

**WETHERSFIELD PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING AND MEETING**

December 4, 2012

The Wethersfield Planning and Zoning Commission held a public hearing and meeting on Tuesday, December 4, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in Keeney Hall of the Keeney Memorial Cultural Center, 200 Main Street, Wethersfield, Connecticut.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Harley called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

1.1 ROLL CALL & SEATING OF ALTERNATES (5 members required for a quorum):

Chairman Harley called the roll as follows:

Member Name	Present	Absent	Excused
Thomas Harley, Chairman	✓		
Richard Roberts, Vice Chairman	✓		
Antonio Margiotta, Clerk	✓		
Joseph Hammer			✓
George Oickle	✓		
Anthony Homicki	✓		
James Hughes			✓
Dave Edwards			✓
Angelo Robert Fazzina	✓		
Thomas Dean (alternate)	✓		
Alex Vasel (alternate)			✓
Leigh Standish (alternate)	✓		

Also present: Peter Gillespie, Town Planner/Economic Development Manager;
Denise Bradley, Assistant Planner

Chairman Harley noted at the time of roll call there were six (6) full members and two (2) alternate members in attendance. All members present to participate.

Members of the Public were present.

2. OLD BUSINESS:

There was no Old Business discussed during this meeting.

3. NEW BUSINESS:

There was no New Business discussed during this meeting.

4. OTHER BUSINESS:

4.1 Review of the Draft 2013 Plan of Conservation and Development.

Glenn Chalder, AICP, Planimetrics, made a presentation and led a discussion thereafter with the

Commissioners, Mr. Gillespie, Ms. Bradley, and Members of the Public regarding the community's review of the Draft Updating the 2000 Plan of Conservation and Development. Mr. Chalder noted the Wethersfield 2013 Plan of Conservation & Development is a strategic plan for the physical development of the community and that it is an advisory document prepared by the Planning & Zoning Commission intended to guide local actions and to provide a framework for consistent decision making in the next decade or so.

Themes discussed in the Draft Plan concerned maintaining community character and quality of life, guiding development, and addressing other issues such as protecting natural resources, preserving open space, managing the roadway system, supporting farms and farming, promoting sustainability and resiliency, maintaining and enhancing utility infrastructure, and managing Wethersfield Cove. Implementation schedules are included in the Draft Plan that would indicate a task a priority code for a given subject, a date of when the task was added, a target date for task completion, Town agency leader of the task, and Town agency partners in the task.

Mr. Chalder encouraged the public to refer to the website: <http://planwethersfield.com> to obtain a Draft of the Plan and to learn more information regarding the Plan, as well as the on-line and telephone survey results pertaining to how Wethersfield citizens responded to inquiries regarding Wethersfield. The next steps in the process of Plan adoption are to incorporate feedback received at this meeting to help finalize the document and schedule a public hearing in the next few months.

Members of the Community commented. A desire to encourage additional street trees (i.e. vicinity of Wolcott Hill Road and Church Street intersection) to assist with air quality, calming of street traffic and shading from sun exposure were cited as benefits of adding street trees.

Mike Liska, 814 Ridge Road, commented on the challenges with Silas Deane Highway's location in Town and the State of Connecticut, Department of Transportation's needs to accommodate regional traffic in that area. He mentioned a redevelopment approach for Wethersfield described as a multi-faceted, mixed use, pedestrian-oriented environment that would create a high economic return for property owners who would choose to invest in a plan.

John Papas, owner of Leo's Pizza, 689 Wolcott Hill Road, spoke of parking and pedestrian/traffic safety and commented on an accident that took the life of a pedestrian and recently occurred across the street (near Beverly Road) from his restaurant. He would like to see this area included in the Plan of Development. Mr. Chalder indicated he will take a closer look at this area.

Paul Courchaine, 481 Main Street, indicated the Silas Deane Master Plan included Beaver Brook. He mentioned there needs to be a stronger advocate/liaison with the State of Connecticut, Department of Transportation when addressing changes on the Silas Deane Highway. He suggested that larger property owners on the Silas Deane Highway should be brought on board, as business owners on the Silas Deane Highway were not in favor of the "island" structures proposed at one point in the past on the Silas Deane Highway.

