

PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP
January 5, 2006
Town Hall Council Chambers, 75 Main Street, Second Floor

Chairman Zaya Oshana, called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm with the following members in attendance:

John Carmody, Michael DelSanto, Patrick Saucier, Noreen Laurinaitis and Francis Kenefick

Alternates: Richard Hart
James Sinclair

Others: Mary Hughes, Town Planner
Mark Sciota, Town Attorney *
Val Ferro from TPA
Pat Heslin from TPA

Absent: John DeMello, Commissioner
Robert Borkowski, Alternate Commissioner
Brian Zaccagnino, Alternate Commissioner

(*Left the meeting where noted.)

A quorum was determined.

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

THE CHAIR: Everybody participates this evening.

The first item for discussion tonight is: Guidelines for Planned Development Districts.

Val?

MS. FERRO: As we discussed last time we met, I think it was our last workshop, we took our general ideas of the design guidelines, remember them, and Meridian Developers had submitted to Mary a list, as well. And, there were some

consistencies and there were some inconsistencies. So, Pat and I put those together and did some additional research and have put them into a format that is more applicable to a design guideline. So, instead of just these lofty ideas, you can see now that there is an actual standard set with each one of those. Okay?

Given that you're just seeing these tonight, we thought we'd at least give them to you and point out some of the highlights and then leave it alone and let you guys reflect on those.

The next step would be for the developer to come in with the procedural aspects. It's okay for them to come in and do the procedural stuff, but we felt it was important for you guys to set the standards on what you wanted them to adhere to. And, this is a flexible, floating-type document. We can add a few more things. I think the big discussion will be and I think that's going to be Mary's job in the next couple of weeks, maybe talk to their attorney and start talking procedurally how they're going to do this and then how the zoning is going to work.

As you know, this is an overlay district. So, the overlay district will work not just on Ideal Forge, but it'll work for anything in what we're calling, and it's a very different type of overlay district and the title is very important. It's an infill design guideline for redevelopment. So, we don't expect this kind of thing to happen like way out in the far reaches of Southington. This is for redevelopment and this is for infill. Places where you are just going to drop it right in there. That's a good thing.

That will guide, hopefully, other developers to come in and look at Brownfields, underutilized, whatever, in your core area. So, these are the types of things that aren't going to happen out in the rural aspects and the hills of Southington. It'll really be in this core area.

MS. LAURINAITIS: Val, when you can see it can in other areas, such as the ones say, for example, Plantsville is kind of distinct in it's own from downtown Southington. So, these guidelines that we're setting up if there was property that was an infill area in Plantsville, they could use these guidelines, as well?

MS. FERRO: Absolutely, yes. And, that's a good question, Noreen, because those are some of the procedural things you might want to think about saying this applies to certain zones or certain areas and you are allowed to do that. That's the good part of this.

THE CHAIR: And, one of the advantages, we could use this for any other thing. This could be basically this Commission's guideline going forward so that there is some consistency so people know what they're coming into when they try to do this type of activity.

MS. LAURINAITIS: Would it be just like downtown areas, like Plantsville and Southington, or would it also be other areas that might be like 322 and Queen Street, you know?

MS. FERRO: You could start, you could say commercial corridors. I mean, you could sort of limit those areas or define them geographically. And, I think that's one of the things that you know, we haven't had much time to talk to Mary about and I think in the next couple of weeks we'll sort of flush that out. We want it to work wherever it needs to work.

MS. LAURINAITIS: I could see Southington as being kind of unique where you have the downtown Southington area, have the downtown Plantsville area. You've got 322 and then you have Queen Street and now we have up and coming West Street.

MS. FERRO: Or, you could do it by zone.

MR. CARMODY: Right, CB zone.

MS. FERRO: So, in other words it wouldn't be out in R-20. It wouldn't be in these areas where you don't really want it. Okay? And, that is the beauty of these things.

Those things we'll be looking at in the next couple of weeks and we'll be talking to Mary about that.

Now, just before we let that go, though. There is a couple of holes in it because we weren't sure where we wanted to go with this. There's a couple of holes in it because we threw in some sort of incentive bonus things. We're not sure if you are interested in that, but we threw in a couple just for you to chew on.

The three big items that --- Pat, you have copies of? Signage. Lighting. Because we really intended on overwhelming you tonight. We want to hand out three things that we feel are really holes in your regulations. Right now, you do not have good lighting standards. You don't have good signage standards. And, you don't have good landscaping standards.

Normally, when you do a development district overlay like this, it sets the performance standards and it defers to signage, lighting, whatever because most zoning codes have that. You don't have that. So, the other benefit to this is we're going to bring those onboard with this. Later on, if you want to beg, borrow and steal and either take them out of the zone and put them in your regular regulations or keep them in the overlay and do something different, you can. But at least you've got some ideas because a development like this or really any development in these core areas like Plantsville, Queen Street or downtown, don't we want to sort of control the signage and the lighting and the landscaping? Those are the most, the three integral parts that even if you are a layperson, and those are the things you notice.

MR. CARMODY: Yes, we talked about that.

MS. FERRO: These folks don't sit around saying: Look at the curved radia on the granite pavers. I mean, they don't talk like that. They look at the "eye" stuff.

THE CHAIR: This is has been going on, like John said, a long time. Things that we wanted to start taking some control over.

MS. FERRO: This helps you because it sort of shunts through the process. Pat has done a fair amount of research looking at some of these things. We'll give you those. And, then let's just cut it there and have you look at them.

But I think if we want to start getting the ball rolling, we're going to have to start to think procedurally and I'm sure the Town Attorney will be involved. I know the Ideal Forging attorney would like to be involved. Mary wants to be involved. And, from that point, we'll just give you advice or ideas or what have you.

I think it's --- in a way, a lot of times you are not in the middle of doing a Plan of Conservation and Development and all of a sudden something incredible like this comes up. But it did. And, it's really given you an opportunity to springboard some of your zoning regulations into things that you really want to do.

So, that being said, ---

MR. DELSANTO: Hey Val, just a quick comment or question or whatever you take it as. But with regards to fixing the signage or fixing the lighting, what happens to the plots or developed areas that are already there?

MS. FERRO: Nothing. They are grandfathered.

