

**TOWN OF SALEM
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 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
Jennifer Lindo
Walter Volberg
Gary Closius, Alternate
Steven Shelley, Alternate (*seated*)

ABSENT

Thomas Reith
Dave Knopf, 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

Alternate Commissioner Shelley was seated for Commissioner Reith.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT: *none*

4. PUBLIC HEARING: *none*

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

a. Regular Meeting Minutes: January 25, 2022

M/S/C: Gadbois/Volberg, to approve the Planning & Zoning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes of January 25, 2022. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

a. Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD)

The goal of this evening's discussion is to substantially complete Chapters 5, 8, and 9.

Chapter 5 – Historic and Archaeological Resources (Commissioners Smith & Volberg)

Chairman Smith reviewed the changes in the chapter, which includes the addition of factual information and the rewriting of some of the sections, as follows:

First page, Second paragraph, Last sentence:

~~It celebrates its 52nd anniversary in the year this document was published and~~

Applefest began in 1970 as a TCCS fundraiser by church members including Judy

Gadbois *and Priscilla Howard. We celebrated its 52nd anniversary in the year this POCD document was published.*

First page, Fifth paragraph:

Salem has always been a farming community with small population growth because of the makeup of the land *but in recent decades, Salem has become a bedroom community. Although the population has nearly tripled since the introduction of Route 11 in 1972, it maintains the attractive rural character that many cite as the reason they relocate their families here.*

The Commissioners also agreed to include the actual number of the population growth in the sentence, i.e., “has nearly tripled (*from 1,420 to 4,250 residents*) since the...”

First Page, Bottom of page (regarding Samuel M. Hopkins):

An addition was made stating that Mr. Hopkins was born in Salem.

The Whittlesey Piano Factory was moved to precede the paragraph regarding the Music Vale Seminary to place the items in chronological order.

Third Page (Music Vale Seminary):

The Seminary...educated hundreds of young women from many different parts of the country, *Canada, and the West Indies....*

Chairman Smith is in the process of searching for a more appropriate photo of the Bluebird carriage with David Wordell to replace the existing photo.

Commissioner Shelley recommended that the section begins with the Notable People in Salem, followed by its Notable Places, and moving the section regarding Hiram Bingham III to follow the paragraph regarding Samuel M. Hopkins, placing them in chronological order.

Other recommended changes included:

Page 2 (Whittlesey Brothers)

A piano factory was established...The *Fortepianos* were made of....

Page 4, Third paragraph, Add final sentence:

The Town was electrified as part of the Rural Electrification Program in 1947.

Chairman Smith will investigate the relationship between Frederick C. Rawolle, Jr., and Fairy Lake Farm.

Page 4, Final paragraph:

A list of the locations or addresses of the homes that are on the National Register of Historic Places will be added to the document. It was noted that the Town is home to other historic homes that are not included on the Register.

Commissioner Closius proposed, and the Commissioners agreed, to the following edit:

Several Salem houses...Establishment of a village center was proposed...removed from this updated version as the town~~people~~ voted not to proceed.

Chapter 8 – Housing Stock and Population Change (Commissioner Fontneau)

The Commissioners reviewed and discussed Commissioner Closius' proposed edits. Commissioner Closius questioned the consistency of the data sources. Commissioner Fontneau stated that the numbers were derived from the preliminary 2020 Census. Town Planner LaFountain added that some of the data, particularly the dollar figures, coincide with the Town's approved Affordable Housing Plan, which includes data included in the 2018 American Community Survey. Commissioner Closius' edits are from the more recent 2019 American Community Survey. He added that the American Community Survey provides more information and information that is more current than the decennial Census. He recommended that the Commission utilize the most recent numbers and reference the source(s) in a footnote. Town Planner LaFountain will double-check all of the numbers to ensure that they are the most recent.

The following sentence, which would dovetail into the related goal, was proposed to replace the numbered list:

A legislative change to the definition of Affordable Housing would greatly benefit and improve affordability options for such rural communities as Salem.

Commissioner Fontneau also proposed adding the following item to page four of the chapter regarding the need for the Town to respond to and balance the needs of the town:

9.) PZC could investigate the feasibility of changing some Rural A land to Residential A to allow for more density.

He also suggested removing the Action Step regarding changing the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations as similar verbiage is included on the previous page (number 8).

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

Commissioner Closius suggested adding the following Objective:

14.5. Objective: Improve the safety of Routes 82 and 85 that traverse the local neighborhoods of Salem

14.5.1. Recommendation: Since Route 11 will likely not be completed, the Board of Selectmen should explore limiting heavy commercial truck traffic and vehicles carrying hazardous materials on Routes 82 and 85 in Salem with the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) (Priority 1)

14.5.2. Recommendation: In order to improve the traffic flow and safety, PZC should develop a list of Salem town roads intersecting Routes 82 and 85 where left turn and turn-off lanes could be added.

