



**CITY OF DANBURY**  
155 DEER HILL AVENUE  
DANBURY, CONNECTICUT 06810

PLANNING COMMISSION  
(203) 797-4525  
(203) 797-4586 (FAX)

MINUTES  
JUNE 12, 2013

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The special meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairman Ken Keller at 7:30 PM.

Present were Fil Cerminara, Kenneth Keller, Helen Hoffstaetter, Joel Urice and Alternates Robert Chiochio and Michael Ferguson. Also present was Deputy Planning Director Sharon Calitro and Planning Director Dennis Elpern.

Absent was Chairman Arnold Finaldi.

Mr. Keller asked Mr. Ferguson to take Mr. Finaldi's place for the items on tonight's agenda.

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PUBLIC HEARING

City of Danbury by Dennis I. Elpern, Director of Planning – Proposed Amendment to the Plan of Conservation & Development in acc. w/ Sec. 8-23 of CT General Statutes.

Mr. Keller read the legal notice. Deputy Planning Director Sharon Calitro explained that as discussed at the March 20, 2013 meeting, pursuant to the State Statutes; the Plan of Conservation & Development must be amended by June 30, 2013. In compliance with the Statutes, these amendments were referred to the City Council, the regional planning agency HVCEO, as well as being posted on the City website and filed in the Town Clerk's office. She said the City Council approved these amendments at their April 4, 2013 meeting. She then read a letter from HVCEO, dated April 10, 2013 which stated that these amendments are "compatible with the 2009 HVCEO Regional Plan of Conservation and Development".

She said this is pretty straightforward, nothing new was added; all they did was clean up the language and remove the things that have been addressed. She explained that our plan must be consistent with the State plan in order for the City to be eligible to apply for funding. Our plan is tied to the State plan and they have been working on updates to that plan. Mr. Urice asked when the maps would be updated. Mrs. Calitro said they will be done afterwards, so the Commission will have to approve them as an amendment to the amendment. Mr. Urice noted that there is a property line error on one of the maps that needs to be corrected. Mrs. Calitro said she had noted it and it will be addressed.

Mr. Keller asked who wanted to speak first and Mr. Urice said he would start since he had a list of items to discuss. Mr. Urice then said on the cover, Mr. Ferguson should be

listed as an Alternate member, and Mr. Chiocchio's name should also be listed as an Alternate. He said he was looking for the Action Plan, which is missing from the amendments as well as his original copy of the Plan. Mr. Elpern explained he had designed it when the 2002 Plan was put together, but no one ever used it. So he did not bother to update or include it in the amendments. Mr. Urice asked that he be sent a copy by e-mail.

Mr. Ferguson questioned why (page 13) the suggestion to combine the Planning and Zoning Commissions was being removed. Mr. Elpern said that would require a change to the City charter, and the Charter Revision Commission did not support it. Ms. Hoffstaetter asked about the removal of "expand the use of computer technology..." listed under the Permit Process section. Mr. Elpern said the language was added to the first item in this section.

Mr. Urice asked why (page 20) preparing architectural guidelines is being removed. Mr. Elpern said there is no funding for this item, so we will just continue to encourage the use of them. Mr. Urice then asked about (page 25) removing the language about rezoning a portion of the CA-80 zone and expanding Kenosia Ave. to four lanes. Mr. Elpern said there are no plans to change the CA-80 zone. And at one time expanding Kenosia was a serious consideration, but the City Traffic Engineer says it now is a dead issue. It is a local road so the City would have to finance the project and turning lanes have been added which seem to have helped.

Mr. Urice asked about the changes to the section titled "Economic Development Projects" (page 28). Mrs. Calitro explained that HVDEP has changed their name to Western CT Economic Development Alliance; and the Community Reinvestment Task Force no longer exists. Mr. Urice then said they should include something under Housing & Neighborhoods (page 28) about senior housing. Mrs. Calitro said housing has its own section and the phrase "quality affordable housing" could include housing designated for seniors. Mr. Urice said this group deserves attention because they are growing in numbers. Mrs. Calitro said this is included in the housing section (page 35). Ms. Hoffstaetter suggested they copy the language (page 35) about "special housing needs". Mr. Elpern said he did not want to do that because this section (page 28) is about economic development and the language Ms. Hoffstaetter is referring to is in the Housing section. He then said the phrase "elderly housing" will be added to the last item listed under housing; after "quality affordable housing" (page 28).

Mrs. Calitro said that the DEP has changed their acronym to DEEP, so that will have to be corrected anywhere that it shows up (page 31). Mr. Urice then said under "Special Housing Needs", an "s" needs to be added to the word service (page 36). He then questioned why we are removing the "Adoption of a Demolition Delay Ordinance" (page 37). Mr. Elpern said to implement this is extraordinarily complicated; there are reams of law on it. And if they did this, it would increase the amount of time it takes to get a building permit.