MR. DELSANTO: Right. Obviously. But I mean, typically in your experiences do people if they see that this new thing is going into effect, like some of the bigger businesses, oh let's get onboard if it looks, this one way and ---

MS. FERRO: Yes, that's a good question. What we would like to do and what we would like to recommend is that through various aspects -- whether you go through some grants or CDBG Funds or whatever you can get, and do some type of signage, lighting and façade improvement program.

And, do it in some strategic areas. Don't overwhelm yourself. And, also, don't get people fighting with one another. One thing we've learned is if your area is too broad, you've got one guy at one end and another person at the other end and you're not getting the real push of what something like that can do.

So you want to keep it small and then move it around until it catches on.

MR. DELSANTO: But there is nothing you can do to mandate that?

MS. FERRO: No, no. No. All these people, and rightfully so, I mean, these people, it's their property and they have a right to operate it and do what they have to do.

THE CHAIR: Now, where you've got the blanks and you're talking about section, you are talking about new sections?

MS. FERRO: New sections or what we would do is --- what I think we should do is take some elements of some these signage, some of these standards we're handing out and put them or drop them right in this PDD zone. Okay?

So that immediately imposes those types of things in.

MS. LAURINAITIS: Can anything be done when property is like resold that we can get them into conformity?

MS. FERRO: Well, your regulations can or will --- I haven't looked at the fine tuning and Mary you can chime in here, but you know, some Towns have specific regulations that if there's a change of use it triggers whatever. If there's a substantial renovation costing more or larger than or whatever, you know, you come up with those things. And, that's how you sort of click through it.

MR. DELSANTO: Kind of like in the 80's with the handicapped stuff. Businesses sold and you had to reconform to certain standards of handicapped accessibility and stuff.

MS. FERRO: Yes. Now, we picked some, we think, very good standards. We chose Simsbury. We chose Tolland. Tolland, Linda Farmer has, she's like a one-person lighting guru. We had just finished a Plan of Development when they were faced with this enormous Mobil station that basically looked like a spaceship. And, she took it upon herself and she researched, she interviewed professors and I mean, it was unbelievable. And, we helped her with some of it. And, what came out is something that most Planners, if they want a lighting standard, they call Linda Farmer. She sends them the regs. We included that.

We have Simsbury landscaping. What else did you bring?

MS. HESLIN: (From the audience) South Windsor. You'll notice when you look at them, some of them approach things differently in terms of how the regs are written. Some of them are very lengthy and very detailed. Some of them are short and to the point. Whatever works is how the community went with it.

But you have something on signage, something on lighting and something on landscaping. Sometimes from the same community, just the different sections of the regs. Sometimes different communities.

We included Berlin. New Canaan. New Canaan's was just done this year. And, it's very short. Each section is very short. South Windsor -- some pieces were done last year. Some of them are relatively new to the Town in terms of use. Some of them are old. They've been in use in the Town for years.

MS. FERRO: And, you'll notice, I know this is different for some consultants than at least the two of us, but you know, it's very nice to be retained by a Town and say that we're going to start writing regulations for you and start from scratch. We don't really subscribe to that philosophy. We think there's plenty of good ones out there. We also subscribe to a National Database that we can go in and get any Town we want, especially the ones I visit and we think, gees, that's a good idea. And, so we take those and we have a whole notebook full of them and we give them to you. And, you know what? Why should you be paying us like six weeks just to figure out well, what kind of lighting should they have? It's all there. And, the best part is, if you want to hop on a bus, and go look at those Towns, and see what it looks like, you have real things to look at instead of thinking, well, what're we doing.

MR. CARMODY: I have, dovetailing what you just said since there's plenty of Towns that have good standards, the one you mentioned, Tolland, it seems quite extensive. I mean, in your opinion, can you give me the top two in your opinion?

MS. FERRO: Well, I think for lighting, Tolland. Landscaping, I would probably say Simsbury. Did you use Simsbury?

MR. CARMODY: I don't think I see Simsbury.

MS.FERRO: Simsbury signage is also very good.

What did you use for landscaping?

MS. HESLIN: (From the audience) Berlin.

MR. CARMODY: We have Berlin. We have New Canaan.

MS. FERRO: New Canaan is excellent. West Hartford's is also excellent.

MR. CARMODY: But not Simsbury.

MS. FERRO: Well, Simsbury's is older. But I have used that quite frequently. So we didn't pull that but their signage regs have been updated. And, Simsbury also just came off about two years a very extensive design guideline process and they really examined signage. So, we used that one.

But you know, they're all good. The ones we gave you, we could probably come up with a few more, but I think the point is, we want you to look at them. Reflect on them. Sort of give us some guidelines saying you know, we want to take some baby steps or do we want to go crazy, what have you.

The thing is none of these things are going to stop development. Okay? They're not even going to make development more expensive. In the case of lighting and Linda can share details with you, the people that have converted over to the type of lighting that we are now wanting to use, you know, the foot cut offs, the corporations, the big parking lots, they're saving hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars a year.

So, this is not a bad thing. Is it a change of thought? Yes. And, we know sometimes change is hard for people. But the fact is that I think the big leap of faith for you folks is you have nothing. Okay? There's not too many Towns around that have nothing.

THE CHAIR: So, you're discussing this being a springboard for developing regulations associated with signage, lighting and landscaping not only for the --- but everybody.

MR. CARMODY: The whole Town.

MS. FERRO: Right. Right. And, we think, because you know, of the time constraints here, we'll test it and use in this zone, okay? You know that that this a very controlled zone. Not only you have those standards, you have these standards. Test it. Okay?

THE CHAIR: What do you think? I mean, are there comments from any of you? What do you think about that idea?

MR. DELSANTO: No time like the present. We've got to start. We've got to get something going. How many times in our regular meetings have we gone over this?

MR. CARMODY: Well, we all want, we've all talked about signage, landscaping and lighting. It's something we want to look at. So, before we go and put in regulations Townwide, which I kind of think we will end up doing, anyway, we have a perfect chance and I don't want to say guinea pig, but it is. Test case right here. Let's have it be, the scope of it be for the Planned Development and if it works, then we can adopt it after. I think.

MS. FERRO: Right, right. And, the thing is what I'm fascinated by is that once we hand these over to the developer; let's see what they come back with. That'll be the real test.

