

TOWN OF WESTERLY  
**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Regular Meeting – January 25, 2017 – 6:00 p.m.  
Development Services Conference Room – Town Hall

**A. 6:00 P.M. CALL TO ORDER**

**Members Present:** Gail Mallard, Chair  
Joseph T. MacAndrew, Vice Chair  
Faith Bessette-Zito  
Stuart Blackburn  
James J. Federico, III  
Nancy N. Richmond (entered 6:04 p.m.)

**Members Absent:** Gina T. Fuller

**Liaisons Present:** Catherine DeNoia, Planning Board (entered 6:01 p.m.)

**Staff Present:** Jason Parker, Town Planner  
Benjamin Delaney, Recording Secretary

**B. 6:00 P.M. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2017 meeting was made by Mr. MacAndrew and seconded by Mr. Federico. By a unanimous vote, the motion was **CARRIED**.

**C. 6:00 P.M. DISCUSSION – FUTURE MEETINGS**

The committee was in consensus to meet every second and fourth Wednesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. in the Development Services Conference Room until its review of the draft Comprehensive Plan was completed.

**D. 6: 02 P.M. DISCUSSION – COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

***Appendix I – Economic Vitality chapter***

***3.4.3 Statewide Growth Center***

Ms. Bessette-Zito noted the Rhode Island Enterprise Zone program was repealed by legislation.

Mr. Parker recommended the draft be revised to include the sentence “That legislation has since been repealed.”

***3.4.5 Downtown Revitalization***

Mr. MacAndrew recommended “...actively sought as of spring 2016.” be revised as “...actively sought as of spring 2018.” He questioned if the subsection on the Westerly Land Trust should be included as it was a non-profit organization and the Westerly Municipal Land Trust was not mentioned.

Mr. Federico confirmed the Westerly Municipal Land Trust owned properties by Pierce Street and did not have a designated urban program.

Ms. Mallard stated her understanding Westerly Land Trust was included due to its urban program engagement.

Ms. Bessette-Zito noted she had contacted Wendy Brown, President of the Westerly-Pawcatuck Downtown Business Association, asking if she was interested in providing text regarding the association and was awaiting a response.

Mr. MacAndrew recommended "The DBA has..." be revised as "The Westerly-Pawcatuck Downtown Business Association (DBA) has..." and "...such as the Chamber." be revised as "...such as the Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce."

### **3.5.1 Employment Rate Comparison**

Mr. Parker clarified for Mr. MacAndrew, regarding "Since 2010, the local..." his understanding the sentence was stating the local unemployment rate had fallen behind the state unemployment rate since 2010.

Ms. Mallard noted "Westerly traditionally has..." did not identify the local unemployment rate.

Mr. Parker stated his understanding the sentence referred to a general trend.

Ms. DeNoia questioned if the statistics included seasonal adjustment.

Mr. Parker citing a publication, stated Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training reported 2014 unemployment for Westerly was eight percent and unemployment for the state was six-and-one-half percent while 2015 unemployment for Westerly was six-and-one-tenth percent and unemployment for the state was four-and-nine-tenths percent.

Mr. MacAndrew recommended "...20 percent lower than the..." be revised as "...20 percent higher than the..."

Mr. Delaney recalled "Westerly traditionally has... the statewide rate." referred to pre-recession statistics and stated he would confirm this.

Mr. Parker revised the text to clarify pre-recession and post-recession trends and cite the statistics provided in the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training publication. He clarified the unemployment rates in the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training publication were for the month of November.

Ms. Mallard recommended the unemployment rates be cited in the text.

### **3.4.6 Real Jobs RI**

Ms. DeNoia recommended the text be revised to state the Westerly Regional Real Jobs Partnership program was ongoing, noting training classes were being held at the Jonnycake Center of Westerly.

### **3.5.2 Westerly Industry Overview**

Mr. Delaney confirmed for Ms. Mallard he would verify the Number of Employees by Industry, 2005-2014 and the Number and Percent Increase of Establishments, 2005-2014 tables.

