

The Public Hearing was called to order at 7:05 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Doug Dubitsky (Chair), Pete Fiasconaro (Vice-Chair, online), Dave Garceau (online), Ken Fortier, Helen Weingart, Alternate Peter Haines.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Randy Godaire, Eric Beer, Alternate Dan Pearce, Alternate Bill Ireland.

ALTERNATES SEATED: Seat Peter Haines for Eric Beer.

ALSO PRESENT: First Selectman Bill Rose, Jim Larkin from NECCOG and Recording Clerk Kathleen Scott.

D. Dubitsky reported that the Legal Notice for the Public Hearing was posted twice in the Willimantic Chronicle and at the Town Clerk's office.

SUBJECT OF HEARING:

A. Town of Chaplin Plan of Conservation & Development:

The POCD is required to be reviewed and updated every 10 years (last done in June 2010). The current version from May 13, 2021 (published on the town website and at the Town Hall) was done with the help of Jim Larkin from NECCOG who will present highlights of the strategies identified in the plan. The process began in October 2020 with updates to demographics in each chapter including population trends that dropped in the last 10 years, reviewed strategies and contacted local Commissions to determine what has been accomplished, and includes conclusions from public outreach visioning sessions from the old plan that are still valid. The future vision is to protect and preserve the rural and environmental assets of the town including: the Natchaug River, agriculture and valued wildlife.

Economic Development - avoid strip type development, reduce the number of driveways and curb cuts, identified the western corridor from RT 198 to the Windham Town line on RT 6 as the heaviest area for commercial development (reviewed three scenarios with possible updates to existing zoning including: boundaries of those zones to follow the actual boundaries of the properties, move away from nodes from 2010 that occurred at the intersection of Lynch Rd and RT 198 and look at the full corridor to allow a mix of residential and commercial development), protect the Natchaug River from commercial development, reviewed the RT 6 Corridor Management Plan for anything that applies to what is there now.

Transportation – promote traffic calming on RT 6 corridor, increased bonds for driveways that connect to local roadways, inventory and work to improve drainage in low impact ways, sight line improvements on some roads that connect to RT 198 (the town is in the process of doing).

Utilities & Energy Conservation– support implementation of non-polluting alternative electricity production technologies such as photovoltaic, geothermal and water turbine systems; promote protection of surface water and review the boundary with possible update to the Aquifer Protection Zone.

Housing – the Town is currently working on an Affordable Housing Plan that can be incorporated or addressed within the POCD when completed, study the need for senior housing and potential locations,

continue to allow and review accessory apartment regulations to make sure they are working for the town.

Historic Preservation – protections for the village district, identify other locations of historic properties and encourage those owners to protect their property to keep as a value to the town.

Natural Resources – consider right to farm ordinance to help promote agriculture, review natural resources inventory with map updates as needed (combined the Conservation Commission with the Inland Wetlands Commission), promote protection of surface ground water resources within the Natchaug River basin.

Public Safety – resolve future building sites of town owned property within the village center (Museum and Old Library), enhance the town’s online presence and accessibility for meetings and services, recruit membership to the Senior Center as a joint venture with some surrounding towns.

Education – maintain the site as well as the building to ensure the property remains well maintained and in case something needs to be moved or consolidated in the future.

Next Steps - The Commission will review comments and correspondence from the Public Hearing and can revise the plan and adopt the plan or any part of the plan or amendment by one single resolution or can pick and choose by sections. After approving the plan, the Commission needs to set an effective date and submit to OPM within 65 days.

The hearing was opened for public comments:

- First Selectman Bill Rose reported that the Board of Selectmen approved the draft POCD to be submitted to the Zoning Board. An email was received from Scott Mathies regarding mapping of the Helen Garrison Trust property (South Bear Hill Rd and Canada Lane) that shows on one map but not the other (shown on pg. 58 but not on pg. 32). K. Fortier read the email for the record. D. Dubitsky responded that the open space map on pg. 32 does not include municipal owned land (the Helen Garrison Trust property is municipal owned).
- Bill Rose commented about the wording for discontinuance of abandoned roads on pg. 18 and will rework the language. He also reported that an email was received from the Senior Center with revised language for the Senior Center on pg. 36 and the Community Center on pg. 37.
- Jim Randall suggested the Garrison Preserve that is restricted and owned by the town should be available for use as farm land. He also asked about the abandonment of Diana’s Pool Rd that has one resident on the end. D. Dubitsky reported that only a portion of the road was discontinued.
- Scott Mathies who arrived late asked about his email regarding mapping for the Helen Garrison Trust. D. Dubitsky responded that the email was read into the record and that the open space map does not include municipal owned land.

Motion to adjourn the Public Hearing at 7:45 PM by P. Haines, seconded by K. Fortier. All in favor, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by,
Recording Clerk Kathleen Scott