I don't know how many times we do these regulations and we sort of wait around for somebody --- whose going to use our new signage? You know, you wait. But in this case, the ink won't even be dry. You let them look at it and see what they think, you know? And, see what they come up with. And, it allows us to give --- and again, remember because this is a limited area, we are going to limit to the areas that we want to use it and we'll be able to control it and if there's mistakes, so what? There really is no mistakes, you know? You learn from doing and regulations are certainly designed to do that. I just think it's a win.

MR. DELSANTO: I think the easiest of the three is probably going to lighting. Would you agree? Just because, like you said earlier, the efficiency part of it and we've --- if memory serves me, we've discussed that with new things comes in and shining down, no shining up.

MS. FERRO: You're right, Mike. You know, with the lighting, we could probably take four or five things out of the lighting standards and even if you just wanted to take a baby step, you know? Full cut off. Maybe no fluorescent lighting on a pedestal sign. There's various ways you can do that. Or illumination from the top down and not from the bottom up. There's just a few things like that that when you drive into a commercial area that has those types of things, it's softer. It's more attractive.

If they get a person that knows how to do lights, it does

not diminish the visibility whatsoever. And, it certainly doesn't affect safety. That's one of the things that the service stations have learned. They've not only cut their operating expenses. They're finding that people can see and in some cases it's better because it's better quality lighting. There's win/win everywhere for lighting.

And, the signage, again, there's ways to baby step that. As there is landscaping. So, I mean, maybe what we want to do is mark it up, decide on the good stuff. Maybe make a list, collate a list. I don't know, Mary, how you want to do that?

MS. HUGHES: That's fine.

MR. KENEFICK: Do these people have a limited height the lights can be in the parking lot, whatever?

MS. FERRO: You can do that. And, also some of it is very functional. I mean, you can't go real, real high. And if you go real high, you have to go huge, which is, you know, sometimes in sort of these cheaper developments you see like two huge lights. It's killing them in utility bills. They don't know that because usually they don't look at the utility bills because if they did, they wouldn't have put them up in the first place.

But they were convinced by someone --- look, just drop these two big things, these big floodlights. And, you know, there's hot spots in those, as you know, so they concentrate. It's very hot. There's a high amount of scatter which is not really good particularly for elderly. And, so it doesn't really work. Although, from above, it looks like WOW! Look at all that light.

So, again, it's something to think about. But I think we can give you some ideas. We wanted you to sort of chew on them, first. And, if you want to take a week or so, mark up some things, get it back to Mary and then if you'd like, what we can do is start going through those and take the ones that we think are the baby steps and again start collating those and adding yours or taking yours and working vice a versa. In the next couple of weeks, I think we can have something workable.

MR. KENEFICK: I spent some time in Arizona recently in the Sedona area. And, I don't think there's a parking lot light

that is over eight feet high.

MS. FERRO: Probably not.

MR. KENEFICK: And, everything is like down. You could drive right by a supermarket and not know it's there unless you saw the sign.

MR. SAUCIER: They do the same thing in ---

THE CHAIR: You can see perfectly.

MR. SAUCIER: They do the same thing in Flagstaff. In addition to having the cutoff, they also have a different type of lighting for the observatory up there. So, they really don't want the light to escape.

MR. KENEFICK: They're really into that pollution.

MS. FERRO: And, the thing is, the lighting industry, in and of itself, has developed better illumination techniques not only to reduce utility costs, but to enhance the visibility and the casting of the light so that people when they're driving by can see it from the road so you're not --- the last thing we want to do is we don't want to prohibit people from seeing something. We want people to be attracted to the development and come and patronize.

But the idea is it doesn't exactly have to glow from Venus.

MR. KENEFICK: I think they went a little bit too far because in the parking lot, I mean, safety.

MS. FERRO: It might be too dark. Eight feet is tough. And, you don't want that, either.

MR. KENEFICK: It's incredible.

MS. FERRO: So, let's leave it at that. If you want to --- what's a comfortable timeframe for you folks to just --- if you want to mark it up or make copies and mark it up or if you want to just copy and clip the stuff you like and just hand it to Mary, whatever way you want to do it. Whatever is easiest and quickest is fine.

MR. DELSANTO: You want us to sift through and find the ones that we find the most attractive and get them to Mary.

MS. FERRO: Yes, mark them up.

MS. HUGHES: You can get them back to me on the 17th, which is our next regularly scheduled meeting, then I can get it to you guys.

MS. FERRO: That'd be great.

(Undertone comments)

MR. DELSANTO: What was that? I'm sorry.

MS. FERRO: Get them back to Mary by the 17th.

MR. DELSANTO: Cracking jokes.

MR. CARMODY: Okay.

THE CHAIR: I think, you know, and maybe I think John was just saying, if we could look at this stuff and maybe from our prospective just pick the one that we think is better instead of coming in with twenty of them ---

MS. FERRO: Sure, oh, absolutely.

THE CHAIR: --- from each of us and see how that works out.

MS. FERRO: Or, if you want to adopt a little committee and two or three of you just say look, this is what we're going to do and ---

THE CHAIR: Well, we'll talk about it because I think that is one of the things we talked about the last time. This seems like a perfect opportunity for one of the items that we're looking at. So, we'll talk about that at the end of the meeting.

MS. FERRO: Okay. Good.

MS. HESLIN: (From the audience) Don't be surprised though if you find and bits and pieces that appeal to you each of them.

MR. DELSANTO: One Town may have taken it from the other.

MS. HUGHES: We routinely boost regulations from each other.

ATTORNEY SCIOTA: That's what CCM is all about.

MS. FERRO: No. It's the list search.

THE CHAIR: The next item on the list that we're talking about I think is the item that we talked about at our last meeting which is the Guiding Principles.)

Val has a process that we're going to look at tonight which is what we talked about at our last meeting and just people --- excuse my writing, it's not the neatest. My son says I write worse than him. So ---

These are the items that came out of the public hearing or the public forum that we had several weeks ago. These are the main topics came up and some of the subheadings that came out of that hearing in terms of some of the major issues that the public forum thought were important for us to look at.

Tonight what we want to do is look at what the Commission is interested --- from what we've heard from people. From what we've heard ourselves from prior applications that have come in. Things that we think are important to guide this Plan to get it moving forward.

