



CITY OF DANBURY
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PLANNING COMMISSION*
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**2023 PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT (“POCD”)
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
June 15, 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), Helen Hoffstaetter (PC), Perry Salvagne (PC), Sharon Calitro (COD Planning), Jennifer Emminger (COD Planning), Roger Palanzo (COD Business Advocacy), Fernanda Carvalho (COD Health), PJ Prunty (Chamber of Commerce), Matthew Cassavechia (COD Emergency Services), Juan Rivas (ZBA), Timothy Nolan (COD Public Services), Brigid Guertin (Danbury Museum & Historical Soc.), and Fred Visconti (City Council). Also present from Fitzgerald & Halliday were Francisco Gomes and Rory Fitzgerald.

Absent: Joel Urice (PC Vice-Chairman), Bob Chiochio (PC), Kevin Haas (PC), Gary Renz (PC), Richard Janelli (Board of Education), Ed Siergiej (Former Env./Lake Commission), Candace Fay (ZC), and Vincent DiGilio (City Council).

Helen Hoffstaetter motioned to accept the April 20, 2021 minutes, Perry Salvagne 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 review of Danbury’s neighborhoods and land use, future land use planning, a discussion of Danbury’s zoning, and an update on the status of the public engagement schedule.

Francisco referenced the map that was discussed in previous meetings and identified the different geographic areas within the city as it relates to geography, landscape, and land use. These areas include several campuses, the downtown, the residential areas around downtown, commercial areas through the City, the PND area in the westside, and the various residential areas.

Starting in the northeast section of the City, the area is primarily single-family, with the exception of a large cluster development identified as Sterling Woods, and a mobile home park. The area is transitional and characterized by large tracts of open space.

The next section of Danbury discussed is the northwest, which is predominately characterized as single-family dwellings of medium density.

The campus areas are generally closer to the downtown and include Western Connecticut State University, Danbury Hospital, Danbury High School, and Federal Correctional Institute.

The next area of the City discussed is the Westside, which includes the mixed-use developments of the Reserve and the Summit at Danbury.

Francisco next discussed the area around the Danbury Fair Mall and the Danbury Airport. He discussed the future of mall and the importance of keeping it active and viable.

The next area Francisco discussed is the residential areas in southwest Danbury, which are similar to the development patterns in northwest and northeast Danbury. Characterized as low density and very rural with a denser community in the Waubeeka Lake area.

Francisco next discussed the area identified as Central Residential which includes the central area of downtown. He identified recent multi-family development projects located at Kennedy Flats. Residential development in this area signifies reinvestment in the downtown. Housing can be characterized as a mixture of older workforce housing and newer multi-family development.

Downtown Danbury was discussed next which includes Main Street and the surrounding areas of the Train Station. Francisco discussed the potential for infill development and the importance of identifying the parking needs to take advantage of opportunities for either new housing or retail/restaurant uses.

The next area discussed is the historic commercial and industrial areas of central Danbury with important connections to the Still River and the rail corridor. This area is characterized by smaller industrial properties with a mixture of manufacturing and distribution type uses.

Francisco next discussed the residential area located in the eastern section of Danbury. This area has a diverse combination of housing types including a mixture of higher density single-family dwellings and multi-family townhouse style development.

The last area discussed is the eastern commercial which is characterized by arterial roads and the rail corridor. Commercial uses range from retail and auto-oriented uses.

The next topic Francisco discussed is the role of the POCD in land use planning. He noted that the Plan provides a foundation for land use planning in its vision and goals along with recommended land use policies. This is expressed in the Future Land Use Map that establishes the basis for the City's zoning district and regulations. As part of this process a new map is developed which documents existing uses and recommends future land development patterns.

Francisco next provided an introduction to zoning and noted that development and land use in Danbury is primarily controlled by the City's zoning regulations. Zoning controls what type of land use can occur in specific areas and the type of permit required to allow the land use. These components include identifying the geographic area of the district, the allowed land uses which include residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use, and the permit requirements for each use which may include a Special Permit, Special Exception, or Site Plan. Francisco noted there are 23 zoning districts and these districts are delineated on the City's official zoning map. In addition to the 23 districts, there are four overlay districts that include the Main Street Historic Overlay Zone, the Downtown Revitalization Overlay Zone, the Deer Hill Avenue Overlay Zone, and the Pleasant Street Overlay Zone. Zoning also controls what form development can take and the intensity of development. These include bulk and coverage standards, site and parking requirements, accessory structures, signage and environmental controls. Francisco noted that three quarters of the land area is zoned residential which also includes lands designated for open space, 7% zoned multi-family, and 8% zoned commercial, 7% zoned industrial.

Francisco next discussed in each zone in detail. The single-family residential zones include the RA-8, RA-20, RA-40, and RA-80 and primarily allow single-family dwellings along with churches, schools, and parks. He next discussed the multi-family residential zones that include the RMF-4, RMF-6, and RMF-10 residential districts. These zones permit apartment houses, garden apartments, single-family dwellings, churches, day care centers and nursing homes. The remaining residential and mixed-use zones he identified include the R3, RH-3, RR-10, and R-O Districts. Commercial zones were discussed next and include 8 different types of districts, including the CG-20, CA-80, CN Zones, and the C-CBD District. Francisco noted there are two industrial districts, the IL-40 which is light industrial and IG-80 which is heavy industrial uses. Lastly, he discussed the Planned Neighborhood Development Zone. He noted it is a floating zone that allows for a range of residential and commercial uses.

Francisco briefly identified several areas around the City where the Plan could identify and recommend zoning changes to correct anomalies or study patterns of development in a specific area.

Francisco next asked the Committee members to discuss the issues surrounding land use and zoning in Danbury. Francisco continued to take live notes as Committee members discussed land use issues in the City.

Francisco summarized the information available on the website (www.danburypocd.com), including all information related to the agenda, minutes, and presentations.

The launch of the public engagement process was discussed and the project team is continuing to build a list of key stakeholders to meet with and asked the Committee to identify additional individuals and organizations.

The project schedule was reviewed. The next meeting will include a more detailed discussion on transportation, infrastructure, and mobility needs.

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

The meeting adjourned at 5:40 pm.