

**TOWN OF SALEM
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2022 – 7:00 P.M.
SALEM TOWN HALL – CONFERENCE ROOM 1**

PRESENT

Vernon Smith, Chair
John Gadbois, Vice Chairman
Carl S. Fontneau
Diba Khan-Bureau (7:15 p.m.)
Jennifer Lindo
Walter Volberg
Gary Closius, Alternate

ABSENT

Thomas Reith
Dave Knopf, Alternate
Steven Shelley, Alternate

ALSO PRESENT

Town Planner Justin LaFountain

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. PUBLIC COMMENT:

First Selectman Ed Chmielewski thanked the Commission for their hard work and efforts drafting the town's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) in the midst of the pandemic and expressed his support for their request for an extension with the State.

4. PUBLIC HEARING: *none*

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S):

a. Regular Meeting Minutes: December 21, 2021

M/S/C: Fontneau/Lindo, to approve the Planning & Zoning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes of December 21, 2021, with the following amendment:

Page 1, Item 3 (Public Comment), second sentence:

In response to Commissioner Khan-Bureau *'s statement regarding the placement of stone in the wetlands, a regulated activity that requires the Inland Wetlands and Conservation Commission's review and approval,*

First Selectman Chmielewski stated that actions are being taken to....

Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0. Voting in Favor: Commissioners Fontneau, Khan-Bureau, Lindo, Volberg, and Smith. Voting in Opposition: None. Voting in Abstention: Commissioner Gadbois.

Alternate Commissioner Closius was seated for Commissioner Reith.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

a. Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD)

Commissioner Fontneau recommended they present their edits in writing to each of the respective authors. The authors of the chapters are as follows:

Forward	Former Commissioner Caron & Commissioner Fontneau	
Chapter 1	TBD	
Chapter 2	Vision Statement/Goals & Objectives	Former Commissioner Caron & Commissioner Fontneau
Chapter 3	Natural Resources	Commissioner Khan-Bureau
Chapter 4	Agriculture/Forestry/Open Space	Commissioner Khan-Bureau
Chapter 5	Historic, Archaeology	Commissioner Smith & Commissioner Volberg
Chapter 6	Economic Development	Commissioner Fontneau
Chapter 7	Municipal Facilities/Land/Services	Commissioner Fontneau
Chapter 8	Housing Stock and Population Change	Commissioner Fontneau
Chapter 9	Transportation and Road Network	Town Planner LaFountain
Chapter 10	Recreation and Trails Network	Commissioner Gadbois
Appendix	Maps	Town Planner LaFountain

General Comments

Commissioner Lindo reported that she has begun reviewing the document for any obvious grammatical or technical errors. Commissioner Fontneau expressed his wish to receive and/or discuss any additions, pertinent comments, updates, suggestions to the chapters before the document is edited.

Commissioner Closius reported that he has begun reviewing the document for its relevance to the results of the survey, stating the importance of ensuring that the POCD addresses the town's concerns. He added that care should be taken when considering the survey results given both the small number of responses and the respondents' age group. He also stressed the importance of maintaining consistency throughout the document, including the need to recognize, acknowledge, and/or avoid conflicting statements, e.g. stating that, though the town has exceeded the State's open space land acquisition and preservation goals, it should continue to strive to increase its open space as well as its number of businesses (Chapter 3, Natural Resources, and Chapter 6, Economic Development).

Goals

The Commissioners agreed to format the Goals/Action Steps, as presented in Chapter 7.

Commissioner Closius created a document compiling all of the recommendations, goals, and objectives with their respective responsible group(s) included in the current and proposed POCD. A section has been added where each of the Chairpersons can note the status of the objective. He proposed sending the document with a letter of request to each respective Chairperson for review and comment by February 7. The responses received by each of the groups may then be reviewed for their pertinence. He reminded the Commission that the goals should be driven from the survey, which reflects the needs and wants of the townspeople. He also reiterated the importance of maintaining consistency throughout the document in relation to the verbiage that is used, e.g., determining whether to utilize the term goals, objectives, or recommendations.

Chairman Smith confirmed that he received a draft of the letter. He proposed requesting the various groups to prioritize the item(s) rather than providing an estimated completion date. He thanked Commissioner Closius for his efforts.

Chapter 2 – Vision Statement/Goals & Objectives (Commissioners Caron & Fontneau)
Town Planner LaFountain stated that the information provided on the population and number of housing units derives from the Census Data. Commissioner Fontneau expressed his curiosity regarding some of the numbers and stated the need to acquire data from the Town's Tax Assessor to determine the town's actual housing data. It is unknown if the 2020 Census Data will be available when the POCD is ready for submission.

Chapter 3 – Natural Resources (Commissioner Khan-Bureau)

Chapter 4 – Agriculture/Forestry/Open Space (Commissioner Khan-Bureau)

Commissioner Khan-Bureau reported that citations have been added to the chapter. The chapters have been provided to the newly-appointed members of the Inland Wetlands and Conservation Commission (IWCC) for their input.