So, Val has got a facilitated process set up tonight that we're going to look at putting together a main topic and then underneath that action items that go underneath that.

So, Val?

MS. FERRO: Okay. We have come up with five major categories. Looking through everything that we heard at the forums, some of the comment forms that were submitted, public comments to the stakeholder surveys that Larry Kenny performed, just a whole host of things and also just reading through ten years of documentation that Mary had stowed away in her office and just everything that came together.

(Attorney Sciota left the meeting.)

We tried to boil it down to major things. So what we are going to do is a little facilitated exercise whereby we're going to hand out cards. There'll be give sets of cards

eventually. And, I'm going to write the major topic on the board and each of you are going to take a minute, just a minute, and write down anything that comes to your head regarding that topic.

You're going to find that many of those are going to fall right into those topics. Some of them will not. But it'll help us cull through these lists that we have and all these ideas that we have. And, those five things will then breakdown into some ideas that will help us identify a guiding principle for each one of those areas.

Okay? So, we're going to start with ---

THE CHAIR: What's your question, John?

MR. CARMODY: A comment. I have a question. Can I ask it? Is that all right?

Hey, Val?

MS. FERRO: Hey what?

MR. CARMODY: I have a question.

MS. FERRO: You do?

MR. CARMODY: Yes. I might have to apologize ahead of time if I should already know the answer to this.

MS. FERRO: Don't apologize. No, no, no, no.

MR. CARMODY: But I think it's --- I was looking at this section, Optimal Build out Findings from the old Plan. Which was in 1991. So, I'm wondering, would it be useful for us to know from 1991 to know, for example, how much --- like commercial land: the future land use plan includes 955 acres of commercially zoned land of which 786 acres, (80%) are developed. Of the remaining 169, undeveloped, 94 acres are considered suitable for development.

I want to know now.

MS. FERRO: Right. We talked about this at the public forum, remember.

MR. CARMODY: I know.

MS. FERRO: And, Mary, through your GIS consultant, has essentially done that and we gave you an update of the map last time.

MR. CARMODY: That's why I was going to apologize.

MS. HUGHES: Vacant parcels.

MR. CARMODY: So, we have all the numbers for commercial, industrial and all the residential zones of what we actually now have currently left in acreage that is developable.

MS. FERRO: Yes, right.

MR. CARMODY: And, what would happen if there was an optimal build out?

MS. FERRO: Well, I don't think they took it to optimal build out.

MS. HUGHES: No. No.

MS. FERRO: For a good reason. That, as we discussed at the forum, you are at the mercy of market. And, what happens when you do these optimal build outs is that you have absolutely no way of telling what your absorption's going to be. So, often, this just rattles people. Because you don't know if that's going to be achieved in 10 years or 50.

We know by comparing the build outs, the optimum build outs that we've seen looking at plans that we have that go back 20, 30 or 40 years, not one of them has ever been right. Because you can't predict the market.

THE CHAIR: But you have the open space. We have the space that's available ---

MS. FERRO: So, what you need to do, what we want to do is when it comes time to factor all this information into developing a future land use plan, is to look at where your land is that can be developed. Also, look at the constraints there. And, think about the patterns that will occur if those get developed and factor in principles and guidelines, basically planning goals for those things. And,

those things can secure your future for years to come.

Now, for residential, you can take a guess because you have been collecting information on your residential development. And, as you can see up here, you've got these patterns, okay? And, by doing an exercise like this, as an example, as we presented at the forum, we have demonstrated to people that you did not grow in just the last ten years. In fact, your biggest growth was the 70's and the 80's. Okay?

And, that's why sometimes when you hang on the optimal build outs, people don't understand what that means in terms of market and absorption and sometimes you have to sort of compare that like your available space which is white right now, and looking at the emerging trends -- because we know what's happening -- all of this is built up. You've got infill. You have an incredible, you still have an incredible amount of infill development going on, but it's all going on in the out reaches, which of course is your most sensitive areas.

What more do you need to know? I don't know. But the information is there and certainly if you want the GIS folks to divvy it up to take it in a different direction, I'm sure they would be willing to do that. I think right now it would be important to just figure out how you want to grow. In what way. How to manage it. What it's going to look like and put your plan together. And, again be proactive about how you want to do that but at the same time we know that market is market. And, other than, as we talked about, buying up the land, you're not going to stop the development.

MR. CARMODY: I wasn't trying to do that.

MS. FERRO: No, but some people want to ---

MR. CARMODY: You bring up a good point. Let's say we had already reached or are very close to --- we're not -- but say we were, how does no development and no growth fiscally affects the Town? Is that a good thing necessarily?

MS.FERRO: Well, not necessarily. No. Towns like West Hartford are going to struggle. That's why they're pushing to keep their commercial centers alive. I mean, they're not going to be growing residentially, from a per unit, but

they could grow in population. More people per household. There's lots of different ways to grown. But that's a whole other set of challenges. You know? You're not there, yet.

MR. CARMODY: Okay, I'm sorry.

MS. FERRO: That's all right. Good question. But I'm glad you asked that because I think you have to discuss it a few times for people to be comfortable with --- you know, John, in the old days, that's all Planners did. They did the build out thing and they said, all right, well here's the plan. You're going to grow by whatever and they didn't really plan. They just sort of spit back all the data.

If you look at plans way back when, that's all it had. That was really the only planning that went on. So, things are a little more complicated these days, but at the same time, the GIS mapping allows you to do all these detailed things, but use it as a tool, no necessarily sending the mantra of what we're going to do in the Plan.

MR. CARMODY: Okay.

MS. HESLIN: (From the audience) The draft does have the stuff that was handed out at the last meeting. There is a summary in the draft, the new Plan, that tells you how much, according to that GIS information, is zoned residential, commercial, industrial and ---

MS. LAURINAITIS: I saw that chart.

MR. CARMODY: That's left? We have a lot of information.

MS. FERRO: You haven't gone through that page-by-page?

MR. CARMODY: No.

MS. FERRO: Okay, well, test for you tomorrow, then.

All right. Are you ready? Remember: you're not limited. As many as you come up with and you know, if they don't exactly fit, who cares. If you want to cheat up here and use some of these things, fine.

