



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
SEPTEMBER 21, 2021**

The web based meeting hosted on Zoom was called to order by Sharon Calitro, City of Danbury (“COD”) Planning Director, at 4:02PM.

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 Carvalho (COD Health), Matthew Cassavechia (COD Emergency Services), Richard Janelli (Board of Education), Ed Siergiej (Former Env./Lake Commission), Timothy Nolan (COD Public Services), Candace Fay (ZC), Fred Visconti (City Council). Present from FHI Studio were Francisco Gomes, Rory Jacobson, Marcy Miller, and Anthony Zemba.

Absent: Kevin Haas (PC), Gary Renz (PC), PJ Prunty (Chamber of Commerce), Juan Rivas (ZBA), Brigid Guertin (Danbury Museum & Historical Soc.), and Vincent DiGilio (City Council).

Fred Visconti motioned to accept the August 17, 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 FHI Studio (“FHI”).

Francisco briefly reviewed the agenda for the meeting, which includes open space and environmental resources, public engagement efforts, an update on the status of the Affordable Housing Plan. He introduced Anthony Zemba from FHI who was also present in the meeting.

Marcy briefly discussed the community engagement launch. This includes finalizing the online survey and attendance at two farmer’s market events. The online survey is expected at the end of September. Following the launch of the survey is the start of the focus group meetings that will cover specific subject areas of the plan.

Francisco identified the many environmental and open space resources which include wetlands, groundwater, habitats, floodplains, streams, rivers and lakes, and open space. He discussed how open space, environmental resources, and sustainability factor into the POCD, noting that the Plan presents an opportunity to identify the environmental resources that are valuable and critical to Danbury's function, quality of life, and sustainability and to identify goals and strategies for protecting and conserving the City's resources.

Land development changes over a 30-year period have been concentrated on the eastern edge of the city and south of I-84, west of Route 7, with much of the change from forested areas to developed areas. Francisco identified that approximately 50% of the city is forested, 34% is developed, 10% is water and wetlands, and the remaining 14% is grass. The City's forested areas are concentrated to the northern and southern parts of the City.

Surface water quality was next discussed. Francisco noted that much of the City's water is rated as high quality and identified the rating class system used by the State of CT.

The Still River watershed was discussed next. The Still River is 25.4 miles long and is a tributary of the Housatonic River. Francisco discussed the Still River Watershed Management Plan with wide range of recommendations and best management practices.

Francisco identified and discussed the existence of 12 subregional drainage basins within the City which are further divided into local basins. The flood zones were next discussed and their relationship to the drainage basins. The most substantial flood zones are associated with the Still River, Miry Brook, Sympaug Brook, and Limekiln Brook. The City's floodplain regulations restrict development and require preservation of the floodplain within the flood hazard area.

Stormwater management was next discussed. Francisco discussed the City's MS4 General Permit and the adoption of the Stormwater Management Plan. The General Permit applies to all areas in the City within the Urbanized Area. Measures are taken to minimize stormwater impacts and to improve water quality. Francisco noted that 75% of the City is designated as an Urbanized Area and most areas with total impervious area greater than 11% are located within the Urbanized Area. He noted that Danbury has 53 water bodies that receive water from its stormwater system.

Francisco next discussed drinking water resources and noted that the watershed areas are concentrated in the northwestern corner of the City and comprise 8,581 acres of area within the City. He discussed the importance of the wetlands and waterbodies as they filter the water and are important to the ecosystem. The wetlands are protected by the City's Inland Wetland and Watercourses Regulations.

Anthony discussed the wetlands, soils types, and topography within the City. The Natural Diversity Data Base areas represent locations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species and critical habitats depicts the classification and distribution of 25 rare and specialized wildlife habitats in the State. He discussed how Danbury is connected to the rest of Fairfield County via pollinator pathways and the importance of these protecting areas to protect birds, bees, and insects. Anthony identified various invasive species and endangered, threatened and species of concern in Fairfield County.

Francisco next discussed open space in Danbury and identified there is over 1,644 acres of municipal open space, 21 City parks and playgrounds as well as Wooster Mountain State Park and 17 properties owned by the Candlewood Valley Regional Trust. Many of the open space properties and environmental resources are managed by the City or a partner authority, such as Candlewood Lake, Lake Kenosia, and Tarrywile Park.

Candlewood Lake and Lake Kenosia were discussed and the importance of maintaining water quality in these important waterbodies. Francisco next discussed Tarrywile Park which is 722 acres of open space and is managed by the Tarrywile Park Authority.

Francisco next identified the various departments, commissions, and agencies that manage and regulate the City's open space and environmental resources.

The Committee members discussed the environmental, open space, and sustainability needs. Francisco continued to take live notes as Committee members discussed needs of the City.

The community engagement launch was summarized and the online survey is expected to be launched by the end of the week.

FHI Studio conducted a kick-off meeting with the Affordable Housing Plan Committee on September 13. The plan will inform housing and land use recommendations of the POCD.

The project schedule was reviewed. The next meeting will include discussion of the City's facilities and services.

The remaining 2021 meeting schedule was discussed and the next scheduled meeting is October 19, 2021.

Fred Visconti made a motion to adjourn and it was seconded by Perry Salvagne. The meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm.