCD and the thoughts on it. Kirsten Bennett-O'Rourke stated that it is too long and is redundant. Cynthia Ross-Zweig liked all the mapping that allowed a view of open-space and traffic patterns. Glenn Chalders suggested a meeting with other boards to help all boards to become more familiar with the POCD and get the thoughts and inputs of their board members. Glenn Chalders stated that the plan needs to be condensed and gave the suggestion to limit each topic to one to two pages.

All correspondence or requests for information from Glenn Chalder will be sent to the Planning Commission email and the recording secretary, Dana Ulibarri, will assist with getting the information or the contact information that is needed.

Appointment of Alternate – A letter of interest was read in that was received from Gary Reetz.

Cynthia Ross-Zweig, Please consider my interest for the position of "alternate" to the Town Planning Commission. Although a recent resident of New Fairfield, I have had extensive experience with County, Town and Village planning while resident in New York State. I would be honored by your consideration for this important public post and happy to serve if called. Sincerely yours, Gary J Reetz

Kirsten Bennett O'Rourke made a motion to approve Gary Reetz as an alternate for the Planning Commission. Cory Neumann seconded the motion **(5-0-0) Motion approved.**

OLD BUSINESS - none

STANDING ITEMS

Subdivision Log - none

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Ernie Lehman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:44 pm. Mr. Cory Neumann seconded the motion. (5-0-0) **All in favor**

Enclosure

POCD Primer

Received by email on 06/28/2023 @ 8:48 a.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield

PLANNING PRIMER FOR NEW FAIRFIELD



Overview

This booklet has been prepared for New Fairfield residents and other people interested in the formulation of the 2024-34 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) for New Fairfield, Connecticut. The following pages are intended to provide general background information and an overview of:

- planning and the planning process, and
- Plans of Conservation and Development.

Introduction To Planning

At its most basic level, planning is a process for making informed decisions about the future. For New Fairfield then, planning is a process intended to make informed decisions about how the community should approach the future in order to:

- protect things which are important to the community, and
- attain the things which will enhance the overall health and well-being of the community and the quality of life of its residents.

Much has changed since New Fairfield’s current POCD was adopted in 2014. Therefore, it is appropriate that New Fairfield review the policies in the current POCD to ensure land use and other policies are appropriate for the future.

“If you don’t know where you’re going, you’ll wind up somewhere else.”

Yogi Berra,
Baseball Legend
Renowned Punster



2014 POCD



Why Plan?

New Fairfield is affected by events and trends in the region, the nation, and the world.

A large number of these events and trends are outside of New Fairfield's control but still affect the municipality and local residents and businesses.

While change cannot be stopped from happening, planning provides the opportunity to:

- focus on the 'bigger picture' and identify significant goals,
- promote overall values and achieve important purposes,
- coordinate efforts and produce consistent results, and
- achieve efficiency and economy in implementation.

About Plans Of Conservation & Development

A Plan of Conservation and Development is a document whose purpose is to establish a common vision for the future of a community and then determine policies that will help attain that vision. While its key purpose and function is to address the physical development of a community, it will often address issues related to economic development and social development as well.

The goals and recommendations of the Plan are intended to reflect an overall consensus of what is considered desirable for New Fairfield and its residents in the future.

A Plan of Conservation and Development becomes an official document after a public hearing and adoption by the New Fairfield Planning Commission. Once adopted, the Plan is used to:

- organize conservation activities,
- guide land use decisions and regulations,
- coordinate public projects, and
- guide how to meet identified public needs.

However, it is important to note that the Plan of Conservation and Development is primarily an advisory document. It is intended to guide local boards, commissions, and officials and to provide a framework for consistent decision-making with regard to conservation and development activities in New Fairfield over the next decade or so.

While the statutory responsibility to adopt the Plan rests with the Planning Commission, implementation will only occur with the diligent efforts of the residents and boards, commissions, and officials of the Town of New Fairfield. The Plan will only be effective if it is understood and supported by the people of New Fairfield, and implemented by local boards and commissions.