### **3.5.4 Income**

Mr. Delaney clarified for Ms. Bessette-Zito the general differences between median household income and median family income. He confirmed for Ms. Mallard clarifying text would be provided for

the draft.

Additional discussion was held regarding median household and family incomes.

### **3.5.5 Statewide Business Incentives**

Mr. Parker recommended "R&D Tax Credit" be revised as "Research and Development Tax Credit."

Ms. Bessette-Zito questioned if the historic preservation tax credit for rehabilitating 19 High Street was allocated.

Ms. Richmond noted the text did not provide the status of 19 High Street's rehabilitation.

### **Appendix I - Natural Resources chapter**

Mr. MacAndrew stated he had sent out draft text about the Charlestown moraine for the committee to consider including in the draft plan. He recommended the draft text be included under 4.2 Hydrology, before 4.2.1 Watersheds.

Ms. DeNoia recommended the draft text be included under 4.2.1 Watershed, after the first paragraph.

Mr. Delaney clarified the Pawcatuck watershed referred to the watershed within Connecticut and Rhode Island while the Wood-Pawcatuck watershed referred to the portion of the watershed only in Rhode Island.

Additional discussion was held regarding the watershed, its name(s) and its relation to the potential federal designation of the Wood-Pawcatuck watershed as Wild and Scenic.

Ms. Mallard recommended "The Pawcatuck Watershed encompasses..." be revised as "The Pawcatuck watershed (also referred to as the Wood-Pawcatuck watershed) encompasses..."

### **4.2.2 Surface Water**

Ms. Mallard noted section 4.2.1 Watersheds cited three saltwater ponds present in Westerly and section 4.2.2 introduced a fourth saltwater pond, Little Maschaug Pond.

Ms. DeNoia stated the oceanographic definition of saltwater ponds.

Ms. Mallard stated the draft did not clarify Maschaug Pond, Quonochontaug Pond and Winnapaug Pond were partially or wholly in Westerly.

Ms. DeNoia confirmed Maschaug Pond should be identified as a lagoon as there was no natural opening to Block Island Sound.

Mr. Parker conducted a map search of Little Maschaug Pond for visual reference.

Mr. Federico recommended "...is also Little Maschaug Pond located in close proximity to Maschaug Pond." be revised as "...is also Little Maschaug Pond located east of Maschaug Pond."

Ms. Mallard confirmed the draft Surface Water map identified Little Maschaug Pond.

### **4.2.3 Groundwater**

Ms. Mallard questioned the accuracy of the sentence "During severe drought conditions,..." and stated her understanding groundwater provided flow in streams during severe drought.

Mr. Parker questioned the phrasing of "conversely recharge."

Ms. DeNoia noted the Pawcatuck River could recharge to some extent.

Ms. Mallard recommended the sentence be revised as "...rivers can recharge groundwater."  
The committee was in consensus to eliminate the sentence.

Mr. Parker, noting the long-term maintenance and effectiveness of the Comprehensive Plan, suggested other referenced plans should be incorporated in a manner equivalent to a third appendix.

Ms. DeNoia stated the draft needed to reference other plans to provide a strong foundation for the Planning Board to make future decisions.

Ms. Mallard questioned if the proposed appendix should include the full text of all referenced plans.

Ms. DeNoia suggested an executive summary of referenced plans be included.

Mr. Parker suggested the Planning Office maintain a central depository of all referenced plans. He confirmed for Ms. DeNoia the Town's online geographic information system did not include an aquifer overlay.

Ms. Mallard suggested the third appendix list critical documents by title.

Mr. MacAndrew recommended a page be created on the Town's website to serve as a central repository.

Mr. Parker confirmed for Ms. DeNoia the GeoInsight report referenced in the draft plan was not currently available digitally.

Mr. MacAndrew and Ms. DeNoia overviewed the GeoInsight reports for the committee.

Ms. Mallard noted the GeoInsight report was not referenced in the draft plan.

Mr. Parker noted an online repository would require maintenance and might be abandoned in the future. He suggested the repository be limited only to plans initiated or accepted by the Town.

Additional discussion was held regarding the draft plan's reference to reports and if and how succeeding and future reports by consultants should be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Parker confirmed for Mr. MacAndrew there was no central online repository of plans.