(Chuckles)

The first one is, and this is a little more complicated

one, but

LIVABILIT / QUALITY OF LIFE. So, what do you think when you hear Livability and Quality of Life. Go!

THE CHAIR: I think what you mean is we're going to put together the guiding principles. This is sort of a direction of the Plan that we're wanting to see.

MS. FERRO: Just one syllable, two syllable words. Just words, ideas. They don't have to be full sentences. Just things. Like: traffic.

MR. KENEFICK: That's the first thing.

MR. DELSANTO: Nice.

MS. FERRO: There you go!

Or pollution.

MR. DELSANTO: All right. That's two.

(Pause, pause, pause)

MR. CARMODY: It's interesting that you brought this as a first one. Does anybody read Hartford Magazine? Did you see the November issue about Southington? Number One, Quality of Life.

MS. FERRO: Pass them out, over, down or out.

(Pause, pause, pause)

(Undertone comments)

Noreen is going to start reading these.

LIVABILITY / QUALITY OF LIFE

Parks and pen space which includes green space, passive/active recreation, traffic and congestion, aesthetics, infrastructure, farm preservation, pedestrian friendly downtown, population, municipal services which includes police and fire protection, good schools, lighting, access, lot size, affordable housing, pollution,

tax rate, zones increasing and economic growth and jobs.

MS. FERRO: Okay, you folks have run the whole gambit here. (Reviewed the list) These are the things you've associated with livability and quality of life. Out of these, there's a few here and you'll see as we get into the process, we'll do the next one and you'll see how this is going to flush out. There's a few of these that are going to drop off and move them into another category. But clearly, you are on a path and it's a very clear path. Okay?

Sometimes when we do this, people sort of struggle and you don't get this pattern. But there is a very clear pattern here, which is going to make it easier to define our principle here.

Also, the fact that you have developed this pattern, gives Pat and you an indication that this really is a principle you are all concerned with. So, you are concerned about the livability and what's going to happen to your Town and what the quality of life is.

If you were in one Town over with different circumstances, maybe this wouldn't be something you want to talk about. But clearly Southington is on a track.

We can go back to these.

(End of Tape #1, Side A)

(Beginning of Tape #1, Side B)

Next is **ECONOMIC GROWTH:**

Smaller lot sizes for industrial zones, mixed use within industrial zones, Town to start industrial parks, West Street Development, Meriden Waterbury Turnpike Development, flexible standards for development, infrastructure, public/private partnerships, redevelopment of Pratt & Whitney, remediate Brownfields, increased economic development budget, reduce industrial zone lot size requirements, national marketing campaign to attract businesses, increased tax incentives, more industry, lower taxes, more

retail, increased zone size, better commercial to residential ratio, traffic, aesthetics, job development, buffers, remediation of former industry - environmental remediation, office and technology growth, protection of natural resources, small business assistance programs, office parks versus retail, retention of industrial growth, overlay zone Brownfield redevelopment, flexible zoning regulations, streamlined application process, competitive monetary incentives, communications between Town and applicants, ready to build sites, redefine industrial and business zones, strategic collaboration for Townwide economic development, develop an industry friendly mentality, buffers and transitions.

MS. FERRO: This is amazing. If we sat around and talked about this, we would never come up with this. That's just the way the brain works. This is amazing, you guys, absolutely amazing.

All of these are relevant. I think the key here is going to be, certainly with economic growth, you've heard Lou talk about it, you've got to get land into a bank so you can start realizing some of these things. I think if you do that, a lot of these things probably would be at the tip of your tongue. But right now, you sort of, you don't have land ready sites. So, this is excellent.

(Pause, pause)

TOWN CHARACTER.

What we should start doing, though, you guys, when you start seeing a little bit of overlap --- you're probably not going to have overlap --- aesthetics and buffers, so you've got that. And, over here, we have it again. And, well, this could be one and this could be one. Okay.

TOWN CHARACTER:

No more clocks, design standards, business façade improvement program, residential rehabilitation program,

more streetscape improvements, aesthetics, signage, lighting, redeveloping of Town centers (Plantsville, Milldale and Marion), increased residential lot size, aesthetics/Town Green, farms, orchards, green space, design review process/committee, density - reduction in density and increase of lot size, exterior illuminated lighting, no big box, facades in concert with others in the area, Southington and Plantsville downtown revitalization, Queen Street, quality of parks, Town Hall, tax base ratio residential/retail business/industry, open space, historic preservation, farm preservation.

So obviously here --

MR. KENEFICK: We have a lot of character.

MS. FERRO: You have a lot of character. But you're worried about how things are looking and you're also worried about how you're going to be judging and this is an interesting one here, because this has serious implications: increased lot size.

We could show you examples of areas where, like Newtown, where they thought that it should all be residential and it all should be large lots. And, it doesn't work.

But that doesn't mean in certain areas you might want to explore that. Whereas, there might be other areas you want to explore cluster housing where you have smaller houses clustered together and leave the rest open space. So, it works. It doesn't work when you use it as one zone and one zone, only.

But these are good and some of these things are certainly starting to fall in a few other categories, but that we can flush out. What we're going to do is we will type these up for you, okay, and then we'll compare them and some of them, if we see overlaps, we'll put those up.

The next is **RESOURCE PROTECTION**.

And, not just natural resources. It could be cultural resources, historic resources, water quality.

(Pause, pause)

water supply system, recreational areas, open space, infrastructure for vehicles and

pedestrians, buffer zones - increased near sensitive areas, creation of a watershed type protection area near cliffs, ridges (ridgeline protection), more parks, historical preservation, architectural preservation, water protection, industry/machine shops (contamination), work/live in Town, parks for Town residents only, up zoning, good water, sewage treatment plant, better traffic flow and circulation, more cleaning of rivers and streams, Quinnipiac River (river and stream water quality improvement), pollution generation, larger lot sizes in sensitive areas, regulations that strictly mandate development (development control).

Sometimes, especially with the Quinnipiac River, between your water bodies that are running through Town and the ridges, you're in a tough spot here, which of course makes the Town gorgeous, but it also makes the Town sensitive.

Clearly, again you see some trends with buffers and also what's happening from the contamination side. And, there's a few that are spilling over into other areas, but that's fine and we can fit those in.