Prior New Fairfield Plans

New Fairfield has prepared Plans of Conservation and Development before including:

- 2003 - Plan of Conservation and Development
- 2014 - Plan of Conservation and Development

Additional planning studies have also been undertaken over time. It is intended that this update of the 2014 POCD will continue the tradition of evaluating ways to best address the conservation and development of New Fairfield.

EXCERPTS FROM CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES 8-23 – PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Commission shall:

- prepare, adopt and amend a plan of conservation and development ...
- review the plan of conservation and development at least once every ten years ...
- adopt such amendments to the plan or parts of the plan ... as the commission deems necessary to update the plan.

The Plan shall:

- be a statement of policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality, ...
- show the commission's recommendation for the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial and other purposes and for the most desirable density of population in the ... parts of the municipality.
- be designed to promote with the greatest efficiency and economy the coordinated development of the municipality and the general welfare and prosperity of its people.
- be made with reasonable consideration for restoration and protection of the ecosystem and habitat of Long Island Sound ...
- make provision for the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multifamily dwellings consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity, for all residents of the municipality and the planning region ...
- promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and moderate income households, and encourage the development of housing which will meet the housing needs ...
- take into account the state plan of conservation and development ... and note any inconsistencies it may have with said state plan.
- consider the use of cluster development to the extent consistent with soil types, terrain, and infrastructure capacity.

The Plan may:

- show the commission's recommendation for a system of principal thoroughfares, parkways, bridges, streets and other public ways; for airports, parks, playgrounds and other public grounds; for general location, relocation and improvement of public buildings; for the general location and extent of public utilities and terminals, whether publicly or privately owned for water, sewerage, light, power, transit and other purposes; and for the extent and location of public housing projects.
- include recommended programs for the implementation of the plan ...
- (include) such other recommendations ... in the plan as will ... be beneficial to the municipality.

General POCD Contents

Many Plans of Conservation and Development address three key *policy areas*:

- What a community wants to preserve or conserve (the “conservation” element of the Plan),
- How a community wants to guide growth or change in the community (the “development” element of the Plan), and
- The services / facilities a community wants in order to meet community needs in the future (the “infrastructure” element of the Plan).

Many POCDs are also now incorporating the concept of sustainability and resilience either within each of the above elements or as a separate element.



A POCD often also includes the following elements:

- Introduction
- Overview of conditions and trends affecting the community
- Implementation strategies
- Conclusion

Planning Process For New Fairfield

1 Scoping / Researching

Scoping / Researching

The first phase focuses on identifying topics and issues important to the community (Planning Commission, residents, property owners, etc.). While this is underway, Planimetrics will also be conducting independent research to develop a thorough understanding of current and potential issues affecting New Fairfield. Specific tasks include:

1. **Scoping Meeting With the Planning Commission**
2. **Board / Agency Questionnaires**
3. **Public Scoping Workshop or Community Survey**
4. **Material Review / Research**
5. **Conditions and Trends (history, demographics (including in-migration and out-migration analysis, economy, housing, land use, zoning, fiscal, etc.)**

