

**PLAN OF CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
TOWN OF ASHFORD
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 15, 2015**

MEMORANDUM OF RECORD

Committee Members Present: Richard Williams, Chairman; Ray Fenn; Bill Darcy; Mike Gantick; Jeff Silver-Smith (Member-at-Large); John Filchak and Sam Alexander (NECCOG).

Meeting Called to Order at 7:10 PM

Discussion and General Comments

Bill Darcy handed out suggested edits of the last draft of the POCD which was emailed to members on September 14th. The Committee reviewed, revised and approved the edits as reflected in the detailed edits and comments below.

Mike Gantick suggested a revision of the road maintenance language.

Dick Williams submitted revised language for the Economic Development section which would delete references to specific properties within planning areas and their zoning classifications. NECCOG was asked to make conforming changes where such zoning references appear in other sections. Williams also submitted pictures appropriate for each of the planning areas.

Ray Fenn suggested a change in the first Economic Development issue to focus on West Ashford.

There was a discussion of how to handle PA 490 which is mentioned in the Conservation text and objective 7. It was decided to put a similar objective in the Governance section for the Board of Selectman, Board of Finance and Assessor to evaluate the tax implications of and eligibility criteria for PA 490.

Fenn and Gantick provided input from Conservation Commission members which resulted in a number of changes to the Conservation and other sections.

In response to a question from Williams, Sam Alexander reported that the Agriculture Commission was satisfied with the Agriculture section in the draft.

Williams asked for input on the Historical section from a variety of people via email, including the head of the Ashford Historical Society but has not received specific text edits, except from Sherri Much. He asked NECCOG to send the section to Barbara Metsack.

Williams noted that we still have not received a draft of the Energy section from Susan Eastwood and email communications indicated she would not submit anything until her return from out of state on September 17. The Committee requested that Williams request Eastwood to submit a draft by September 21 or NECCOG and the Committee would have to draft the Energy section.

The Committee deferred consideration of the Implementation section until the next meeting. However, Mr. Silver-Smith requested that the committee go over each Objective/Action and begin to assign responsibilities prior to the next meeting.

There was a discussion of maps and the Committee and NECCOG agreed to add maps on water quality, a parcel map with roads and structures and a natural diversity/critical habitat map.

Williams reported that the Board of Education Chairman would be submitting comments on the Education section after receiving input from school administrators.

There was a discussion of the schedule with the goal of sending P&Z members a draft soon after the September 29 meeting and posting it on the web by October 29.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM

Detailed Edits and Comments on the 9-14-15 Draft POCD

p. 3 First sentence of **Natural Resources** changed to: "Equally important to Ashford's scenic appeal and rural character are the Town's natural resources, in

its acres of dense forests, rolling hills, lakes, ponds, swamps, streams and wildlife. They are irreplaceable and deserve continued attention from Town government, as well as the State of Connecticut, local land trusts, and private stewards."

Ashford 2015 -2025 Delete last sentence. It puts too much weight on this small section, when the meat of the guidance for the future is in the substantive chapters.

p. 7. Growth Management Principle # 4. Change "of" to "or" on second line.

p. 10 Land Use and Land Cover, in first line add "ash" after "oak."

p. 13 in first paragraph "Ashford's highest point *is* Snow Hill in the *northeast* corner..."

p. 14 Future of Ashford, eliminate the comma between "technology park" and "at UCONN"

p. 16 Governance, "act legislatively in *instances* such as approving..."

p. 17 Delete first full sentence ("Because of this..."). The Ashford mill rate, as shown by the above chart, is not any more "skewed" than that of most other towns.

pp 18-19 Revise sentences starting at end of p. 18 to state, "It remains critical that the town allocate adequate funding to support a sound pavement/road surface maintenance management program to insure a safe and reliable road network. Ashford's unimproved roads provide scenic value vital to the character of the town"

pp. 23-24 Governance Add two new objectives :

"Objective 5. Assess the adequacy of the Town's infrastructure, including communications."

