

**PLAN UPDATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

*Minutes*

*Room 104, Shelton City Hall*

*Shelton, CT*

*Monday, December 6, 2004*

**I. Call to Order**

Chairman Frank Osak called the meeting to order at approximately 4:15 P.M.

**Members Present:**

**Frank Osak, Chairman**

**Peter DiCarlo, Vice Chairman**

**Fred Musante**

**Jim Tate**

**Michael Adanti**

**Tom Harbinson**

**Also Present:**

**Marianne Chaya**

**Eric Barz – Planimetrics**

**II. Pledge of Allegiance**

All in attendance pledged allegiance to the flag.

**III. Approval of Minutes**

Tom Harbinson MOVED to approve the minutes from the November 29, 2004 meeting. Fred Musante SECONDED the motion. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.

**IV. Review of Preliminary Vision: Planimetrics**

Eric Barz stated that before we get into the preliminary vision I want to talk about some things that I hear that somewhat concern Planimetrics. Some is the discussion about the transportation consultant, which should have had the money already in place. In our experience, we have never seen anything like this. Peter DiCarlo said that he believes that we should have not had to spend one minute of our time involved with the monies required to do this job. This money should have been in place before we convened.

Eric Barz said that there is a misconception about what the transportation component of the plan is or should be. I left the Mayor's office feeling like the DOT had painted us into a corner. When they were asked the question, is the scope of work sufficient for the purposes of a plan or conservation and

development? They said no. The irony of it is, is that the gentleman that said no is on the P&Z in Colchester, where Glenn had done their plan. The level of detail that we did without a traffic consultant suited him, in Colchester, just fine. Colchester is not Shelton, but in any event, I think what he was suggesting was something more than belongs in a plan of conservation and development, or at least in the time frame allotted for doing a plan and not losing the public's interest all together. What I'm hearing is that they are talking about being through pre-design for correcting the improvements. Peter DiCarlo said that is not what he heard, but he heard them talk about traffic counts, and someone manning the locations to understand who is going in what direction. Eric Barz said he heard that as well but took it a step further. He was looking like he wanted to know exactly how this was going to be fixed, and was talking about it in a pre-design phase where you identify the properties that are going to be taken, and the details involved. That is not the level of detail that normally goes into a plan of conservation and development. Jim Tate asked what we should expect. Eric Barz stated that you are going to get all the hot spots in town that clearly need to be fixed and getting some preliminary direction in what needs to be done to fix them. In some cases it will call for the need to determine what is the best approach for fixing them. It lays the groundwork for future study and when it comes time for valley projects, you will be able to say that our plan of conservation and development recommends the following improvements to State roads and it will cost "x dollars" for design, "x dollars" for acquisition, etc. This would lay the groundwork for that. You're not going to get a corridor study for Bridgeport Ave. Jim Tate said that we understand that, but we want to make sure that there is enough strength in the plan that encourages the City to join partners now and get this started. Eric Barz said that we can get into that discussion when we start going through it.

Eric Barz talked about what we call the planning "verbs" and gave some examples of that to show what type of wording will get the kind of attention that would get acted on. Peter DiCarlo said that he felt to get the traffic study continued is to get the State to say what it needs, and get the State to shadow what's being done here and then get it to P&Z so that as they plan for their future budgets, whatever seed money they need to perpetuate the activity, so that we don't wind up with a document that shows the path with no resources to go there and no incentive to do it. What I would like out of this is something tangible rather than just a wishy-washy statement.

Eric Barz said that one thing that they have, as a trademark is a strong implementation approach. First of all, the responsibility for implementation lies with the Planning & Zoning Commission. If P&Z doesn't have the time or the will to do it, we suggest the backup plan where you create an implementation committee that may be made up of members from the P&Z and other Boards and committees that will have a strong role in the implementation of the plan. You have them meet however many times necessary during the course of the year to make sure that the plan stays on target and on time. You prioritize recommendations and that committee can determine what are the highest priorities and who is responsible for them and then they send out the marching

orders. We have had some towns where the some of the members of the steering committee volunteered to become part of that committee. Jim Tate asked, for the \$15K that we are going to spend on a traffic consultant, how can we best utilize that consultant? Eric Barz responded that the scope of work is going to provide enough information for us to lay out the general, and in some cases, the specific strategies needed to get Shelton through the next 10 years and beyond. It is not just a matter of defining where turn lanes should be or how wide the roads are, it is all interconnected. We are going to make land use decisions that are going to, in some cases, preserve traffic capacity on the road network, and in other cases, we are going to improve the road network to support land uses where we feel is the most desirable. Jim Tate asked, taking Constitution Blvd. specifically, what level of information are they going to provide and how would we go about starting the process of making the necessary changes, and would it take "X dollars" more to get that information? What I don't want to happen is to say, "explore the possibility of extending Constitution Blvd." or "investigate further traffic studies because we believe it would possibly relieve traffic in Huntington Center". If that is the case, I want to leave now. Eric Barz said that the bottom line is, between Barkan & Mess, and Glenn and I, we are going to take the first crack at it. It doesn't get to P&Z until everybody at this table is satisfied. We may not come to 100% consensus on some issues but we are going to come down to 9 out of 10 people agree what the priorities are and what the strength of the language is that we want to use. Please don't fret about the end product. It is going to start out my words but will end up being your plan.

Eric Barz started the discussion of the Preliminary Vision. The first page is the Overview and the Overall Vision. He asked for input from the committee members for any changes, additions or deletions to the wording. After some discussion it was decided that the statement highlighted stays the same. The next page states the three Core Values: Protect important resources, guide appropriate and balanced development, and address community needs. The overall vision is supported by the three core values, which in turn can be broken down into a series of action themes. They discussed some of the action themes and there was a suggestion to add to a couple of the themes, specifically the ones that deal with guiding the economic and residential development. It was suggested to add the wording: optimize return on investment on bullet 8 and that on bullet 9 add wording that we are trying to minimize negative impacts. Eric also explained the chart on the next page, which gives the visual to the conceptual plan structure.

#### Side B

The discussion focused on development strategies and how it will be laid out in the plan. Frank Osak suggested that when they get into the specifics of the development plan that they have a large-scale map of the City with all the subdivisions plotted in. Jim Tate said that Rick Schultz was given a map that could be used at the meetings and they need to remind him to bring it for each meeting.

Eric Barz stated that they just got the zoning information from VCOG and we will start doing the build out analysis and I will start generating maps that I will be bringing. I feel like I have been working with one hand tied behind my back by not having the traffic consultant and the zoning data but it now starting to come together so things should start moving quickly. We will probably spend several meetings just talking about residential and economic build outs.

Jim Tate asked about some of the phrases, such as protect community character and what that represents. He also mentioned the gateway areas and what strategies could be considered to handle it.

Eric Barz stated that the Core Values lend themselves to a good way of organizing the chapters and the exception, he feels, is downtown and Huntington Center is a strong enough issue that it might warrant its own chapter. It would otherwise be lost in the section "guide economic development". The Industrial park and the Research Park on Bridgeport Ave. might warrant a special treatment. Perhaps he may put it into a separate section under the Guide Economic Development or separately. They have to be dealt with comprehensively. All this needs to be tied together.

Page 4 is titled Protect Important Resources. Each of the action themes is broken down into the major issues within the themes and then a notation of a very broad strategy. The topics are Natural Resources, Open Space, and Community Character. Eric gave several ideas of expanding on the strategies for some specific topics.

He asked if there are any Natural Resource strategies that are not listed. Fred Musante suggested adding the Housatonic River.

In reference to the Open Space topic, Eric said that there would only be a little tweaking added.

Some of the things that encompass Community Character are historic resources, agriculture, scenic roads, vistas, and community spirit. Open Space is part of community character but it was a strong enough subject to warrant its own section.

Eric Barz asked if there was anything left out and Jim Tate said that in regards to open space, because it becomes raw land there is a maintenance responsibility by the City. We have to start establishing protective guidelines and some programs for usage of some of the land, such as haying.

Frank Osak asked about the verbiage used in the strategies, such as "modify regulations or policies". Give me an example of these modifications. As an example, Eric Barz talked about modifying the PDD regulations, which needs a major overhaul based on current zoning criteria. Jim Tate asked if they are going to give us draft regulations and Eric responded, no. All the plan is doing is planting the seed and laying the groundwork. The City has to take it and run with it.

Frank Osak stated that what a shame it would be if this were put on a shelf after this is all done. One way to force the issue is to take 2-3 key things where regulations have to be changed and we should be a petitioner for the change in the regulations. Jim Tate asked if Planimetrics could write the draft regulations and Eric said he can't write them within the scope of the contract. Some towns

have contracted with us to comprehensively re-write their regulations. One town said that they wanted it stated that they recommend a comprehensive re-write of the zoning regulations to implement those strategies that require some major changes to the regulations. It was asked how much it would cost and Eric said it could be anywhere between \$20K-\$50K. Shelton is closer to the \$50K cost. The next section is titled Guide Appropriate Development. The topics are Protect and Enhance Community Structure, broken down into office/industrial areas, downtown, Huntington Center, and White Hills. This defines what it is and begins the discussion of the elements that are worth protecting and how to protect them. Fred Musante asked to break out the south end (River Road) into its own section and they discussed the area in detail. Eric then went on to discuss some of the reasoning behind the strategies, particularly in the downtown area. The discussion turned back to who would modify the regulations and how to appropriate the funds to do this task.

Tape 2, Side A

The question came up about how to extricate yourself in a situation where something is allowed to go in totally wrong for the area, in the downtown area for example. A suggestion was to re-write the regulations to prohibit it from happening in the future, which would render this business as non-conforming, and make sure that the Zoning Board of Appeals has strict orders not to do anything to encourage this to continue. Most likely condemning the property wouldn't work. A suggestion of possibly taking the property by eminent domain, for the good of the community could be an option.

They discussed the issue noted in the White Hills section regarding public water/sewer limits. The strategy needs to be changed and it was explained why. Eric explained that the strategy shown needs to be stated in the plan that it is dependent upon several other things being implemented. The wording will be changed somewhat. The members discussed what their perception is on the strategy of the remaining land in White Hills. The discussion centered on the failing septic systems in White Hills to which Eric suggested adding a section on septic systems in the section of Addressing Community needs under the Public Utilities topic.

Frank Osak asked Eric Barz if what we accomplished today is what he needed and Eric responded that he would have liked to finish going through the rest of the Preliminary Vision. Eric said that so far he has not heard a lot of need for revision on what has been presented so far. Eric asked that if there are items that they need to bring to Eric's attention to fax it to him.

## **V. Future Meeting Times and Schedules**

They discussed if and when to bring Allan Cribbins into one of the meetings. Eric Barz said that he is not scheduled to meet with this committee again until January 24. The tentative plan is to have a meeting on Monday, Dec. 13, and break until January.

## **VI. Adjournment**

Fred Musante MOVED to adjourn. SECONDED by Tom Harbinson. All were in favor, MEETING ADJOURNED at 6:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Chaya  
Clerk, Plan Update Advisory Committee  
2 tapes are on file in the City/Town Clerk's office