Quinnipiac River and coming up with some type of protection program, which your water department has, and the Quinnipiac River Watershed is certainly working towards. Maybe there's some other things we can start helping with you to sort of coordinate with.

This is good. Certainly not as intensive, though, as the other ones. And, I think rightly so.

And, we have one more. This will be a good one as I think it will be a catchall. Last but not least: **COMMUNITY SERVICES.**

You know, police, fire, garbage. Town Hall. Infrastructure, roads. Schools.

Recreational facilities, improved and increased parking for buildings with auditoriums, Town Hall, snow/sleet removal services, funding for social services, FD manpower and staffing levels,

improved EMS response services, second high school, fire protection, police, community center, park upgrades, historical society, better street intersections to move traffic better (improved traffic flow and control), better transportation for senior citizens, relieve strain on municipal services, slow residential growth, schools, communication/strong interaction between Town Boards, great Town services but they need more money in their budgets, more parks, transfer station, highway department, welfare, New Town Hall, better road upkeep, school modernizations, centralized social services center.

Well, that's interesting. So, we have obviously schools, obviously rec facilities and you've basically hit all of the services.

And, this is sort of a typical pattern I see from taxpayers and also people concerned about how things are going to get done. There's nothing that really jumps out. You've hit just about every community service.

We didn't really hit on, other than, and I think we hit on it before, but certainly water and sewer might fall into this, infrastructure. Maybe not, but traditionally if you look at planning aspects, that's where it falls into.

But nothing earth shattering here by any stretch. I think with some of these topics, there might be implications as far as centralized social services. What is happening now?

You've got your senior center, but how are social services handled?

MS. HUGHES: We have a full time social service technician. John Weichsel is the Social Services Director and we have Janet Mellon.

MS. FERRO: Okay, uh-huh. Pat, do you know, did she respond? Did anybody respond to our agency questionnaire?

MS. HESLIN: (From the audience) There's nothing in tonight's package is there?

MS. HUGHES: No.

MS. FERRO: Okay, you might want to get her to fill one out again. That would be a good thing.

So, what do you think?

THE CHAIR: Some trends obviously jumped out at you.

MS. FERRO: There's some major trends here, okay? And, that took us an hour and fifteen minutes and we got all these things. If we asked you to do this and send them in, you'd have never done it.

Now, what do you think, react little bit and just maybe throw out some ideas here. What do you think about the topics we chose? Clearly, we can see some weakening trends when it comes to community services, and that's okay. Well, it's not typical, but if we're in a Town where there was some heated debated like going from a volunteer to a full time fire department or something like that, it's really when you see issues, when you get the hot buttons here.

But still, there is some strategic things that can be said here. This particular topic, Community Services, always, at least in my mind, they struggle in the Plan of Development because the way you're doing these Plans of Development, the Planning & Zoning Commissions are the implementers. So, you're making sort of decisions that dovetail into other people's territory. Sort of, it's the difficult part to try to come up with things that relate to the Plan of Development and link to growth, preservation and development the way the Statutes read, but also to get people to start thinking strategically about community facilities.

Some Towns don't stop there. They get into all sorts of things and then they just sit there because no one is really --- if you started like saying, water department -- well, we want to see a safe yield of whatever --- well, they're in charge of that and they have a water supply plan that dictates that and that is mandated by the State.

So you know, there's real give and take when it comes to this. Everything else, I think is very, very valid. There might be other ways to say certain things and we can still play with that a little bit. But I think what we can now do is start lumping some of this together and maybe we want to

just quickly go through the original list that we came up with and if we want to add that to this, it's quite a list.

THE CHAIR: If you look at it, I think we cover a lot of these issues.

MS. FERRO: I think you did. I think you did. You want to go through those?

THE CHAIR: Well, we've got scale. I think we had written down size, lot size, zone size and things like that.

Uses, we have residential versus industrial versus business.

Buffers, location and aesthetics. So, I think we've got those.

Balance between residential and non-residential.

Request for zone change. There was one that came up about the streamlined modifications and I don't know if it goes in that area, or not.

MS. FERRO: Maybe not, but that's fine.

You know, we'll probably, there might be, in terms of guiding principles, we might craft four or five of those. But when it comes to specific actions, those will marry up with these, but you don't have to go linearly. So, there might be a category in the actions that fall under administrative or planning and zoning responsibilities, or something like that. So, we don't have to worry about how that lines up.

THE CHAIR: Industrial zone review and modification, we see that, along with mixed use and flexible zoning.

You've got the tax base implications. I think you've got a lot of these.

And, resource protection/open space.

MS. FERRO: Definitely have that.

THE CHAIR: The need for more open space. The thing that came up was the question, do you think we need more open

space and does the Town need to go to referendum to get more. That was one of the items that was brought up at the hearing.

MS. FERRO: And, that's it? You've got them all.

What Pat and I would like to do is take these, type them up. We're going to start crafting some language, some principles that go with these categories. While we do that, we're going to send you back --- Mary, we'll send you a word file that has each of these. You start thinking about them.

Then in the next few weeks, we'll hope to have some principles and start flushing out actions. You're going to start getting into the strategic planning aspect.

Now, Noreen sent us some of her ideas and comments, many of which fell. Some of yours were in detail and probably are action items, which are good. So, we're still waiting for the rest of you if you have any other ideas.

Any other things that we didn't cover in here, feel free to give them to Mary. But we want to try to flush out this framework so when we come back to you next, which I guess we should talk about; we have this to talk about.

I think there's a clear indication here of the direction you want to take. Once we get into this, there's probably going to be more things that come up and that's fine. There might be things that you come up with and there might be things that we come up with, but we'll flush that out. It's just very important to start getting into this so that we can start bouncing some draft language to you so you start seeing how these things really develop. Okay?

THE CHAIR: Does anyone thing we missed any major headings, major areas, major topics?

MR. DELSANTO: I don't think we could have. The brainstorming we did is a great session.

MR. CARMODY: I was just thinking of an issue that I'm aware of and it might be like too specific, but we might have covered it. As far as the type of residential development we have. Thinking, forward thinking as far as and I'll be specific and I don't know if you want to make it a general

thing. I'm always thinking about, we have this trend of age-restricted housing and as to how it's a win/win because there's not a lot of burden on the Town services and no kids in the school.

But I'm also thinking that it's also a product or its also market based. There's a market for it with the baby boomers. What happens when they're done?