" Objective 6: Develop sound policies for the taxation of open space

a. The Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and Assessor should continually examine implementation of PA 490 for open space, including eligibility criteria such as acreage, area of town, and natural features."

p. 24 renumber Objective 5 to Objective 7.

p. 28 Education. Revise first sentence of second paragraph to read, "Seventy Seven percent (77%) of Ashford's budgeted expenditures are for education."

p. 30 Regional School District 19, Objective 3 a, delete "one of" from sentence.

p. 31 Economic Development, revise from last sentence of first paragraph to next paragraph as follows:

Concentrating commercial and industrial uses in ~~commercial-designated locations zones~~ also minimizes impacts to farmland, forests, and aesthetics and will lessen long-term development pressures on the stewards of those resources.

The ~~Planning and Zoning Commission and previous 2005~~ POCDs ~~have~~ created three primary ~~commercial-economic development~~ zones in Town, the general commercial zone along state routes 44 and 74 in Warrentonville and West Ashford, the interstate commercial and industrial zone near exit 72 on I-84 and an technology development zone on the Western border of the Town, the former Wagon Shed properties. These economic development zones (generally called Special Planning Areas (SPAs) have been retained in the current (2015) POCD. Each of these ~~Special Planning Areas (SPAs)~~ have special characteristics, issues and goals which are described in write ups following the "Principal Objectives of Economic Development" below.

The first of the **Issues** is revised to read, "Vacancy of existing West Ashford commercial space gives negative impression of the area market and discourages new business development."

p. 33 Warrentonville-West Ashford, remove coloring of individual parcels on map.

p. 35 Wagon Shed Properties, on map make the wagon shed property a muted color. Do not show dotted line in Willington and on title below map delete "TD zoning district on the former"

In second sentence substitute "designated" for "zoned."

p. 37 Interstate 84 Interchange. On map remove all shading of the parcels. Dotted lines should not extend into Union

Vision statement, add "industrial" between "scale" and "businesses."

The first sentence should be revised as follows: The Interstate 84 Interchange Special Planning Area includes the properties at and around Route 89 and I84 Exit 72. ~~the Interstate Interchange Development (IID) Zone on Ashford's zoning map.~~

The last sentence of the first paragraph should read, " Interstate travel, and the SPAs position in a remote corner of Town present an excellent opportunity for recruiting commercial and industrial businesses with minimal impact to farmland, forests, and residential properties in interior portions of Town.

Delete the second paragraph.

pp. 37-38 Delete the last paragraph extending to p. 38

P. 38 Add a new paragraph, as follows: "Although the SPA is remote from most of the rest of the Town, it is also a gateway into Ashford for people entering from the Interstate. Hence, efforts should be made to preserve the scenic beauty. Likewise any economic development should be mindful of the environmentally sensitive resources in and around this SPA.

Objective 3 b, delete end of sentence words, " such as Morey Pond, the Mount Hope River, and wetlands on Frontage Road."

p. 41 Land Use Regulations Objective 2 a, substitute "Consider" for "Review" and change "district" to "districts."

p. 52 Open Space, next to last sentence at the end revise to "open space pursuant to PA 490 (Connecticut General Statutes Sections 12-107a through 107f)."

p. 55 Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Commission. The second sentence should start, "The Commission has the authority....". In the next sentence Commission should be capitalized.

p. 57 Objective 3 a add to end of sentence "and increase signage of access areas."

Objective 3. c, delete "Murder Lane"

Objective 4, change to town wide goal, "Assure the future usefulness of the town's water resources for recreation and natural qualities."

Objective 4 c, revise to state, "Continue water quality testing of Lake Chafee, Ashford Lake and the Mount Hope River."

Objective 5, revise to state, "Protect animal habitat and diversity."

Add sub-objective in Natural Resources section,

"Consider the recommendations of the Open Space Master Plan."

"Consider the proliferation of invasive plants in the natural landscape."

"Consider the fragmentation of open space and wildlife."

p. 60. Other Historic Sites, delete reference to the Ashford Oak.

p. 64 Ashford 2015-2025, Land Use, only the first paragraph is tabled, the remaining two paragraphs are okay.

Maps will be added on water quality, a parcel map with roads and structures and a natural diversity/critical habitat map