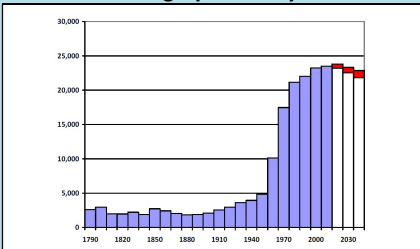
Public Meeting Exercises



Community Involvement



Demographic Analysis



Housing Overview



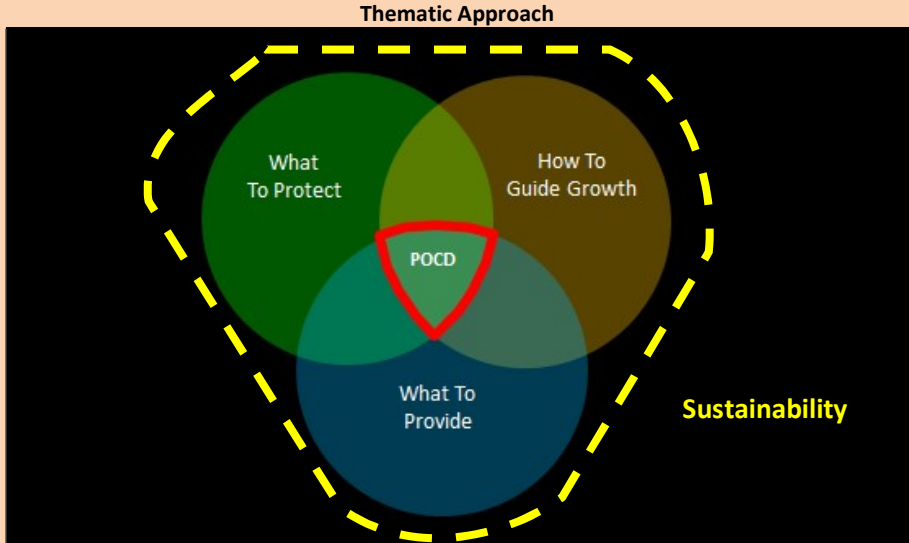
2 Organizing / Strategizing

Organizing / Strategizing

The second phase focuses on updating the POCD and identifying appropriate strategies in key thematic areas which include:

Theme	Description	Anticipated Topics
Sustainability (Future Thinking)	How to maintain and improve New Fairfield’s long-term sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sustainability ▪ Resiliency ▪ Hazard Mitigation
Conservation (What To Protect)	How to protect and preserve things important to New Fairfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Natural resources ▪ Open space ▪ Cultural resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic, scenic, etc.
Development (How To Guide Growth)	How to guide and manage growth or change in New Fairfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New Fairfield Center / Candlewood Corners ▪ Housing / residential development (including affordable housing) ▪ Business / economic development
Infrastructure (What To Provide)	How to provide facilities / services wanted or needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community facilities ▪ Vehicular transportation ▪ Pedestrians / bicycles / transit ▪ Utilities

6. Consultant Prepares “Briefing Booklets” On Topics
7. Commission Reviews / Discusses Strategies On Topics At Working Meetings



3 Preparing / Adopting

Preparing / Adopting

The third phase focuses on crafting a POCD document and sharing it with the community in various ways to get input and feedback. Specific tasks include:

1. **Plan Preparation and Refinement**
2. **Community Review / Input On Draft POCD**
3. **Finalize Recommended POCD**
4. **Notice / Referral Period (65 Days)**
5. **Public Hearing On Adoption**
6. **Adoption**

First Draft



Plan Review Meetings



Community Workshops



Plan Presentation



NOTE - The work elements in Phase 3 are predicated on funding availability and the timing of such funding.

See next page for more information.

Schedule Parameters

The project will commence in June of 2023 since funding becomes available in July. This is expected to fund project work through about February 2024.

In February 2024, depending on funding availability and the timing of such funding, the Consultant may, at its option, choose to:

- continue work and bill after July 1 2024 when additional funds become available.
- suspend work on the project until funding has been appropriated, or
- may terminate its work on the project.

It is understood that the Town’s wishes for the POCD to be adopted by September 22, 2024 and this schedule accomplishes that unless there is an interruption or delay in funding.

Preliminary Schedule

The following schedule is predicated on one meeting per month (or more) with the Planning Commission *dedicated* to the POCD update.

	2023							2024									
	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O
Finalize Agreement																	
1. SCOPING / RESEARCHING																	
PC Kick-off Meeting																	
Community Workshop Or Survey																	
Research / Material Review																	
2. ORGANIZING / STRATEGIZING																	
Research / Analysis / Briefing Books																	
Review / Refine POCD Strategies																	
3. PREPARING / ADOPTING																	
Prepare First Draft																	
Deliver / Review / Refine Draft POCD																	
Community Meeting																	
PC Finalize Proposed POCD																	
Statutory Notice Period																	
Review By BOS / COG																	
Public Hearing																	
Plan Adoption																	
Plan Completion																	

The red box indicates the period of time when, depending on progress of Town funding of the POCD project for FY 2024-25, Planimetrics may, at its option, choose to:

- work through a pause in available funding,
- suspend work on the project until funding has been appropriated, or
- terminate its work on the project.