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CITY OF DANBURY
155 DEER HILL AVENUE
DANBURY, CONNECTICUT 06810

PLANNING COMMISSION*
www.danbury-ct.gov
*POCD Oversight Committee

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

**2023 PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT ("POCD")
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 19, 2022**

Although there was not a quorum to conduct business, the committee wanted to keep on its scheduled track so it was determined that FHI Studio would make its presentation as per the agenda. Meeting notes and not official minutes would be prepared for this meeting. Since there was no quorum and no official conduct of business, the meeting minutes of April 19, 2022 were not considered for approval.

The web based meeting hosted on Zoom was called to order by Sharon Calitro, City of Danbury ("COD") Planning Director, at 4:08 PM.

Present were Oversight Committee Members Arnold Finaldi (PC Chairman), Helen Hoffstaetter (PC), Bob Chiochio (PC), Sharon Calitro (COD Planning), Jennifer Emminger (COD Planning), PJ Prunty (Chamber of Commerce), Juan Rivas (ZBA), Timothy Nolan (COD Public Services), Vincent DiGilio (City Council), and Paul Rotello (City Council). Present from FHI Studio were Francisco Gomes.

Absent: Perry Salvagne (PC), Kevin Haas (PC), Gary Renz (PC), Shay Nagarsheth (COD Business Advocacy), Fernanda Carvalho (COD Health), Matthew Cassavechia (COD Emergency Services), Richard Janelli (Board of Education), Ed Siergiej (Former Env./Lake Commission), Brigid Guertin (Danbury Museum & Historical Soc.), Candace Fay (ZC), and Fred Visconti (City Council).

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 a review of the introduction section, review of the draft housing and mobility section and implementation recommendations and a discussion on the potential strategies for Land Use and Environmental Resources and Economic Development, and a review of the project schedule.

The outline of the plan was reviewed, which will include the introduction, topic sections that includes mobility, housing, economic development, land use, services and facilities, and cultural resources, the implementation section, and appendix.

Francisco discussed the Mobility topic section and noted the goal is to improve mobility in Danbury across all modes of travel and improve transportation connections to the region. Mobility Strategies and Actions were discussed. Strategies included improving traffic operations across the City, to strategically improve transportation infrastructure across the City, improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity across the City, support the expansion and improvement of transit service across the City and region, accommodate emerging transportation modes and technologies, continue to address safety issues across Danbury's transportation system, improve communications with residents and stakeholders regarding transportation conditions, update City regulations and policies to better manage and accommodate transportation needs across the City, .

The implementation plan was briefly discussed. Francisco noted the strategies and actions from each topic area would be brought together in the implementation plan with the lead and partnering entities and the priority levels identified.

The next topic area discussed is housing. The housing goal is to expand housing supply and housing choice in Danbury and address issues related to overcrowding in the City. Francisco detailed the many housing strategies and actions. The first strategy discussed is to increase the supply and range of affordable housing in Danbury and maintain an affordable housing inventory in excess of existing supply with seven specific actions identified. Strategy 2 is to maintain and increase the supply of housing designed for or occupied by seniors. Actions include ensuring existing elderly/disabled tax credit program, and provide support service to assist seniors to age in place. The next strategy identified is to increase the supply of housing in, and proximate to, Danbury's Downtown with an emphasis on affordable units. Strategy 4 is to foster relationships that ensure the housing of the City's most vulnerable residents are met. Strategy 5 is to administer, educate, and support affordable housing initiatives. The next housing strategy is to increase the number of homes in Danbury that are accessible to those with mobility limitations or other disabilities. Strategy 7 is to review the City's zoning regulations to ensure the regulations allow for the development of new housing while protecting the integrity of the City's neighborhoods. The last strategy is to improve the condition of Danbury's housing supply and address overcrowding in the City's neighborhoods.

Francisco next discussed the recommended strategies and actions for Land Use and Environmental Resources. The goal is to direct growth and development to areas of the City that have the infrastructure and services to accommodate that growth while protecting the City's environmental resources and ensuring that future growth does not adversely impact those resources. Strategy ideas were discussed which included ensuring the City's zoning regulations direct development towards areas that can support development without adversely impacting the City's environmental resources; develop an Open Space and Conservation plan with the aims of ensuring the protection and effective management of City-owned open space and identifying open space that may be targeted for acquisition, adopt and implement low impact policies, and practices; continue the protection of environmentally sensitive areas; actively work towards protecting and improving water quality of the Still River and other waterways in the City; improve stewardship of forests and tree canopy on City-owned open space and right-of-ways; continue to promote sustainable stormwater management and floodplain management to be resilient and adaptable to a changing climate; and improve the management and oversight of the City's land use and environmental resources.

Economic Development was the next topic discussed. The recommended strategies and actions were discussed. The goal of is to leverage Danbury's unique assets to support economic development that provides opportunities for all of Danbury's residents. Strategy ideas identified include foster an environment that is supportive of economic development and provides opportunities for growth and development of businesses in the City; consider funding an economic development strategic plan for the City to help define economic development priorities and target industries, workforce development strategies, and assess organizational capacity to undertake economic development programs and initiatives; consider extending the Downtown Central Business District north and south to allow for new, higher intensity growth while protecting Downtown's historic buildings; continue to invest in downtown through infrastructure and streetscape improvements, façade improvements, public spaces for events, and marketing and attracting people to the Downtown; develop a campaign and communications that promotes Danbury as a place of innovation and activity; review and update the City's commercial zone regulations to ensure the regulations provide sufficient flexibility to allow development that responds to current and future market conditions; consider conducting corridor studies or area plans for corridors within the CG-20 and CA-80 districts to help align economic development priorities with needed infrastructure improvements to adequately support future growth; strengthen Danbury's marketing to outside businesses and investors highlighting the City's economic strengths; partner with WCSU, NVCC, the Chamber of Commerce, and major employers in the City to encourage workforce development, training, employee pipelines, and the potential for innovation or entrepreneurial activity; explore ways to increase employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for disadvantaged groups in the City; implement the recommendations of the City's Affordable Housing Plan.

The remaining project schedule was discussed and reviewed. May's meeting will include city services and facilities and cultural resources. The next meeting is scheduled for May 17, 2022.

The meeting adjourned at 5:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer L. Emminger
Deputy Planning Director