

MINUTES OF PLANNING BOARD  
REGULAR MEETING - TUESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2000  
7th FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM, GOVERNMENT CENTER  
888 WASHINGTON BLVD., STAMFORD, CT

Present for the Board were: Marggie Laurie, Acting Chairman; John Garnjost; Jack Rich; Tim Abbazia; Duane Hill; and Helane Rheingold. Present for staff were: Robin Stein, Land Use Bureau Chief; and Carol Davis, Senior Planner.

Mrs. Laurie opened the meeting at 7:30 PM.

Consultants, John Shapiro and Mike Berne from Abeles Phillips Preiss & Shapiro and Robert Lane, Jeff Zupan and Robert Yaro of the Regional Plan Association, presented an update on the work they have been doing for Master Plan 2000. They said that the Quinnipiac survey showed housing and traffic to be the main problem areas and that the locational advantages ranked among assets. Mr. Zupan said it is significant that respondents cited traffic problems within the downtown over those related to I-95 and the Parkway and he suggested that a poll of those who do not reside in the City may have been different.

Mr. Hill asked if the sample was representative of the City's diversity. Mr. Yaro said it was a stratified sample.

Mr. Lane reviewed material submitted by Chris Jones regarding economic growth. He showed a model of the central city and maps showing where there is growth potential. He said his land use survey indicates office growth capacity of 10 million square feet. He said there is 1.4 million sq. ft. of industrial capacity but that economic projections show no increased demand. He said the question is where would the growth go and what would it look like. He said housing and quality of life issues must be addressed.

Mrs. Laurie asked if a population increase would require more schools and open space. Mr. Lane explained that institutional growth is schools and hospitals and that housing will be a major constraint.

The three growth management models were reviewed. Mr. Hill asked how the models are driven and Mr. Shapiro explained that the no growth scenario would require up zoning to suppress the market and the market would be pumped up for the vigorous growth alternative. He said the middle alternative would mean continuance of present policies. Mr. Yaro said growth is predicated on regional trends, that Stamford can grab more or less growth with some caveats like transportation and affordable housing.

The consultants emphasized that once an attitude is adopted the details can be worked out. Mr. Lane said this is not a matter of picking one scenario but more a series of contingent statements. Mr. Shapiro said there will be an ideological divide but that the plan should move beyond pendulum swings.

Mr. Hill said that discussion should address quality of life in neighborhoods.

Mrs. Laurie asked about the effect of ferry service on traffic. Mr. Zupan said it will fill a niche but will not have a big effect on traffic. Mr. Shapiro said the primary benefit will be to offices. Steven McKensie, Director of Economic Development, commented he favors the ferry because companies make many airport trips.

Mr. Shapiro said the next round of neighborhood meetings will deal with specific problems in the neighborhoods. He said the advisory group will have a presentation on the growth alternatives.

Mrs. Laurie said the neighborhoods must be informed about the growth issues as well. Mr. Shapiro said this would be covered in the third round. Mr. Lane said the consequences of the scenarios should be presented to the neighborhoods.

Mr. Garnjost asked for a time line and Mr. Stein asked for real life examples of the three alternatives.

Mr. Zupan described the traffic studies done by Taub Assoc. He said they studied 20 intersections and that with the no growth option a .75% increase was anticipated at each intersection by the year 2020. He explained that while the map exaggerates congestion a lower level of service will reduce development. He said infrastructure improvements to ease traffic congestion will be required with new development.

In answer to Mrs. Laurie, Mr. Zupan explained that it is not possible to predict how long it would take to get from one point to another but that it may be possible to predict how many lights it would take to get through an intersection. He explained that improvement of one problem may lead to another.

Mr. Stein asked what effect technological change will have on future plans. Mr. Shapiro said there may be restructuring over 20 years. Mr. Yaro said the plan should build on assets and anticipate the effects of change.

Mr. Zupan said if selling downtown is important the downtown should be attractive with attention to pedestrian safety and other amenities. Mr. Yaro suggested that as the downtown becomes more attractive parking can be moved to the periphery and there will be fewer auto trips within the city.

Mr. Lane said he cannot locate enough housing sites to accommodate the increased employment. Mr. McKensie said from the standpoint of attracting new business the housing shortage and lack of commercial space are bigger problems than I-95. He expressed his concern that informed decisions be made.

There was discussion about what products should be released and Mr. Stein emphasized that it is critical how the message is disseminated. It was agreed that the survey be released on January 27. Mr. Yaro said he would attempt a media event with the mayor and president of Quinnipiac for the release.

## Old Business

Mr. Stein said the appeal of MP-364 will go to the Board of Representatives on February 3. Mrs. Laurie said she and Mrs. Davis will attend.

Mr. Stein said a public hearing is scheduled on the Efron subdivision for January 25 but may not take place if the applicant withdraws. Mr. Stein said a public hearing for the Scarborough subdivision is scheduled for February 1 preceding the Budget hearing. It was agreed that this hearing should be held in a location other than the cafeteria.

Mr. Stein reported that Mr. Rozier has submitted his resignation to the mayor and that the Board of Finance has set the safe debt limit at \$29 million. He suggested inviting the Board of Representatives Land Use Committee to the next meeting with the Master Plan consultants.

There being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 10:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marggie Laurie, Acting Chairman  
Stamford Planning Board