



**REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
MIDDLETOWN CONNECTICUT
JULY 31, 2019**

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Devoto called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance

2. Roll Taking

Present: Commissioner Stephen Devoto
Commissioner Nicholas Fazzino
Commissioner Richard Pelletier
Commissioner Molly Salafia
Commissioner Elizabeth Emery
Commissioner Thom Pattavina (seated for Commissioner Rossiter)

Absent: Commissioner Joyce Rossiter
Commissioner Tyrell Brown
Commissioner Steven Kovach
Commissioner Christopher Sugar

Staff: Joseph Samolis, Director of Planning, Conservation & Development

Public: Approximately 40 member of public

3. Items removed from the agenda and why

None

4. Public comment on items on agenda which are not currently scheduled for a public hearing

None

5. ZEO Certification that all public hearing signs have been properly noticed (when scheduled)

There were no public hearings scheduled

6. Public Hearings (when scheduled)

None

7. Old Business

None

8. New Business

1) **POCD Listening Session – Economic Development and Riverfront Revitalization**

John Gustkowski, Consultant with CME explained that he was hired by the City to facilitate the update of the Planning, Conservation and Development. He explained what they were doing and explained that it is mandated by Statute to update this every ten years. It is basically a statement of goals and the direction of where you want to see your City go, such as in terms of housing, infrastructure, open space, lands to be conserved, education and sewer & water concerns among other goals.

Some key input that they received from the Charettes and surveys:

- Beautify buildings standing vacant;
- Parking;
- Adaptive re-use;
- Need for good schools;
- Additional smaller music venues;
- Market rate housing downtown;
- Additional retail restaurants;
- Expanding tax base;
- Good public transportation;
- Accessible amenities and Services.

Key relevant input – downtown & riverfront

- Connect riverfront to downtown;
- Better walking and walkability;
- Create multiple connections between Harbor Park and Main Street for pedestrians and bike with handicap access 1 block wide elevated crossing;
- Turn downtown and riverfront brownfields into public spaces;
- Rooftop dining and gardens;
- Multi-story parking arcade near Main Street;
- Improve green spaces for children on Main Street (playgrounds);
- Parking at Metro Square;
- Close Main Street to vehicles at 6:00 PM every day;
- Improve connection between Wesleyan and downtown;
- How to get more people to visit Middletown.

Key findings from POCD Community Surveys. The 3 top greatest challenges facing Middletown in the next 10 years:

- Continued economic development and business growth;
- Education/Schools;
- Fiscal/budgetary issues.

Topics to be emphasized in the overall 2020-2030 POCD:

- Bicycle and pedestrian access/Improvements;
- Housing needs;
- Improving community services;
- Addressing transportation issues
- Enhancing downtown;
- Park & open space access/improvements

- Economic business development

Environmental topics to be emphasized in the overall 2020-2030 POCD:

- Preserving natural resources (examples: farmland, forests, clean water & air);
- Sustainability;
- Riverfront preservation;
- Open space and conservation.

Topics most important to you (from the surveys);

- Open space and natural resource preservation;
- Riverfront revitalization;
- Continued commercial development downtown;
- Bicycle and pedestrian amenities;
- Increased city services;
- Increased commercial and industrial development;
- Increased residential growth.

Rank the following from most appropriate to least appropriate as they relate to the revitalization along the Connecticut River in Middletown:

- 1) Fishing
- 2) Boating/marina
- 3) Walking and biking trails;
- 4) Protected and preserved
- 5) Public parks
- 6) Housing
- 7) Recreation center;
- 8) Connection to Main Street and downtown.

Most important topics (by survey);

- 1) Open space and natural resource preservation;
- 2) Riverfront revitalization;
- 3) Continued commercial development downtown;
- 4) Bicycle & pedestrian services;
- 5) Increased commercial and industrial development;
- 6) Increased residential growth.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

This is a brief list of topics from the public. You can watch the video of the meeting at www.middletowct.gov.

- Boathouse building
- Boat launch
- Entertainment venue
- Update on sewage plant
- Recreational activity at Riverfront
- Housing throughout Middletown (rentals and affordable housing)
- Mixed use development

- Mixed use development
- Focus on details; think through the design
- Connecting multi-use trails to Riverfront
- Sewage treatment plant
- Execution of Riverfront Development
- Valet parking (multi-business)
- Market rate housing
- ARTS
- RFP for the whole riverfront
- Broadband – internet
- Corridors cannot be ignored
- No surface parking on Main Street
- Railroad – included in solution for riverfront
- YMCA
- Playscapes in the downtown
- Too many restaurants
- Public spaces key to riverfront
- Food truck row
- Important to keep river clean
- Improve waterfront walk on Union Street
- Better access to riverfront
- Gospel-fest
- Comprehensive plan for parking
- Vessels/docking
- Preservation / conservation
- Walkable destination
- Transit solutions

2) Request for a Special Exception with regard to Section 60.02.08 to convert property at 324 Washington Street from Private College Housing to Professional & Business Offices. Applicant/agent Stephen Rak SE2019-6 (Date of receipt: 7/1/19; To be scheduled for a public hearing for August 28, 2019)

Joe Samolis asked the Commission to schedule this for a public hearing on August 28, 2019.

A motion to schedule for a public hearing on August 28 was moved by Commissioner Pattavina and seconded by Commissioner Pelletier. The chair called for the vote. Motion passed unanimously.

3) Request for a Special Exception with regard to Section 61.02.17 for a Power Sport Dealership at 1379 Newfield Street. Applicant/agent Freeman Enterprises, LLC SE2019-7 (Date of receipt: 7/31/19; To be scheduled for a public hearing)

Joe Samolis asked the Commission to schedule this for a public hearing on August 28, 2019.

A motion to schedule for a public hearing on August 28 was moved by Commissioner Salafia and seconded by Commissioner Pattavina. The chair called for the vote. Motion passed unanimously.

9. Public comment on topics which are not or have not been the subject of a public hearing

None

10. Minutes of the Regular Meeting, Transcripts, Staff Reports and Commission Affairs

10.1 Minutes of June 26 & July 10 Meetings

Since the minutes of the June 26th meeting were not included in the last packet, Commissioner Fazzino moves to table until the next meeting. Commissioner Emery seconds the motion. The Chair calls for the vote. It is unanimously approved to table the 6/26/19 minutes.

A motion to approve the July 10th minutes was moved by Commission Fazzino and seconded by Commissioner Pattavina. The Chair calls for the vote. It is unanimously approved.

10.2 Other Commission Affairs

a. River-Cog Report

Commissioner Emery reported that the Regional Plan of Conservation has been put on hold for quite some time due to illness of staff and they are going to hire a consultant.

10.3 POCD Discussion

Joe Samolis said the last listening session is August 14th and invited all the public to attend.

10.4 Zoning Regulations / Text Changes

11. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Samolis
Director of Planning, Conservation and Development