Barbara Ruhe, 79 Main Street, mentioned there should be pedestrian access (as there is no sidewalk) on the Silas Deane Highway from Victoria Road to Jordan Lane due to the existence of the shopping plaza (Price Rite Supermarket, 160 Silas Deane Highway) and the shopping plaza currently under renovation on the corner of Jordan Lane and the west side of Silas Deane Highway. She suggested that financing opportunities may exist for smaller portions of bigger tasks so that realistic goals can be set and achieved.

Commissioner Homicki indicated (as noted on Page 65 of the Draft for Community Review) that in at least six (6) other communities in Connecticut, parts of State owned, multi-lane roadways were successfully reduced to one (1) lane.

Brent Owen, 42 Wells Farm Drive, mentioned that in Madison, CT, a state-owned road passes through the Town Center and there is a sense of character in that area with businesses such as *R.J. Julia Booksellers* existing in that area. He also mentioned that addressing housing needs and the idea of having additional trees are good for the community. He added that adding sidewalks in areas may be appropriate, however he would like to the Wells Quarter Village neighborhood to remain without sidewalks.

Rita-Ann Owen, 42 Wells Farm Drive, mentioned that adding a bus lane on the Silas Deane Highway would encourage ridership.

Steve Randall, 35 Beverly Road, indicated that draft plan has been well thought out. He suggested the implementation tables include contacts at the State level where appropriate and that leaders be designated to follow through with a task completion.

Mr. Chalder spoke of the community members as ambassadors of the final Plan.

A member of the audience inquired if anything had been completed as a result of the 1986 or 2000 Plans.

Mike Liska, 814 Ridge Road, responded by mentioning the Façade Improvement Program is a direct result of the 2000 Plan.

Mr. Gillespie indicated that as a result of the 2000 Plan, zoning on the Silas Deane Highway has changed and that an Architectural Review Process (Design Review Advisory Committee) has been in place.

Steve Randall, 35 Beverly Road, indicated the addition of a fifth (5th) lane on the Silas Deane Highway for purposes of turning is a result of the 2000 Plan.

Sue Tenorio, 28 Lincoln Road, suggested the Plan include a component for connecting those in Town who do not feel connected to the Town due to their unfamiliarity of the Town, State, Region, etc. She noted that her work with the Wethersfield Early Readiness Council has led her conclusion and that the ability for these people to obtain information pertaining to happenings and resources in Town from a central location would be beneficial.

Phil Knecht, 100 Executive Square, #1208, mentioned building on the success of the trolley by extending tours of Old Wethersfield by way of the trolley. A member of the public mentioned there were ice skating and bond fire events in Mill Woods Park in the past and that perhaps those events could occur again.

Mike Liska, 814 Ridge Road, offered a different perspective to the aversion to changes in Wethersfield. He asked the public to consider a few notions: 1) Wethersfield as an international designation; 2) a liaison effort with the City of Hartford; and 3) the railroad line existing in Wethersfield as a resource with the ability to accommodate pedestrian use.

Charlie Ford, 249 Ridge Road, noted the Wilkus Farm Property acquisition as a positive component in the positive promotion of character and quality of life in Wethersfield.

5. MINUTES – November 20, 2012 Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes:

The Minutes will be discussed and voted on at the next meeting of the Commission.

Minutes of the November 20, 2012 Meeting of the Planning & Zoning Commission will be reviewed at the next meeting of the Commission.

6. STAFF REPORTS:

There were no reports made by Staff during this meeting.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON GENERAL MATTERS OF PLANNING AND ZONING.

There were no public comments made at this meeting regarding general matters of planning and zoning.

8. CORRESPONDENCE:

There were no items of correspondence discussed at this meeting.

9. PENDING APPLICATIONS TO BE HEARD AT FUTURE MEETINGS:

There were no pending applications discussed during this meeting.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: Commissioner Homicki motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Second: Commissioner Fazzina seconded the motion.

Aye: Harley, Roberts, Margiotta, Oickle, Homicki, Fazzina, Dean, Standish;

Nay: None;

Vote: 8 – 0;

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellen Goslicki, Recording Secretary