

**PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT
IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 2020 – 6 PM
Virtual/Remote Meeting**

Assistant City Planner Dan Daniska read information pertaining to virtual meetings and clearly stated that the meeting, including video, will be recorded.

A. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Frank Manfredi called at the meeting to order at 6: 00 PM.

B. INTRODUCTIONS OF MEMBERS AND GUEST PARTICIPANTS:

Present: Committee on the City Plan: Chair Frank Manfredi and Vice Chair Les King, Harbor Management Commission: Tucker Braddock and Geoff Steadman, City Council: Alderman Mark Bettencourt, Norwich Public Utilities: General Manager Chris LaRose (entered the meeting at 6:38 PM)

Others Present: City Planner Deanna Rhodes and Assistant City Planner Dan Daniska

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: May 13, 2020

On a motion by Tucker Braddock, seconded by Les King, the commission unanimously approved the minutes of the Norwich Plan of Conservation and Development: Plan Implementation Committee (POCD PIC) meeting of May 13, 2020.

D. OLD BUSINESS: None presented.

E. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Review & Discuss: Chapter entitled "Leverage Assets" - Sections entitled "Protect Natural Resources" and "Protect Coastal Resources" - Pages 24-26 of Implementation Element & Pages 56-59 of Strategic Element Subsections:

Per agreement of POCD-PIC members, consultant to the Harbor Management Commission Geoff Steadman gave a presentation to address the elements of protecting natural and coastal resources in the POCD. A PowerPoint presentation was displayed. The Harbor Management Plan compliments the POCD and is currently being updated by the Harbor Management Commission. It highlights the wonderful opportunities of the harbor which include public waterfront access, waterfront development and environmental enhancement.

Throughout the presentation, Mr. Steadman reviewed the history of the development of the plan according to state guidelines, and with municipality control, which was adopted twenty-four years ago. The plan is still applicable with updates and modifications as necessary to support the Norwich Harbor. The plan's primary goals are safety, protect the environment and beneficial use of the waterfront. The presentation addressed the implementation and next steps of the POCD elements.

The presentation also reviewed a separate document that has been prepared by the Harbor Management Commission (HMC) to supplement the Harbor Management Plan. The Waterfront Vision was endorsed by the City Council. It frames preferred utilization of specific waterfront areas. This document supports economic development of the harbor.

The HMC has planned the repair of the docks at Howard T. Brown Park on the harbor. The Connecticut Port Authority has approved a grant for the repair, with matching funds that have been approved from the city. Two other priority areas in the Vision are the Shipping Street and New Wharf areas. New flood plain maps have hindered redevelopment efforts.

Mr. Steadman noted the eagerness of the HMC to work with the Department of Planning and Neighborhood Services in updating the HMC.

City Planner Deanna Rhodes noted that the two areas, New Wharf and Shipping Street, are privately owned. Discussion ensued on challenges relating to development of these properties, including flood plains and flood ways, and the need for environmental clean-up that the state's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) will not fund at this time.

Protect Natural Resources:

A: Protect Natural Resources

A1. Strive to preserve significant natural resources such as wetlands, watercourses, steep slopes, 100-year floodplains, and areas identified in the "natural diversity database" maintained by DEEP.

Mr. Daniska reported that the city has been working towards this.

A2. Continue efforts to clean up contaminated landfill and "brownfield" sites.

Ms. Rhodes reported that extensive work has been done by her department and the city's Redevelopment Agency.

A3. Continue efforts to improve water quality.

Mr. Daniska noted this is routinely done by Norwich Public Utility staff. NPU General Manager Chris LaRose reported the long-term control plan has been updated with DEEP. In 2021 the sewer plant upgrade will start. This will improve water quality in the harbor. Mr. LaRose offered to attend a HMC meeting to answer questions about this control plan, which will be referenced in the updated Harbor Management Plan.

A4. Maintain a program for periodic cleaning of storm sewers and drainage systems.

City Public Works staff continually do this.

A5. Consider adopting a septic management ordinance to help protect water quality in rural areas.

Mr. Daniska noted this has not be addressed. Ms. Rhodes noted her staff could talk with Uncas Health District about this element.

A6. Make regulatory changes as necessary to ensure consideration of significant and important natural resources as part of reviewing development proposals.

At the staff level, Mr. Daniska noted, this is done with each application.

A7. Seek ways to enable redevelopment of historic properties located in floodplain areas.

Mr. Daniska noted there are active projects under this element and projects are ongoing.

A8. Address invasive species.

Mr. Daniska noted that this has not been actively addressed.

Protect Coastal Resources:

Mr. Daniska noted that these elements were addressed in the Harbor Management Plan presentation and earlier comments within the meeting.

A. Protect Coastal Resources

A1. Continue to implement state and federal programs for coastal management.

A2. Continue to improve coastal water quality.

A3. Evaluate the long-term implications of sea-level rise.

Mr. Daniska noted the importance of this issue and said the city is actively addressing it.

B. Plan for Waterfront Areas

B1. Promote and preserve waterfront areas for water dependent uses.

B2. Secure additional public access along the waterfront.

B3. Continue to support dredging efforts for maritime navigation.

B4. Implement the Harbor Management Commission's vision plan.

B5. Revisit the extent of the Waterfront Development (WD) zoning designation and consider applying it only on properties with direct waterfront access.

Next Steps and Accountability for Section - "Protect Natural Resources" and "Protect Coastal Resources":
These topics were covered in the discussions during the meeting.

2. Round Table: Reports from Committee Members and Guests

Chair Manfredi referred to communication that was sent to the POCD-PIC members from Bill Champagne. He presented an idea for dinner cruises in the harbor, with potentially an historic ship. He mentioned the potential for the Sachem Fund to pay for a feasibility study. Mr. Bhatia asked for traffic counts or user data in the harbor to support development. Discussion ensued and it was determined that the HMC had a study of similar nature performed a few years ago. Mr. Steadman will review his records for a copy of the study and send it to Ms. Rhodes.

F: OTHER ITEMS

- 1. Meeting Reminder for September 9, 2020:** Prepare to Review & Discuss Chapter entitled "Promote Sustainability" - Sections entitled "Promote Agriculture" and "Promote Ecological Sustainability" - Pages 27-28 of Implementation Element & Pages 60-61 of Strategic Element.

G. ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion by Tucker Braddock, seconded by Swarnjit Singh Bhatia, the POCD PIC meeting adjourned at 6:54 PM.

*Respectfully submitted,
Melinda Wilson
Recording Secretary*