14.5.3. The Board of Selectmen should continue to apply public pressure on Salem State Representatives and CTDOT to improve safety on Routes 82 and 85

Discussion ensued regarding the feasibility of adding left turn and turn-off lanes. The Commission could opt to amend the Town's Subdivision Regulations extending the width requirement for the road and allowing for the installation of a left turn/turn-off lane for new subdivisions. All roads intersecting State roads must be approved by the State, which may require a turning lane or widening of a road for an abutting town road.

Commissioner Fontneau reminded the Commission of their previous discussion to add a list of problem Town roads or intersections in either Chapter 7 or 9. Town Planner LaFountain questioned whether a listing of problem roads could lead to liability issues for the Town.

General Comments

The format of the Goals/Action Step tables was briefly discussed. Commissioner Closius questioned the titles of the table in relation to those included in the 2012 POCD (Goal, Objective, and Recommendation vs. Goal, Action Step, and Priority). He explained the need to maintain the original focus of the goals and their respective objective(s). The Commissioners agreed with the importance of maintaining clarity and consistency throughout the document.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the use of abbreviations. The Commissioners agreed that the abbreviations should be consistent throughout the document and be spelled out in each chapter.

The Commission also agreed to utilize formal verbiage such that such pronouns as "we" and "our" are not utilized. It was noted that care must be taken in the final document to ensure that the footnotes relate to the footnote number on the page.

Commissioner Closius reported that only one response was received from the boards/commissions regarding his request for the status of the 2012 POCD Goals/Objectives.

Commissioner Khan-Bureau reported that the Inland Wetlands & Conservation Commission has agreed to dedicate their next meeting to complete their review of Chapters 3, Natural Resources, and 4, Agriculture/Forestry/Open Space. She also informed the Commissioners that she extended an invitation to Chairperson Kimberly Bradley and Commissioner Ed Natoli to attend their upcoming meeting and discuss any questions they might have.

Next Chapters

The Commissioners will review and aim to complete the following chapters during their next Regular Meeting:

Chapter 6 – Economic Development (Commissioner Fontneau)

Chapter 10 – Recreation and Trails Network (Commissioner Gadbois)

Because Chapter 2 is similar to an Executive Summary, it was agreed to work on the chapter last.

Filing of the Waiver

Town Planner LaFountain will draft a letter, addressed to the Board of Selectmen, for review. The letter will request that the Board of Selectmen mail a letter to the State's Office of Policy and Management (OPM) requesting a waiver. Upon approval of the waiver, the Town would continue to be eligible for discretionary funding. The State Statute does not indicate how long the waiver would be valid. The timeline is as follows:

65 Days prior to the Deadline Date – The document must be sent to the SCCOG (Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments) for review and comment. SCCOG will review the plan to ensure its consistency with the Regional and State Plans of Conservation and Development and any issues the document might have with the neighboring towns.

Concurrently or Immediately Following SCCOG's Review – The document is forwarded to the Board of Selectmen for review and approval. The Board of Selectmen may opt to schedule a Public Hearing.

35 Days Prior to the Deadline Date – The Planning & Zoning Commission must schedule a Public Hearing. He recommended holding either a preliminary Public Hearing or Public Information Session prior to holding the Public Hearing to address the public's feedback.

It was estimated that the process would take approximately four to four-and-a-half months. The Commissioners agreed to aim to complete the document by March/April for submission in August.

7. **NEW BUSINESS** – *none*
8. **ZONING ENFORCEMENT OFFICER'S REPORT/INLAND WETLANDS AND CONSERVATION COMMISSION REPORT** – *none*
9. **TOWN PLANNER REPORT**

Town Planner LaFountain reported that 45 Forest Drive, LLC, will be submitting an application to apply the Special Agricultural Zone to the property. Their initial submission included the wrong payment amount, which has been somewhat corrected. They are also required to submit an application to the Inland Wetlands & Conservation Commission prior to

submitting an application to the Planning & Zoning Commission. He reiterated his warning to the Commission to refrain from speaking about the case outside of their meetings.

10. CORRESPONDENCE – *none*

11. PUBLIC COMMENT – *none*

12. PLUS DELTAS

Chairman Smith expressed his appreciation to the Commissioners for their input. He felt positive about their progress and looks forward to continuing the momentum.

13. ADJOURNMENT

**M/S/C: Khan-Bureau/Volberg, to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. Discussion: None.
Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor.**

Respectfully Submitted by:

Agnes T. Miyuki, Recording Secretary for the Town of Salem