

**PLAN OF CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
TOWN OF ASHFORD
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 9, 2015**

MEMORANDUM OF RECORD

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

Meeting Called to Order at 7:07 PM

Discussion and General Comments

Chairman Williams told NECCOG that the last draft of the Exec. Summary, Introduction, and Governance chapters of the POCD transmitted yesterday (Sept. 8) did not include a number of the Committee edits as delineated in the Memorandum of Record of the August 31 meeting. The Committee agreed. NECCOG said that would be remedied in the next draft.

Ray Fenn said he had some suggested edits of the Natural Resources section of the draft POCD that were submitted by a member of the Conservation Commission (CC). It was agreed that the matter should be first considered by the Conservation Commission and if there was a consensus of the Conservation Commission their comments would be considered by the Committee. Since the CC is meeting next Monday he will have all revisions to that chapter in time for our next meeting.

Fenn also submitted a draft "Public Safety and Health" Chapter, but he was still awaiting input on the section by a number of Town fire and emergency personnel. NECCOG will beef up the draft and include it in the next POCD draft.

Williams reported that he had received an email from Susan Eastwood stating that she would be on vacation until Sept. 17 and would not have anything to submit on the Energy section until her return. Williams requested that she submit whatever notes and materials she had so NECCOG could start drafting the section. Fenn noted he had previously provided Eastwood with a template of how the section should be drafted.

Williams stated he had prepared an article for the Ashford Citizen on the POCD and stated in the article that there would be a draft of the POCD ready for public comment in October.

The schedule was discussed with the goal of finishing up the final edits on the POCD at the Sept. 29 meeting with a final draft completed by October 2. NECCOG felt this was doable if all of the other commissions and organizations submitted their comments and input in a timely manner. If the schedule slip more than a few days then we will be up against the holidays, and final approval may slip to after the first of the year. We will continue to assess the schedule at the next meeting on September 15, 2015.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM

Detailed Edits and Comments on the 8/31/15 Draft POCD (continued)

The following edits and comments continue in the draft where the Committee stopped at the end of the 8/31/15 meeting. See the minutes of the 8/31/15 meeting for similar info on the first part of the draft.

HOUSING (p. 45-47) General agreement that the description was okay, so focus was on objectives.

- Obj. 2a is inconsistent with current Town and PZC policy. Presently the policy is to restrict construction on the small parcels because they are not large enough to adequately support septic. NECCOG to re-write to reflect zoning changes that protect the water quality of the lakes.

AGRICULTURE (p. 48-51) There was agreement that the text of the section was okay and subject to Agriculture Commission comment, but there was discussion of some of the Objectives (p. 51)

- Jeff Silver-Smith suggested the addition of a new objective (inserted after Obj. 1a). to read, "Seek additional ways to support and promote Ashford's Farmers Market" to which the Committee agreed.
- Obj. 1d add the following to the end of sentence "subject to balancing the interests of existing residential properties."

NATURAL RESOURCES (p. 52-62) The Committee wanted to add the role of the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission. Ray Fenn was to submit a copy of this section to the Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commissions for review.

- p. 58. The text should state the percentage of the Town's land (most of it) which is subject to open space protection.
- There was considerable discussion of the application of Public Act 490 and its impact on tax revenues. The Committee agreed to add an objective, "Determine in cooperation with the Board of Selectman, Board of Finance, Assessor and Planning and Zoning Commission how to apply PA 490 open spaces policy. "
- The chapter should also reference the Conservation Commission's recently developed Open Space Plan.

HISTORIC RESOURCES (p. 64-67) The major objectives should center on preserving the Westford and Ashford Center Villages; preserving existing historic buildings, and stone walls. There is considerable information about the town's historical activities on the Historical Society's website and in the materials collected as part of the Ashford's 300 Years book which is being written by the 300th Anniversary Committee. The United Baptist Church of Ashford is now named Living Proof Church. Use the current name and state formerly called the United Baptist Church of Ashford. The town historian and Historical Society should be asked for input on this chapter.

- p. 64 refers to the Tremko-Stebbins House as "recently renovated" when only the outside of the building was worked upon and building needs considerable more work to make it a useable museum or archiving documents. Should say "recently renovated exterior to "eventually" serve as the headquarters for the Historical Society.
- p. 66 Substitute in the Vision statement either "historic" or "traditional steepled" for "white" churches.
- Delete in Issues "Ashford Oak is dying."

Historic SPAs It is appropriate to call Westford a historical village. Warrenton is a town center with several period and historic properties. There is little left of the historic Ashford Center but we should protect what's left.

- p. 67 Revise Objective 1 *d* to "Consider prohibiting further commercial development near and adjacent to existing historic buildings in Ashford Center."
- Delete Objective 1 *e*

ASHFORD 2015-2025 (pp. 69-81) **Land Use** Table the first paragraph of this section pending P&Z review of the topic. Second paragraph revise to state "Ashford's *commercially and* industrially zoned locations" and make that change throughout the document. **Land**

Preservation first line, change "for" to "or."

- p. 70 **Delete** the build out analysis and related maps on pp. 74-78. Instead add an objective to this section that states - "Consider working with NECCOG to develop a build of the Town that would be done in concert with planning activities proposed for the SPA's"
- Add a second objective - "Periodically reviewed and update the POCD as the economic and regulatory environment evolves."
- p. 71 Revise map legend to state "Industrial *and Commercial* Development."

Plan Implementation

- We need to go over all of these assignments once all of the objectives are finalized.
- Note the assignments for each objective in the body of the POCD
- Note that present assignments do not include anything for the BOF.