Discussion ensued regarding areas that have been identified as vulnerable to heavy rains and floods. A Flood Zone Map, as delineated by FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), is included in the document. Chairman Smith questioned whether specific flood zone areas should be highlighted and recommendations be included in the document.

In response to Commissioner Fontneau who questioned the status of his input, Commissioner Khan-Bureau stated that she is in the process of reviewing his input, which is comprised of 10 pages, with the IWCC Chairperson. Some of the items, she noted, are already in progress, e.g., increasing the buffer zone of the Eightmile River Corridor. Commissioner Fontneau expressed his frustrations with the continuing lack of progress.

Chapter 9 – Transportation and Road Network (Town Planner LaFountain)

Discussion ensued regarding the traffic issues along Route 85. Commissioner Closius proposed the possibility of engaging the town to work with the State to prohibit tractor-trailer trucks from traveling along the road, much of which is a residential neighborhood. Town Planner LaFountain reported that a meeting was held with the CT DOT (Connecticut Department of Transportation) regarding a proposed road improvement project to be conducted along Route 85, south of the round-a-bout, to improve the flow of traffic and safety of the road. He noted that, should certain types of vehicles be limited on the road(s), the town could lose state priority with funding.

Commissioner Fontneau recommended they include a list of problem intersections or locations on town roads in the POCD. The list can also be included in SCCOG's (Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments) Transportation Plan and/or referred to the town's local legislators and introduced to CT DOT. While the town might consider prohibiting tractor-trailer trucks from traveling on town roads, the enforceability of such a ban was questioned. In response to Commissioner Fontneau regarding previous traffic counts, Town Planner LaFountain stated that he was unable to locate any information prior to 2018 and plans to contact CT DOT.

Waiver/Deadline Extension

Town Planner LaFountain stated that the POCD is due on March 20. A draft of the letter to the State requesting a waiver will be presented to the Commissioners for review and approval in February. The letter will then be referred to the Board of Selectmen for review and approval. When approved, it will be sent to OPM (Office of Policy and Management) for approval. Commissioner Fontneau expressed the importance of finalizing the POCD, stating that the Commission has many other tasks that must be completed, including amending their regulations to comply with the State Statutes.

Commissioner Volberg suggested the possibility of concentrating and completing one chapter at a time rather than working on all of the chapters simultaneously.

7. NEW BUSINESS – none

8. ZONING ENFORCEMENT OFFICER'S REPORT/INLAND WETLANDS AND CONSERVATION COMMISSION REPORT

An e-mail correspondence, including photographs, received from ZWEO Matt Allen regarding the placement of gravel on an existing road located atop a dam, at 89 Norwich Road, was briefly discussed. Commissioner Khan-Bureau, who also serves as the IWCC Vice-Chairperson, agreed with ZWEO Allen's statement that the placement of gravel in the area is a regulated activity and reported that the IWCC voted to issue a Notice of Violation.

She noted that CT DEEP (Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection) is also aware of the activity.

Commissioner Fontneau expressed his dismay with the ZWEO who has not provided a report to the Commission for several months. Additionally, he is disappointed with both the ZWEO and IWCC for not informing the Commission regarding the placement of the bridge along Harris Brook on the town's Multi-Purpose Path, which requires a §8-24 Review and, potentially, a Zoning Permit. He felt that the IWCC should have, at least, informed the Commission as a courtesy. Commissioner Khan-Bureau provided a brief history of the placement, repair, and replacement of the bridge, which was not approved by the IWCC, and discussed the bridge in comparison to those which were placed as part of the Disc Golf Course.

Commissioner Lindo suggested Chairman Smith send a formal letter to the IWCC Chairperson requesting that the IWCC inform the Commission regarding any issues or applications that should come before the Commission. She also expressed her dismay with the ZWEO who has neglected to provide the Commission with, at least, a monthly report. She stated that it is the responsibility of the paid staff, i.e., ZWEO, to inform both Commissions regarding such activities. Chairman Smith, admittedly, reported that he had not contacted the ZWEO, as promised.

9. TOWN PLANNER REPORT

Town Planner LaFountain stated that he will inform the Commission when the Public Meeting is scheduled for the Route 85 road improvement project.

He reminded the Commissioners of their new bi-weekly meeting schedule. Their next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 25.

10. CORRESPONDENCE – none

11. PUBLIC COMMENT – none

12. PLUS DELTAS

Commissioner Fontneau wished to add the FY2022/23 Budget to their next agenda.

Commissioner Lindo thanked Commissioner Closius for his hard work compiling the information.

13. ADJOURNMENT

**M/S/C: Lindo/Khan-Bureau, to adjourn the meeting at 8:48 p.m. Discussion: None.
Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor.**

Respectfully Submitted by: Agnes T. Miyuki, Recording Secretary for the Town of Salem