



CITY OF DANBURY
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PLANNING COMMISSION*
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*POCD Oversight Committee

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**2023 PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT (“POCD”)
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 16, 2021**

The web based meeting hosted on Zoom was called to order by Sharon Calitro, City of Danbury (“COD”) Planning Director, at 4:03 PM.

Present were Oversight Committee Members Arnold Finaldi (PC Chairman), Joel Urice (PC Vice-Chairman), Helen Hoffstaetter (PC), Bob Chiochio (PC), Perry Salvagne (PC), Sharon Calitro (COD Planning), Jennifer Emminger (COD Planning), Roger Palanzo (COD Business Advocacy), Fernanda Carvahlo (COD Health), PJ Prunty (Chamber of Commerce), Matthew Cassavechia (COD Emergency Services), Richard Janelli (Board of Education), Ed Siergiej (Former Env./Lake Commission), Juan Rivas (ZBA), Timothy Nolan (COD Public Services), and Vincent DiGilio (City Council). Also present from Fitzgerald & Halliday were Francisco Gomes and Rory Fitzgerald.

Absent: Kevin Haas (PC), Gary Renz (PC), Brigid Guertin (Danbury Museum & Historical Soc.), Candace Fay (ZC), and Fred Visconti (City Council).

Joel Urice motioned to accept the January 19, 2021 minutes, PJ Prunty seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

Sharon Calitro welcomed the Oversight Committee and turned the meeting agenda over to Francisco Gomes from Fitzgerald & Halliday (“FHI”).

Francisco briefly reviewed the agenda for the meeting. The meeting would include a lengthy discussion of the demographic and socioeconomic data and trends that will provide an overview of where Danbury is now and where it’s headed in future, review of the updated draft vision statement, an update on the status of the launch of the public campaign, and next steps.

The presentation of the demographic data and trends is organized into a series of topics including population, education, household data, housing, employment, and economy. Francisco noted that Danbury’s population has steadily grown over the past 50 years, with the current population

estimated at 84,619 with an average rate of growth at 1.4%. The City's population has grown older on average with a greater share over 55 years old since 2010 which is consistent with the State. Francisco discussed the population of children under the age of 5 and adults between 25 and 54 has decreased with the exception of the 40-44 cohort and the average median age of 38 is slightly younger than the County and the State. He noted the City is approximately twice as diverse as Fairfield County and the State as measured by non-white population, foreign-born population, and English proficiency. Lastly, he stated the population of the City is projected to steadily grow over the next twenty years with growth expected to occur in the below 55-year old age group and declines expected in 50 to 74 years old population age group.

The next data/trend topic discussed is education. Francisco noted that Danbury has a higher share of residents with only a high school diploma and lower share of those with a bachelor's or post graduate degree. Trends show that over the past ten years, the City is shifting towards residents with higher education degrees. He noted that school enrollment in Danbury public schools has steadily increased over the past ten years at an average rate of 1.1% and is expected to continue to grow over the next five years.

Francisco next discussed the topic of household data. He noted that the average household size is 2.82 persons, which is larger than the average for both Fairfield County and the State. The share of family vs. non-family households is equivalent to the State and the percentage of family households is slightly less than that of Fairfield County. Francisco stated the median household income is approximately \$73,000 and the percentage of households in the income brackets between \$35k and \$149k exceeds that of the Fairfield County and the State and the City has a comparable share of households with incomes below \$35k.

Housing data and trends were the next demographic topic discussed. Francisco noted that approximately 42% of the City consists of single-family detached dwelling units. The remaining 58% of the housing stock is comprised of attached multi-family dwelling of varying sizes ranging from two and three family dwellings to larger apartment buildings. He discussed the age of the housing stock in the City and noted the rate of home ownership is at 58%. The median home value in Danbury is approximately \$299,000 and is 9% higher than the State, however it is 30% lower than Fairfield County. Francisco added that approximately 42% of the owner-occupied housing is valued between 300k to 500k and less than half of the housing is valued less than 300k. He went on to note the median household rent in Danbury is \$1,400 which is consistent with Fairfield County and 24% higher than the State average. Francisco discussed the City's percentage of qualified affordable housing and noted Danbury is at approximately 11.9% which is almost double the Statewide town average of 6.1%.

Francisco next discussed employment data and trends. He noted that an overwhelming majority of Danbury residents work within the City and a majority of those commuting are traveling to areas within 10 miles of the City. Francisco discussed the unemployment rate is currently at 6.9% and has consistently been lower than both Fairfield County and the State of Connecticut.

The next topic discussed is Danbury's economy. Francisco noted that the City has a wide variety of business establishments ranging from professional, scientific and technical services; public administration; arts and entertainment; educational services; finance and insurance; and information. These establishments result in a greater share than that of Fairfield County. He further noted that Danbury has a wide array of retail establishments and the segments of retail are

evenly distributed to other types of retail. Francisco discussed Danbury's role as a regional center for jobs and shopping. He noted the City has a greater share of residents employed in the retail trade, arts and entertainment, food sector, and manufacturing sectors than that of Fairfield County or the State. Trends show that Danbury's employment has grown in multiple sectors over the past decade.

Francisco next discussed the draft vision statement which incorporated comments received by the Oversight Committee last month.

The launch of the public campaign was discussed, which includes a new webpage that will be linked from the City website and will be managed by FHI. The social media plan and communications materials are being developed and finalized with the launch expected to take place in the next couple of weeks.

The project schedule was reviewed. The next meeting will include discussion of Danbury's neighborhoods and a more detailed focus on housing assessment.

The 2021 meeting schedule was discussed and the next scheduled meeting is April 20, 2021.

Arnie Finaldi made a motion to adjourn and it was seconded by Perry Salvagne. The meeting adjourned at 5:35 pm.