Mr. Urice suggested that if the amount of public parks/open space areas has increased, they should show the increase so the State will see the increase. Mr. Elpern said although the Parks & Recreation Plan was completed there is still much more work to be done.

Mr. Urice then questioned the number of firehouses (page 41) not including headquarters. Mrs. Calitro confirmed that three is incorrect, there actually are four:

Osborne St. /Commerce Park/South King St. and the Airport. Mr. Urice asked what the findings of the school task force were. Mr. Keller asked if there would be any expansion of the High School. Mr. Elpern said the findings suggested we need to expand our elementary schools and possibly build another middle school.

Under the “Public Utilities” section, Mrs. Calitro pointed out that many of their projects are funded by their capital plan which is funded by sewer fees. Mr. Urice questioned the removal of “to remove nitrogen and metals” to be replaced by “meet evolving needs”. He said he thought there was a capital project regarding this. Mr. Elpern said David Day, the Superintendent of Public Utilities, reviewed these amendments and did not offer any corrections. Mrs. Calitro said she would check with Mr. Day on this issue. Mr. Urice also questioned how they would expand the reservoirs. Mrs. Calitro said they would have to make them deeper. Mr. Urice then asked if the new Mill Plain Rd. pumping station was completed. Mrs. Calitro asked him where he thought this new pumping station was. She added that the Westside Sewer Pumping Station was put in to take the load off of the Mill Plain Pumping Station and because of that the Mill Plain station does not need to be upgraded at this time.

Mr. Urice suggested they add something about continuing to add land under “Acquisitions” as opportunities arise. Mr. Elpern said there is a new policy so we cannot add anything to the list now. Mrs. Calitro said there is an existing open space bond with a coordinating list. Mr. Keller asked about the Palace Theater. Mrs. Calitro said they did the restoration study which was funded through a State trust. The catch is that this is privately owned unlike Waterbury which had a similar property that was publicly owned. At one time, there was an idea of partnering but that is no longer under consideration. So the City is not actively attempting to acquire this property.

Under the “Transportation” section (page 45), Mr. Urice asked why the improvements on White St. to Federal Rd. was not removed since it has been done. Mr. Elpern said that the City Traffic Engineer still has some plans which have not been completed. Mrs. Calitro added that HVCEO has funded things which still are to be done. Mr. Urice asked if improvements to Newtown Rd. are a State project. Mrs. Calitro said there are ongoing things as well as current things in progress that are funded by the State. Mr. Urice asked what the status was of the proposal to amend the Zoning Regulations to implement the curb cut control plans for Route 7, Padanaram and Federal Rds. Mrs. Calitro said Mill Plain Rd. is done although there still work to be done. She added that this is something that is looked at during the site plan/special exception review process.

Mrs. Calitro then said they are constantly amending the Zoning Regulations in order to require the best project for a specific site. Mr. Keller asked if any other roads in the City will be designated as scenic roads. Mr. Elpern said that term is a misnomer, because it only affects the City right-of-way, not the properties on the road. Mr. Urice then asked how the sidewalk from Triangle St. to Eagle Rd. is progressing. Mrs. Calitro said bits and pieces of it are coming together, but DOT will not just fund a sidewalk, they want to do highway improvements too.

Mr. Elpern then said that HVCEO is still working on extending rail service to New Milford (page 48), but unfortunately the proposed additional improvements to Route 7 from Danbury to New Canaan are not going to happen. He added that there are also problems with the idea to expand the Interstate to six lanes (page 49). Mr. Keller asked Mr. Elpern why they would want to support the expansion of Stewart Airport. Mr.

Elpern said the most congested airports are in the New York area and they still have land that could be used for expansion. Mr. Keller said Westchester Airport is much better than Stewart. Ms. Hoffstaetter asked what kind of support Danbury residents would be able to give to improvements in the Tri-State area. Mr. Elpern said they would make statements in favor of the improvements. Mr. Keller asked if any of the Commission members had any other questions or comments and there were none. Mr. Keller said the Commission thanks Mr. Urice for going over this document with a fine tooth comb.

Mr. Keller asked if there was anyone else to speak in favor of this matter and there was no one. He then asked if there was anyone to speak in opposition and there was no one.

Mr. Urice made a motion to close the public hearing. Ms. Hoffstaetter seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously. Mr. Urice then made a motion to move this to item number one under Old Business. Mr. Ferguson seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

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#### OLD BUSINESS FOR CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

City of Danbury by Dennis I. Elpern, Director of Planning – Proposed Amendment to the Plan of Conservation & Development in acc. w/ Sec. 8-23 of CT General Statutes.

Mr. Urice made a motion to approve the amendment as presented and amended this evening. Mr. Cerminara seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

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Mr. Keller then announced that he would be resigning from the Commission after eleven years. He said he has taken a job in Georgia and will be moving there this summer.

Mr. Urice made a motion to thank Mr. Keller for all the years of service. Ms. Hoffstaetter seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

At 8:30 PM, Mr. Urice made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Hoffstaetter seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.