Ms. DeNoia recommended committee members review the GeoInsight reports.

Mr. MacAndrew recommended the draft plan support the creation and maintenance of a central online repository of adopted reports.

Mr. Parker stated hyperlinks could be inserted into the digital copy of the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Mallard questioned if links to reports by agencies and organizations other than the Town should be provided.

Mr. MacAndrew recommended all reports adopted by the Town Council should be linked in the digital copy of the Comprehensive Plan.

Additional discussion was held regarding the draft plan's reference to reports and if and how succeeding and future reports by consultants should be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Federico suggested reports not adopted by the Town be identified as non-binding recommendations.

Mr. Parker stated only adopted reports should be referenced.

Ms. DeNoia questioned if reports being referenced in the draft plan would become binding as a result of the plan's adoption by the Town Council.

Mr. MacAndrew recommended the discussion be tabled to a future meeting.

Ms. Mallard recommended "The ability of... though system disinfection has had some impacts on water quality in some areas of Town." be revised as "The ability of... through system disinfection."

#### **4.3 Stressors**

Ms. Mallard confirmed for Mr. MacAndrew the text cited industrial wastewater as a stressor.

Ms. Bessette-Zito questioned if there were any updates regarding the Engineering Department's program for addressing requirements of the Rhode Island Cesspool Act of 2007.

Mr. Parker stated his understanding the State was targeting known cesspools statewide and the Town's Engineering Department had been planning to take part in the septic system loan program. He confirmed he would seek confirmation on the status of the Engineering Department's involvement in the program. He confirmed for Mr. Blackburn the Town did not have a program for inspecting septic systems.

Ms. DeNoia recommended "Westerly's water supply... in Bradford, Crandall Swamp and White Rock." be revised as "Westerly's water supply... in White Rock, with additional capacity at Bradford and Crandall Swamp." because most of the water supply was sourced from White Rock.

Mr. MacAndrew suggested the White Rock wellheads and the percentages of the total water supply produced by each be included in the draft plan.

Ms. DeNoia stated zoning regulations should not allow commercial and industrial uses above the aquifer.

Mr. Parker suggested "this presents a... road salt runoff." be revised as "this presents a substantial risk of contamination from other factors such as hazardous waste spills, leaking underground storage tanks (LUSTs) and road salt runoff."

Mr. MacAndrew stated the Town should comply with its ordinances regarding the school bus garage to serve as an example for others to comply.

Mr. Parker confirmed for Ms. Mallard the Zoning Code precluded certain uses in its wellhead protection areas but did not preclude all uses of concern.

Ms. DeNoia and Mr. MacAndrew stated their concerns with the effect of blasting activities on the White Rock wells and a lack of Town monitoring. Mr. MacAndrew noted the GeoInsight reports identified the White Rock wells as fragile.

Ms. Richmond recommended the text be revised to include the sentence "Special consideration should be taken to preserve the wellhead protection area in White Rock."

The committee was in consensus for Mr. Parker to revise the text with the condition the meaning of the text would not be changed.

Mr. MacAndrew recommended reference to the Noyes Avenue wellhead protection area be eliminated.

Mr. Parker noted the Noyes Avenue wellhead protection area may still be identified by the state. He stated his expectation, citing "RIDEM requires municipalities... by RI Health," that the state would require plans to note some level of protection of such areas.

Mr. MacAndrew recommended the text be revised to include a statement the Town will comply with state regulations for the management of wellhead protection areas.

Ms. Mallard noted the age of the municipality and its historical development. She recommended the text be revised to include a statement regarding new development and changes in land use.

Mr. MacAndrew recommended a policy or action item be drafted regarding wellhead protection

area management. He questioned what actions the Town could have taken to prevent blasting near or within the wellhead protection area.

**E. 8:08 P.M. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**F. 8:08 P.M. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. MacAndrew and seconded by Ms. Richmond. By a unanimous vote, the motion was **CARRIED**.

Minutes for the January 25, 2017 regular meeting submitted by:



Benjamin Delaney