The pig and the snake. When it's gone, what're we left with? I'm thinking all right, we should proactively have --
-

(End of Tape #1, Side B)

(Beginning of Tape #2, Side A)

--- even though there is a State mandate for affordable housing, we should proactively think about that. There should be from a planning and zoning prospective some kind-- I know there's a State guideline that we have, but we don't really take that in our active consciousness about affordable housing.

I don't know if we talked about that in general terms, or not.

MS. LAURINAITIS: There was one.

MS. FERRO: There was one there. There was certainly affordable housing and your first comment, though, raises a specific issues because ---

MR. CARMODY: Right, it's a little too specific for this ---

MS. FARRO: --- how do you put your arms around a market trend? It's like big box retail. You know? We thought five years ago, how much more could we build?

MS. LAURINAITIS: Can we restrict, you know, the density of areas such that we will see only a certain number of new units going for 66+ and still leave some areas where we would have affordable --

MR. CARMODY: We might be able to restrict it by changing, making a simple change in the regulations.

MS. FERRO: That's a zone. That's a zone. What you're

getting at, the specificity of your question is really, a zone change or a text change. But the concept of thinking about housing trends and matching it to your population and not overbuilding in one aspect or another, that's something you can easily say in your Plan.

THE CHAIR: And, I think, also one way of doing it and I don't think it's a zone change, I do think it is a text change. If we change the density of residential or over 66, age restricted, to a normal density instead of the amount that we now allow to be packed into a tiny little area for age restricted, I think that not only deals with that issue, but it deals with the long term in terms of if these units become available, these houses become available ---

MR. CARMODY: My biggest fear, and you already know what it is, is we have all these age restricted housing units and in 30 years from now, you know, we don't have people to fill them. What're we going to do with them? Lift the restriction?

MS. FERRO: You see, the trend right now, first of all, we're planning for ten years. And, the trend right now is you are not going to see those empty out in ten years. However, maybe your issue is not so much density per say, but are they going in everywhere? And, you don't want that?

MR. DELSANTO: The amount of units coming.

MS. FERRO: I mean, if they are cropping up everywhere, that's just like big box retail. I mean, you've got to start thinking about ---

MR. KENEFICK: But the density is what I think is way off.

MS. LAURINAITIS: Well, no. There have been some that've been built and I think that are totally inappropriate where they were placed.

MS. FERRO: It's placement.

THE CHAIR: Well, you're right. What is it, Mary?

MS. HUGHES: One unit per 3000, which is about 14 units per acre.

THE CHAIR: And, what is our regular?

MR. CARMODY: Ten thousand.

MS. HUGHES: One per 10,000.

THE CHAIR: So, we have one-tenth?

MS. FERRO: Yes, but for age restricted and mixed use things, that is not, that is not dense.

THE CHAIR: No, but when you start looking at some of the potential or the things that may have come in front of this Board and I'm not picking on anything in particular, but some of the applications that have come to the Board have tried to shove because they're age restricted, so many units into such a small area, which creates traffic issues and safety issues and Town service issues and resource issues.

MS. HUGHES: There's ways to manage that and Val will tell you that you can require it only be on certain streets.

MS. FERRO: Water and sewer.

MS. HUGHES: Increase the lot size. You have a two-acre minimum for multi family housing. You can bump that up and you start knocking these smaller parcels out.

MS. FERRO: Exactly. That's what you need to do.

MR. CARMODY: I mean, I might have gotten too specific to mention it right here.

MS. FERRO: That's the zoning, but those are the discussions.

MR. KENEFICK: Good point, John. That was good.

MS. FERRO: Yes, it was very good.

That helps you sort of define --- that's the hard part of being here on the planning side and then jumping over to the zoning side and it's the hard straddle. You're at that point where you want to get going with the zoning, but that doesn't mean that --- I hear what you're saying and there has to be a sensitivity to that because I think those things are affecting Town Character, are they not?

MR. CARMODY: Yah!

MS. FERRO: Okay. Absolutely.

MR. KENEFICK: Probably now they're not because they're all doing well and everything.

MR. CARMODY: But if we let it keep going unchecked ---

MR. KENEFICK: Like John says, in 30 years, it could affect the character.

MS. FERRO: But you certainly want to be on the radar screen. Very much like gas stations were 45 or 30 years ago when the trend was going from Mom and Pop gas stations to corporate owned and that whole template changed.

For how many years, you know, I remember growing up and everywhere were just abandoned gas stations. Just everywhere. Then all of a sudden, they all came back. They all look different, but they all came back. I think this is a phenomenon that we're all going to witness. It probably won't be in the ten-year horizon because the boomers are still pushing.

MR. CARMODY: Well, I plan to be here for at least 30 years.

MS. FERRO: Exactly.

THE CHAIR: Well, the end of the boomers are not that far from the over 55, so the 62 age. Not that far away.

MS. FERRO: I know, it's going to be interesting. And, you know, there's this push now for, like my generation's like, I'm not going to live there. You know? You don't want to live in those types of things.

We want to live independently. There is more physical activity. You know, they are starting down the south building these --- there is kayaking and canoeing and hiking and these people are 60 to 65 and that's what they're doing. It's not golf. It's not a golf community. These people are physically rigorous.

MR. CARMODY: Active. How dare they?

THE CHAIR: And, they are very --- I mean, I spend a lot of time, fortunately or unfortunately, in Georgia. And, the developing cities down there which used to be farmland, they've plunked a Town of Southington in one little area where you walk out the gate and you've got the doublewide broken down outside and the 37 gas stations and all, but inside ---

MS. FERRO: Oh, yes!

THE CHAIR: You've got the Quinnipiac River flowing through and you've got the ridge and you've got Mount Southington in there. It's beautiful. However, you look at something like that, a serious strain they're putting on those, its ridiculous.

MS. FERRO: Well, someone is going to inherit those.

THE CHAIR: Absolutely.

MS. FERRO: But that is the value of going through something like this because it just lets you --- you didn't think that hard. Your brain just came up with these things because it reacted to what you folks know, living here, working here, hearing what you hear on the Commission side, running into people in the supermarket, all those things. It sort of erases the inhibitions of thinking about is this a good thing to say, or not. You put it down on paper. That's why this process works.

