



The Planning Commission

Town of New Fairfield
New Fairfield, Connecticut 06812

Regular Meeting Minutes

May 20, 2024 @ 7:30 pm
Community Room @ 33 Route 37
New Fairfield Conference Room
New Fairfield CT

Commissioners: Ms. Cynthia Ross-Zweig, Chair
Mr. Cory Neumann, Vice Chair/Secretary (absent)
Mr. Ernie Lehman
Mr. Gary Reetz (absent)
Mr. Keith Landa

Alternates: Ms. Christina McCartney
Mr. Michael Oliva (absent)
Mr. Dylan White (absent)

Guests: Evan White, New Fairfield Zoning Enforcement Officer

Call to Order: 7:31 pm

Pledge of Allegiance

Ernie Lehman elevated Christina McCartney to a voting member. Seconded by Keith Landa. **All in Favor (3-0-0). Motion passed.**

Approve Minutes

Christina McCartney made a motion to approve the May 20, 2024 Regular Meeting minutes as presented. Keith Landa seconded the motion. **3-1-0 Cynthia Ross-Zweig abstained. Motion passed.**

Correspondence/ Announcements

Budget

Public Comment

none

New Business

none

Old Business

Discussion on the POCD (began at page 26)

Enhancing the town center and economic development – with introduction of sewers there is the opportunity for more reliable sewer service for restaurants. Cynthia Ross-Zweig stated that when addressing sewers the water supply system will need to be addressed. Glenn Chalder stated that the management of the water system will need to be modified. Number one on Page 8 will be called infrastructure so that sewer and water can be addressed. These will be cross referenced to Page 66. Cynthia Ross-Zweig stated a concern for ad hoc boards vs appointed boards for the EDC. Keith Landa

stated that for focused work that there should be time limited task forces from the town. Glenn Chalder stated that spreading the workload can be beneficial and make it a collaborative effort. Lead agencies would be Planning and Zoning the other agencies would be partners. Glenn Chalder stated that EDC would be the lead agency on specific things. Cynthia Ross-Zweig stated that since these are ad hoc committees that the lead agencies should be the elected boards and the partners be the ad hoc boards/committees. Keith Landa stated that the POCD is a guiding document and that giving the EDC a prominent role could be beneficial. Glenn Chalder gave a suggestion of changing the column headings to recommended leader and recommended partner. The text should be state if a ad hoc committee is not around then the leader/partner would be identified. Keith Landa stated that this is a modular plan and can be adjusted in seven years. Cynthia Ross-Zweig stated that a board can not be listed as a leader if currently they are not doing what is listed in the POCD draft. Glenn Chalder stated that the plan will need to be adjusted and requested to set a public meeting for September 2024. Keith Landa stated that there needs to be an advocate for housing downtown. Cynthia Ross-Zweig stated an objection for a listing an ad hoc committee as a leader. Glenn Chalder suggested sharing this with other boards and commissions to see if one of them steps up to take the lead. Ernie Lehman stated that someone is going to have to lead and if a board becomes non-existent then another board will have to step up. A discussion was held regarding the pros and cons and what boards would step up and that the EDC can be the lead even though they have not been in the past. Glenn Chalder stated that changing the verbiage to “task” so that the committee that is tasked will take the lead. Keith Landa stated that the EDC should be advocating/leading and is the appropriate committee. Ernie Lehman and Christina McCartney agreed with Keith Landa. Christina McCartney requested that verbiage be added that if they lead committee is disbanded then the responsibility moves to the partners. Glenn Chalder stated that the verbiage can be changed and the goal on the first draft is to propose changes and that this is not the final language. Cynthia Ross-Zweig requested that what the boards have been chartered to do be looked at. Page 35 Action Item 1 – a working group would be formed that would include members from the elected boards, townspeople, members of the business community, and the Planning Commission. Once the plan is shared then the townspeople will have a chance to view the plan and then give feedback at a town meeting. Glenn Chalder stated that water, sewer, housing near the town center, additional activities near the town center, expanding sidewalks, etc.... are ways to enhance the town center as the economic, social, cultural, and government focal point. Glenn Chalder stated that if the aesthetics are recommended in the POCD then this can help keep the town look consistent. The board agreed to have the wording be that the aesthetics be recommended in the POCD. Keith Landa stated that a different leader would be needed for Town Center F. Page 36 – Diversify Our Housing Portfolio – 75% of houses are on non-conforming lots. The Zoning Commission is exploring possible changes to the Zoning Regulations to address the non-conforming lots. Glenn Chalder suggested that making the rules the same and fair would be a good direction for the POCD and the Zoning Regulations. Keith Landa stated that having a blanket set of rules will lessen the number of people going in front of the ZBA. Cynthia Ross-Zweig stated that when there is a plan like this that the charts need to be explained for what they are but to not make statements that summarize opinions. She requested some housing for demographics that is specific to New Fairfield or the regional area. The demographic information is not available for seventy years for New Fairfield so Glenn Chalder asked if the page should be removed. Cynthia Ross-Zweig stated that the comparison of 70 years that is not specific to New Fairfield is not needed. Cynthia Ross-Zweig requested that the pages 38 & 39 be removed. The board agreed with the removal of pages 38 & 39. Glenn Chalder stated that the town center or Candlewood area may be good areas for senior housing. When looking for areas for diversify does this need to be identified on a map. Cynthia Ross-Zweig stated that this can be based upon when a lot or land opens up. The board agreed that the dotted line should be removed from the Residential Development Map. Page 42 and Page 43 exploring alternatives to the R44 and R88 districts. Zoning Commission currently working on Zoning Regulations so this will change as the Zoning Regulations change. Page 44 and Page 45 converting the Housing Study Committee from ad hoc to a permanent committee. Cynthia Ross-Zweig stated a concern of moving from ad hot to permanent based on the reason the committee was originally formed. Glenn Chalder suggested changing the wording to “explore creating a permanent committee” the board agreed. Glenn Chalder went over the action steps. The board requested that adopt

be replaced with explore and change create to consider. Keith Landa asked if there are comparable examples of Affordable Housing Trust Funds that could be shared with the board. Glenn Chalder stated that there are examples. Page 46 - Preserving Open Space and Extending Trails – New Fairfield should continue the efforts that are currently in place. Glenn Chalder asked if the board is interested in recommending conservation subdivisions in R88 zones A conservation subdivision would have a given percentage of the project be conserved as open space. The number of homes would remain the same it is just the layout may vary to include the required conservation area. Cynthia Ross-Zweig stated that the Marjerie Reservoir Trail shown may not be the final trail and requested that additional text be added stating that the map shown is a conceptual map and not a finalized version. A request was made for a Special Meeting on July 15, 2024. Dana Ulibarri, the clerk, will check into a room. Glenn Chalder stated that the public informational meeting should be planned for September 2024.

Standing Items

Subdivision Log - none

FOIA - none

Adjournment

Christina McCartney made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 pm. Keith Landa seconded the motion. **All in favor. Motion Passed.**

Respectfully submitted

Dana Ulibarri, clerk

Received by email on 6/25/2024 @ 8:19 a.m.
by Tricia Quinn, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield