

PLAN UPDATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes

Room 104, Shelton City Hall

Shelton, CT

Monday, August 9, 2004

Members Present:

**Frank Osak, Chairman
Peter DiCarlo
Jim Tate**

**Fred Musante
Anthony Pogoda
Michael Adanti**

Staff Members:

**Richard Schultz
Marianne Chaya**

Also Present:

Robert Araujo, Chairman, Board of Fire Commissioners

Agenda Items:

I. Call To Order

Chairman Frank Osak called the meeting to order at 4:30 P.M.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

All in attendance pledged allegiance to the flag.

III. Approval of Minutes

Anthony Pogoda MOVED to approve the minutes from the August 2, 2004 meeting. Michael Adanti SECONDED the motion. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.

IV. Communication – Subcommittee Report

Fred Musante reported that he met with Frank Osak, Anthony Pogoda, Rick Schultz and Eric Barz. They reviewed the options for creating public awareness. The first thing was that if an option weren't part of what they were paying for from Planimetrics, it would not be given serious consideration. The copy of the press

release the members have that was handed out was created after this meeting. The following was the strategy this subcommittee recommended:

1. Issue press releases to all newspapers two to three weeks prior to public meetings and follow up with phone calls to reporters/editors.
2. Mail/e-mail meeting notifications to residents who asked to be notified and create a signup sheet for notification of future meetings.
3. Post 30 posters for upcoming workshops throughout the City and include tear-away web addresses when website is established.
4. Mail or e-mail meeting notifications to all City agencies, boards, and civic organizations.
5. Include quarterly reports and meeting notices in City newsletter, published in the Connecticut Post and mailed to every address.
6. Establish a Plan of Conservation and Development website linked to the City's website main page.
 - Create a frequently asked questions (FAQ) web page,
 - Post all press releases, committee reports, Plan drafts, etc. and
 - Create a guest book to gather e-mail addresses of interested residents.
7. Publish the public meeting schedule on Tele-Media public access community calendar.
8. Prepare City's traveling display to publicize the Plan (cost permitting).
9. Create a tie-in to high school civics classes if timing and curriculum allow.
10. Publicize that a spokesperson is available to speak to civic groups if invited.

Mr. Musante said that regarding item #8, we do have a display. In order for us to use it we can attach visuals by Velcro. If we utilize this method one person from the committee is going to have to do this. This will take a lot of extra time and could be too time-consuming.

Items 8-10 were items that could be implemented if we didn't feel that we were getting enough coverage from items 1-7. Eric, from Planimetrics said that he could be the spokesperson, but it would be an extra cost.

Rick Schultz will contact the web master for the City web site to see what can be utilized on the web site.

Fred Musante MOVED to have the committee accept the report from the publicity sub-committee and we proceed with item 1-7 listed on the Strategy for Increasing Public Awareness of the Shelton 2005 Plan of Conservation and Development (as listed above). Items 8-10 would be items to possibly consider at a future time. Michael Adanti SECONDED the motion. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.

Chairman Osak asked Fred Musante if he would consider monitoring these items. Mr. Musante said that would be fine but he would like to keep this as an item on each meeting's agenda.

V. Fire Commission Overview: Robert Araujo

Mr. Araujo introduced himself as the Chairman of the Fire Commissioners. Rick Schultz called and asked for the strategic planning issues. We are in process of preparing a strategic plan for the department. The first key infrastructure issues that would impact this committee is the need for moving Company 1, Echo Hose station. It needs to be upgraded and moved. The Bridgeport Ave. corridor has been considered. The vehicles are getting heavier and bigger, which would mean some station modifications. Huntington Station #3, would have a need for a sub-station centered around the Booth Hill/Mohegan Rd. area. Mohegan School would first come to mind as a location. Modifications to existing buildings are needed due to the size and weight of the vehicles. Sanitary sewers are needed at the White Hills facility (Co. 5). We cannot wash the fire apparatus inside Company 5.

Regarding building height, as you approach a fire at a multi-story building, the fire suppression technology changes and your approach changes. Your fire resources are taxed when fighting a fire at a multi-story building. You would need a lot more people to manage that effort. You have for every crew in; you have to have a crew out. Each firefighter has to carry about 200 lbs. of equipment. The Fire Marshal insures that the buildings have what is necessary, such as sprinkler systems, smoke evacuation system, detection systems, pressurized stair towers. When you look at something that happens, such as a rescue, your suppression system should work. Your minimum crew size is 2 in, 2 out. With a multi-story building you could have about 20 people, with everyone doing something.

It was asked how far in the future is the long-range plan. Mr. Araujo said that they are working on a 2-3 strategic plan for the fire department. The long-range financial plan is a 5-year plan.

Mr. Pogoda asked if there was any discussion about having a paid fire department.

Mr. Araujo said not within the fire department. There has not been any formal discussion; we will saturate our volunteers to a point. We, as leaders of this City, have to look at what point do we want a transition from volunteered to paid; or do we want a transition?

Chairman Osak stated that this committee is looking at a 10-year long range plan and it would be helpful to know what capital and facilities in the next 6 years, not only in dollars, but also for site selection for any new facilities.

Mr. Araujo said ideally, Echo Hose, which was built in 1960, needs to be replaced. The most centered location would be lower Bridgeport Ave. to be able to get to the other end of town plus the River Rd. area. You also have to look at the population density of the volunteers and giving them alternate routes for them to get to the location.

Also, the fire departments need more administrative space. We also need space for training. We need state-of-the-art training facilities. Every firefighter has training every year that they have to go through, most of it is electronic, and so it is time for us to put in classrooms. We are looking at the old intermediate school

as an option. We are trying to convince the Mayor to allow 4 classrooms to be used for training. We also want our administrative offices there. Training is done in town, out of town and out of state, depending on what is needed.

We are one of the largest volunteer fire departments on the east coast.

We recently acquired 4 new pump trucks. We need 2 new heavy rescue trucks plus 2 new aerial devices. Our average vehicle, before we received the 4 new trucks, was 22 years old. Some of the vehicles are so old, that when repairs need to be done, it becomes timely and costly to repair.

The next item is communications. Our first communications infrastructure was put in 1947. We updated in 1990. It is time to upgrade the 2-way radio system. We are working in conjunction with the Police Dept. and it will probably cost around \$1.3-1.5M. This is a very high priority.

Peter DiCarlo asked how many high-rise structures does Shelton have? Are you sufficiently staffed? Mr. Araujo said off the top of his head probably 10. The fire chief assures that he has sufficient staffing if he has to call for outside help. If you have a major incident, we would call every town around for help. Right now we have about 290 volunteers, of which 150 are certified interior firefighters. We certify for interior, exterior and station help only. To be a certified interior firefighter they have to pass the self contained breathing apparatus, hazardous materials awareness, blood born pathogen and a full respiratory physical. The exterior firefighters do not use the self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). The staffing and training level is intense. At any one general call you would use about 8-10 per station. The average age is in their late 30's. There is always a need for volunteers and usually we try and recruit at Shelton Day and also at the high school.

Fred Musante asked about a paid fire department maybe 10 years down the line. Mr. Araujo said that 75-80% of the fire departments in the country are volunteers. The other item dealing with infrastructure is the WAN (Wide Area Network). The fire department is tied into it and every station is wired to the Internet. The thing I would recommend for planning for public buildings is to make sure every building is wired with the highest speed or band possible. We have a server that is being installed now and I will have an Intranet and CBT(computer based training) for some of the basic stuff. If we don't progress rapidly, we will be doing a disservice and at a higher cost. Communications and WAN are two of the initiatives that we have in our capital plan.

Peter DiCarlo asked if there is an emergency command center and Bob Araujo said that it is currently in the Police Department. We are looking to upgrade it and if we move to the old intermediate school we may move some there.

Within 5 years we will have computers in the vehicles, tied to the internet and intranet. We also need wireless access for a public building.

Chairman Osak stated that by about June of next year this committee will have most of the pieces of the puzzle put together and we are not going to make the decisions for the fire department, so you would have to tell us what you will be needing in the next 10 years. We are looking for your input. If you have a strategic plan process going, this is what we wanted to hear. The most important thing is, where are you going to need new facilities and major capital. Bob

Araujo said that the heavy capital besides buildings is fire apparatus. All three aerial devices must be replaced within the next 5 years. They are \$1M each. We will need 2 rescue trucks @ \$450K each. The Huntington Station is small for the new trucks. They had to special order a truck so it would fit in the station, which cost about \$50-60K more for the custom design.

Chairman Osak asked Mr. Araujo to put this in writing so that it could be incorporated in the plan for consideration.

VI. Discussion of Finance Department Data

Last week the Finance Dept. gave the committee members the 6-year capital budget, which is supposed to be the answer to the charter mandate for capital improvements. This is just a collection of department expenses. Nothing is going to happen in an orderly fashion unless you can project your capital spending for the future. The plan that Finance gave us doesn't have the regular schedule of bond indebtedness on an annual retirement basis going forward, nor does it have projection of revenue derived from the grand list from at a specific mil rate. The revenue base has to be projected. Land use has to have a policy that makes sure that every place you don't have residences you would have the maximum possible grand list at the lowest possible cost.

They discussed use of regulations in Planning & Zoning, to make the most out of what we have from non-residential additions to the grand list.

You have to ask yourself, do we have enough property zoned non-residential to produce the kind of revenue we need to keep the people living in residences happy? That will be answered by, what was the addition per acre of developable land in the commercial areas per year. You are going to look at it and ask what is wrong with the regulations? What are you going to change them to? How much is a good return? We have to be more visionary than their current problems.

We have to ask the Finance Dept. to give us the retirement schedule of the bonds, how much capital that means going forward, and what the grand list projections are. We also have to get definitions for capital improvement. Capital Bond and Capital Expenses should be separate and should be shown. This should go back onto the agenda to get more of the specifics we need. Frank Osak and Tom Harbinson will try and schedule a meeting with Finance to get the bond retirement schedule, projections of the grand list and what constitutes capital improvement.

VII. Budget Agreement Discussion

We seem to have a political impasse. We have the initial \$40,000 in the contract that the Mayor put in. Glen Chalder has petitioned Rick Schultz saying that it is time to get more money in there. It seems that since the Mayor struck the deal with Planimetrics directly and it should stay that way. We won't get involved any more than we already have except to be aware when the first \$40,000 is

exhausted and to make the appropriate people aware when that time comes, monitored by Peter DiCarlo and Frank Osak.

VIII. Future Meeting Times and Schedules

The next meeting will be 8/16 with Parks & Recreation. Planimetrics will be at the 8/23 to give specifics from the 6/24 public informational meeting. The Board of Ed presentation will probably be 8/30, as long as the Long-Range Plan is available for the committee members prior to the meeting. The public informational meetings are 9/13, 10/4 and 11/8.

IX. Adjournment

Michael Adanti MOVED to adjourn the meeting, SECONDED by Peter DiCarlo. All were in favor, MEETING ADJOURNED at 5:57 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Chaya
Clerk, Plan Update Advisory Committee

One tape is on file in the City/Town Clerk's office.