

MINUTES
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
Special Meeting
April 10, 2018

A Subcommittee of the Planning and Zoning Commission conducted a special meeting on April 10, 2018 at 7:00 PM in the Council Chamber, 3rd Floor, City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT 06516.

Present: Commission Chairman Hendricks, Vice-Chairman Biancur and Alternate Milano; ZEO Conniff and Assistant City Planner Killeen.

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Hendricks at 7:05 PM.

1. Approval of Minutes of Special Meeting of February 13, 2018

Motion was made by Vice-Chairman Biancur, seconded by Alternate Milano and passed.

2. Discussion of Implementation Schedule for Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD)/Ranking of Priorities

Subcommittee members continued their discussion of priorities for implementing recommendations of the POCD, based on their ranking of priorities from the previous meetings.

Vice-Chairman Biancur, who is serving as the lead committee member overseeing the Beach and Beachfront strategies, reported that he and Mr. Killeen had met to discuss this area last week. Some of the conclusions and further discussion based on their meeting:

- a. Vice-Chairman Biancur would like staff to work with the City's Grant Writer to identify potential funding sources for construction of bikeways and walkways extending west from Bradley Point to South Street. Additionally, the City should seek funding and/or work with the Army Corps of Engineers to reconstruct existing jetties and undertake beach nourishment programs to ensure long term resilience of West Haven's beaches.
- b. Based on a conversation with Planning and Development Commissioner Messore, it will be important to pursue strategies involving residential and mixed-use developments for the SCR and SRR Districts in view of current market demands. It was felt that the beach area may be too far from the Interstate Highway to attract hotels and larger restaurants. Alternate Milano concurred that mixed-use development would be important.
- c. Mr. Killeen explained that the SCR District currently does not allow any residential uses. Representatives of the Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection have explained that they would oppose efforts by the City to increase allowed residential development within the 100-year flood plain if there was not direct egress above the

- flood plain. Mr. Killeen is trying to identify steps that could be taken to evaluate the potential to elevate portions of roadways to provide that egress for key development parcels in the SCR (and SRR) District. Such a study has already been identified in the draft Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan that is being developed by the Southern CT Regional Council of Governments/RPA. Mr. Messoro had also suggested we could check the existing budget to see if any funds could be available to assist with such a planning/engineering study.
- d. Alternate Milano suggested that the Subcommittee identify the uses it wants to see along the beachfront, determine appropriate boundaries and rewrite existing zoning regulations in this area. Vice-Chairman Biancur suggested that one option would be to combine the SCR and SRR Districts into one District, like the SRR District which allows both commercial and retail use. Then, the Subcommittee can review existing setback, density and and bulk standards to recommend revisions that could work for this whole ares.
 - e. Vice-Chairman Biancur noted that the fire and police departments already have in place emergency service protocols for accessing and assisting individuals who reside in floodprone dwellings. He asked that we contact the Fire Chiefs of each Fire Department and ask for copies of necessary documentation which should be shared with DEEP to learn if those practices would help the City in making modifications to our Zoning Regulations to allow for increased residential development along the shore.
 - f. Mr. Killeen reported that the City had been approved for reconstruction of certain jetties near Prospect Beach around 2006, but since funds weren't available at that time, the permit has expired. The Engineering Department is currently involved in resubmitting those permit applications. He also reported that the Harbor Management Commission has also been concerned about maintaining the resilience of the beach and they have: 1) included beach nourishment as a goal in the draft Harbor Management Plan, which may be presented to the City Council for adoption as early as May 2018. 2) Working with Assistant Public Works Commissioner Mark Paine, the Commission is trying to gain State DEEP approval of strategies to reclaim beach sand offshore and pull it back up onto the City's beaches. 3) As far as funding, he did have a conversation with the City's Grant Writer. She encouraged the Committee to develop cost estimates for the various projects, and she said the Committee/Commission should present these ideas to the Administration to ensure they are ranked in priority with other City projects.

Mr. Killeen next referred to a packet of information that had been forwarded to subcommittee members, containing sample "Complete Streets Policies" that had been adopted by the State Department of Transportation and a number of other Connecticut communities in the past few years (e.g. West Hartford, Hartford, South Windsor). The Committee discussed the importance of preparing a draft Policy and presenting it to the City Council for consideration and adoption. The Committee liked the West Hartford and Hartford policies the best.

Mr. Killeen also discussed with the Subcommittee one issue that has come up with the redevelopment of properties near the University of New Haven. The approval of these redevelopment projects (i.e. The Atwood and the Park View) was based on parking calculations for first floor space being retail use. Now, the developers are seeking approval for restaurants and bars, which have a different parking standard. Staff is looking into the potential for changes to the Zoning Regulations that could allow for the same parking calculation for retail and restaurant uses, specifically in this area/district.

3. New Business/Next Steps

The Committee agreed on the following action steps:

- a. Alternate Milano will continue to work on recommendations for the downtown and the possibility of establishing a Village District. He will try to meet with Mr. Killeen to review the current CBD Regulations before the next meeting.
- b. Staff should prepare a draft Complete Streets Policy, based on the West Hartford and Hartford examples for presentation to the Subcommittee at a future meeting.
- c. Subcommittee members would review the draft Policy, make necessary changes, and be prepared to advocate for its adoption before the City Council.
- d. Staff should contact the City fire departments to document the current protocols for providing emergency services to individuals living in flood prone locations and discuss whether those protocols would help satisfy DEEP's concerns for increasing residential density on properties in the 100-year flood plain.
- e. Staff should work with the grant writer and the Regional Planning Commission to further explore potential funding sources for constructing bikeways and walkways between Bradley Point and South Street and also for reconstructing jetties and nourishing beach sand to prevent erosion and increase sustainability of the City's beaches.
- f. As suggested by Commissioner Messoro, staff should check on any available funding in the existing Planning and Development budget that could be used to study accessibility to key development sites along the beachfront during times of flooding.
- g. The Subcommittee would like to meet with Commissioner Messoro in the future to discuss the City's plans for the Savin Rock Conference Center and other key City parcels.

4. Adjournment

There being no further business, meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM