

WATERBURY PLANNING COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
APPROVED MINUTES
Thursday, September 12, 2013

Members present: Becca Washburn, Chair; Judi Kamien; Ken Belliveau, Jason Wulff

Staff present: Steve Lotspeich, Community Planner

Public: Kathryn Grace, Monica Callan, Natalie Howell-Sherman, Rebecca Ellis, David Lachtrupp, John Callan

The meeting was opened at 7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING ON MUNICIPAL PLAN, DRAFT #1

Becca Washburn opened the public hearing at 7:08 p.m. Becca Washburn introduced the process of how the Municipal Plan was re-written. The Planning Commission partnered with various community groups such as LEAP, the Waterbury Conservation Commission, and others. Becca Washburn explained that the Draft #1 of the Plan was finalized before all the needed comments, edits and additional language was incorporated by the Planning Commission. Becca explained the Errata document that addresses the missing language that needs to be added to the draft. She explained that the goal is to incorporate any additional comments and edits to the draft and possibly approve the Planning Commission final draft this evening.

Steve L. gave some additional background on the process of re-writing the Municipal Plan including the Community Survey that was carried out with assistance from Brandy Saxton of Place Sense. He explained that the numerical data for the responses is attached to the draft as Appendix 1.

Monica Callan commented that the reference to Across Roads Center for the Arts should not be referred to as ARCA but can be abbreviated to Across Roads. She gave some additional edits relating to the references to the past organization, Waterbury Activities Cultural Center (WACC).

Kathryn Grace commented on page 3, that additional language is needed on Climate Change and Global Warming, including a broader goal addressing the floodplain areas within the Growth Centers. She commented that there is no language addressing industrially zoned property that is in the 100-year floodplain. She commented that flooding of areas in the residential areas of the Village next to the industrial areas needs to be addressed. She also commented that the flood hazard area permitting process should not be loosened for businesses/commercial property and made less stringent.

Natalie Howell-Sherman asked a question regarding enterprise zones. Judi K. explained that these areas would be oriented to businesses with a manufacturing and art bent. The enterprise zones are not necessarily an area with defined boundaries but are more conceptual. These areas are most appropriate for tax abatement. The concept is to find businesses to fill a current gap in business type such as a clothing store. Enterprise zones are also called "business improvement districts". Kathryn Grace commented that commercial/industrial areas should not necessarily be expanded into existing residential areas. The increase in the Growth Centers should be considered with attention to detail in terms of where and how they are expanded and changed.

Rebecca Ellis commented on page 30, that the Digital Economy Grant was state-wide and should not be referred to as a \$1 million grant. Waterbury is only one of many communities that are recipients of part of this grant. Growth Centers are defined in state statute and that should be clear in our Plan.

Dave Lachtrupp asked when additional comments can be e-mailed for incorporation. Becca explained that the time line is aggressive to minimize the length of time that our Municipal Plan approval lapses.

Kathryn Grace commented on page 32, that Action No. 15 should include the Village Historic district as well as Colbyville and Waterbury Center. On page 121, the Flood Hazard Area Regulations that were approved in March, 2011, need to be added to the list of zoning amendments. On page 123, the issue that utilizing the ground floor retail spaces for other uses is not optimum, was discussed.

Natalie commented that the Plan is very readable and has a lot of relevant information. Mary Koen was credited for helping to craft the Plan as a very readable document. Kathryn Grace commented that she felt listened to throughout the re-write process.

The issue of development in floodplains should be addressed in the goals, objectives, and actions in the Land Use chapter.

John Callan asked for a synopsis of the process of re-writing the Municipal Plan. Becca described the process for the required public hearings and approval. John asked about how Smart Growth is addressed in the Plan, especially as it relates to increasing the supply of housing and reducing the cost of housing. He is concerned about the scarcity of housing, especially higher density housing. Higher density housing should be considered in areas with gravel soils that are suitable for on-site septic. Some of this higher density could be in more rural areas where the soils are suitable. It was noted that this concept may be counter to Smart Growth principles and concentrating higher density in and around our existing villages. Becca noted that the re-write of the Municipal Plan will be followed by a re-write of the Zoning Regulations that will include examining where higher density housing can be encouraged and facilitated.

The expansion of the Village of Waterbury and the associated wastewater service area is being considered, especially along the Route 2 corridor to the west of the Village.

Becca Washburn closed the public hearing at 8:22pm.

INCORPORATING COMMENTS, EDITS, AND ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE IN THE DRAFT MUNICIPAL PLAN

It was confirmed that the pieces that need to be added to the Errata document, in addition to the comments being added at this meeting, include Mary Koen's changes to the Health and Social Service section of the Community Facilities and Services chapter, starting on page 90. Alec Tuscany's comments #3 through #6 in his memo dated September 12th also need to be incorporated into the Facilities and Services chapter starting on page 95. It was agreed that the complete Community Survey report including the all the narrative responses to the survey questions needs to be appended to the draft Plan.

The Planning Commission went through the draft Plan and decided where the comments and edits from the Public Hearing should be added to the Errata document. Ken Belliveau made the changes that were decided on by the Commission.

MOTION:

Ken Belliveau moved and Jason Wulff seconded the motion to approve and forward to the Select Board and Trustees the draft of the 2013-2018 Waterbury Municipal Plan document dated August 12, 2013, with the changes included in the errata sheet created September 12, 2013, along with the addition of map of the Designated Downtown including any appropriate text references to the map.

VOTE:

The motion was approved unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted:



Stephen Lotspeich
Community Planner

*These minutes were approved on September 23, 2013.