So you did good! Very valuable. So now, you've given the two of us plenty of work to do.

THE CHAIR: Just switching gears for a second, for the Planned Development District, when do you foresee us giving that to Meridian? Our guidelines?

MS. HUGHES: What I'm going to do is I'm going to get a hold of their attorney, Ken Baldwin, and give him the outline that we have. And, tell we're working on the guidelines and we'd like him to flush out some ---

MS. FERRO: Start to work out the process.

So, I would say in a month, don't you think?

THE CHAIR: How about we do this, though? You know, I think

one of the things that is important that we talked about is that signage, lighting and landscaping and something that is actually an action item and I think we can put a group together to discuss that. Put something together to present to them and use as the base for our regulations going forward.

I wonder if Commissioner Carmody, Fran and Pat, you want to be involved? The three of you maybe set up a group? Go through this stuff?

I think everyone can look at it obviously and give these guys the input. If you guys want to set up some time together to talk and put something together.

MR. CARMODY: Are you going to be there, too?

MS. HUGHES: No. Unless you want to have a quorum present?

THE CHAIR: No.

The meeting on the 17th, I don't know if that's possible for your timing. I know schedules are kind of tight. The 17th, would it be possible to have something to present? You think? Too soon? Or would the next meeting be more ---

MR. SAUCIER: You're talking about going through the material that we were presented today, highlight what we like ---

THE CHAIR: Your ideas of what you think are good for sign, light and landscaping.

MR. CARMODY: I think the three of us can get together and do that before the 17th.

THE CHAIR: And, that, I think, is going to be the basis going forward for what we may look at as regulation changes.

MS. FERRO: That's fine. Do you want us to be there? Or do you want to do it?

THE CHAIR: You guys want to do it?

MR. CARMODY: If they want to be there, that's fine with me.

MS. FERRO: I don't care. Not that we would really lend any

MS. HUGHES: Why don't you guys go through the exercise and

MR. KENEFICK: Trust us on our own.

MS. FERRO: You can do this. Okay?

MR. CARMODY: I think we probably can.

MR. DELSANTO: I have every confidence in you. I have every
confidence.

MR. KENEFICK: If Mike thinks, so I think we can do it.

THE CHAIR: So, we'll have Fran Kenefick, John Carmody and
Pat Saucier come back to us on the 17th with some
recommendations.

MR. CARMODY: Franny, I'll call you and Pat and we'll pick a
date. Hammer it out. Have dinner.

MR. SAUCIER: Sure.

THE CHAIR: And, I think once you come back to us with these
things, we'll be able to see, maybe see the trends, but I
think seeing them on paper, we'll be able to see the trends
a little bit better. Then I think we go forward with the
next step, which is ---

MS. FERRO: Yes. And, there's a couple of overlaps ---

THE CHAIR: Your guiding principals, I think, are down on
paper right now, okay? I think.

MS. FERRO: Oh, yes. And, what's going to happen is these
are going to help us come up with some general language,
but the details of these will become your action items.

THE CHAIR: Exactly. And, then we set up going forward and
pegging them off and going. Great.

MR. CARMODY: Outstanding.

MS. FERRO: Good job! All right.

THE CHAIR: Anybody else have any other comments?

MR. CARMODY: No, this was productive.

MS. LAURINAITIS: Are we having another meeting?

MS. HUGHES: What I would suggest is, does somebody have a calendar for February with them?

Your next meetings for February are on the 7th and the 21st. So, Thursday, February 16th this room is available and Thursday, the 2nd, it's available.

THE CHAIR: From my prospective, the week of the 13th to the 17th, I'm not going to be here. I have business commitments.

MS. HUGHES: Do you want to shoot for the 2nd?

MR. DELSANTO: I'm not going to be here the 2nd.

MS. HUGHES: I don't want to start putting this off to March because we really want to get the Plan moving?

MS. FERRO: We want to get flying.

MS. HUGHES: That's a month from now and I'm not trying to be --- not everybody is available and we knew that but I am at the mercy of this room and like I said, now we're looking at, we're pushing it too far off.

MR. DELSANTO: The police station?

MS. HUGHES: I don't know if it's available. Michael, I am never going to get a day that's good for everybody.

MR. DELSANTO: You're right, you're right.

THE CHAIR: If there are rooms available, if we look at January the 23rd, which is the Monday.

MS. HUGHES: The 25th, but I don't want to put Meridian under the gun. Their lawyer's got to do some work.

MS. FERRO: You know what? Put them under the gun.

THE CHAIR: We're going to be going beyond just Meridian. This is going to be continued on to the next stage.

MS. HUGHES: All right, ladies and gentlemen. How about Wednesday the 21st or Thursday the 22nd? This room is available.

MR. CARMODY: Either one.

THE CHAIR: How about January the 22nd, Thursday?

MS. HUGHES: Okay, so we're going to say Thursday, January 22nd.

MS. LAURINAITIS: Sure.

MR. KENEFICK: All right, so what're we going to do?

THE CHAIR: The 22nd, we'll have a Plan of Development Meeting.

MR. DELSANTO: So it's not February 2nd?

MS. HUGHES: No.

MR. DELSANTO: Good.

MS. LAURINAITIS: One-twenty-six.

MS. HUGHES: And, if I may make a suggestion which is a silly suggestion, but the start time be 7:15 because on Thursday, we're open until 7:00, so the parking lot will clear out.

MS. FERRO: That's not silly. That's planning.

MR. CARMODY: All right.

THE CHAIR: So, at that meeting, we'll do the review of the stuff, but we're also going to be following up on the pages you're going to be doing.

MS. FERRO: Exactly.

THE CHAIR: We'll do a further follow up on the committee and then further going on with Meridian.

MR. CARMODY: We're not scheduled for the 17th?

THE CHAIR: We're going to do it on the 17th and then at that point, after discussions, I don't think we're going to take ---

MS.HUGHES: I mean those things can be just "blank" "blank" "blank" until you guys come up and that's enough time for me to get them the direction you want to take it in.

MR. CARMODY: All right. We'll meet next week then. For sure.

THE CHAIR: Anybody else have anything, any comments, any issues?

MR. DELSANTO: Thanks for coming out, folks. Good to see everyone coming out.

(Upon a motion made, second and passed unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.)