

**PLANNING COMMISSION – Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, October 24, 2023, at 7:00 P.M.**  
**Public Meeting was held in FSPL Room – Simsbury Public Library**  
**725 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT 06070**

**I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chair Leavitt-Smith called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Town Planner, George McGregor; Assistant Town Planner, Brittany MacGilpin; Planning Consultant, Glenn Chalder; Planning Chair, Erin Leavitt-Smith; Planning Secretary, William Rice; Planning Commission Members: Holly Beum, Joseph Campolieta, Donald Colantonio, and Julie Eaton. Planning Commission Alternates: Marcus Furze, and Craig MacCormac.

**II. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**2022-2023 Draft Plan of Conservation and Development**

Mr. Chalder presented the community with an overview of the POCD.

- **Over-arching Principles:** Livability; Sustainability; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; and Well-Being (Environmental, Social, Economic).
- **Five Major Sections:**
  - **Introduction:** Summary, evaluation of current condition and trends in community, things that are changing, and observations from community engagement activities.
  - **Conservation:** Natural resources, open space, ambience,
  - **Development:** Promoting a sense of “place” in the different villages, economic, housing needs, and sustainability.
  - **Infrastructure:** Town facilities, transportation, utilities, and land use
  - **Looking Ahead:** Policies and action steps.

**PUBLIC AUDIENCE**

**Jeff Dornenburg, 225 Old Farms Road, Simsbury**, stated as Chair of the Performing Arts Center they have been waiting 15 years for the center to be finished. Between the events Simsbury puts on and the Hartford Symphony using the facility in the summers, it greatly contributes to the economy and is worth taking care of.

**Sally Rieger, 9 Stodmor Road, Simsbury**, spoke as Simsbury’s Representative in the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild & Scenic Committee. On page 32, under “Water Resurces” the first line reads, “The Farmington River is the main watercourse in Simsbury,” when it should read, “The federally designated wild and scenic Farmington River is the main water course in Simsbury.” She stated it being federally designated is important because that means there are certain obligations to

47 focus on funding for the river's preservation while also positively reflecting Simsbury's  
48 preservation efforts. She also wanted the bullet point "Wild and Science River (2019),"  
49 on page 34 to read, "A federally designated "Wild and Scenic River" (2019)". She also  
50 wanted the LFRSWS to be listed on the last page under "Legend for Leaders / Partners".  
51

52 **Susan Masino, 41 Madison Lane, West Simsbury**, stated that she was speaking on  
53 behalf of the Open Space Committee, as well as herself. She stated that the inventory  
54 of the open space resources needs to be listed, as it is a part of "Sustainable  
55 Connecticut" requirements. She encouraged the establishment of a greenway system  
56 on both track rock bridges. Open Space wants the POCD to be reviewed and updated  
57 in five years, as opposed to ten. Because there are many evictions in Simsbury, she  
58 suggested rental assistance programs so that current residents will not have to leave.  
59 She noticed mislabeling on the "Community Assets Map." She also wanted more  
60 clarity on when and how the public can submit comments before public hearings. She  
61 encouraged an expert to come in and discuss sustainability claims that the Town makes  
62 for projects. She wants the Town to focus more on using buildings that are already built  
63 in creative ways, such as having people live together in the larger vacant homes that  
64 we have. She offered her report "Wildlands in New England" as an educational tool  
65 and suggested the POCD include links to outside learning sources.  
66

67 **Tucker Salls, 11 Tunxis Place, Tariffville**, reiterated the importance of using existing  
68 structures for affordable housing options, especially in the town center, which would  
69 be helpful for the businesses there.  
70

71 **Diana Yeisley, 78 County Road, Simsbury**, stated that as Chair of the Aging and  
72 Disability Commission she was happy to see the focus on housing, transportation, and  
73 ADA enhancements for buildings that currently do not meet the requirements. She  
74 stated that the Town Hall, Senior Center, and Simsbury Meadows all have accessibility  
75 issues. She encouraged a focus on accessibility with recreational facilities. Her  
76 commission is working on Simsbury meeting the requirements to be designated by  
77 AARP as an "Age-Friendly Community" and Dial-by-drive cannot be the only  
78 transportation service in town. Not having transportation services impacts the  
79 involvement and employment of those who are seniors and/or disabled.  
80

81 **Sharon Thomas, 42 Brettonwood Drive, Simsbury**, reiterated the importance of  
82 transportation. She advocated for the "8 Domains of Livability" to be noted throughout  
83 the POCD, as well as more clarification of what "livability" means and what  
84 Simsbury's livability index is.  
85

86 **Susan Van Kleef, 6 Mallard Circle, Tariffville**, stated that there are inconsistencies  
87 with the words "ecological" and "environmental" and has a copy of the POCD with her  
88 revisions available. She also reworded the description of "Climate Change" on page  
89 102. She requested that "climate change" be mentioned more throughout the POCD.  
90 She explained that the Sustainability Committee does have standards and would like  
91 those referred to and included in the Zoning Commissions decision making process.

92 She also urged electrical charging stations for cars be put back in as an action step by  
93 the Sustainability Committee.  
94

95 **Nicole Kodak , 231 Old Farms Road, Simsbury**, stated as Co-Chair of the DEI  
96 Council, the importance of affordable housing, and will be presenting a study they did  
97 at the Board of Selectmen meeting on November 13<sup>th</sup>. She stated that residents have  
98 inquired about a shared outdoor community center, like the Meadows, that they can  
99 afford and access. On page 98 she wanted specific suggestions for the Affordable  
100 Housing Committee's makeup and advocated for the inclusion of DEI Council to have  
101 meetings with Planning Commission and Zoning Commission. She encouraged that a  
102 more specific and directive word than "consider" be used throughout the POCD. She  
103 stated multi-family properties and mixed-use vacancies need to be considered for  
104 affordable housing.  
105

106 **Diane Nash, 5 Merrywood Drive, Simsbury**, encouraged that the POCD be reviewed  
107 and changed sooner than 2033. She also wanted more public hearings on it. She stated  
108 conservation be the first focus of preservation and future developments accommodated  
109 around it.  
110

111 **Laurie Boyko, 15 Oakhurst Road, Simsbury**, stated that what drives affordable  
112 prices for people renting out property is the property tax. She said her own home's  
113 mortgage payment went up \$250 a month because of tax. The plans for developments  
114 and services directly impacts taxes. People cannot enjoy the town if they cannot afford  
115 to live here. She stated that the term, "equity" is used throughout the POCD and was  
116 defined contradictory.  
117

118 **Jesse Schofield, 9 Fairview Street, Simsbury**, hopes the future Board of Selectmen  
119 carry out the plans and actions steps listed in the POCD and that it might be helpful if  
120 the different commissions and boards had their own action steps. He also encouraged  
121 a measure of efficiency for the upgrades that will be happening for sustainability. He  
122 would love to see a dashboard on the website showing energy usage by electricity,  
123 heating oil, and gas, and thinks it will help the community understand certain decisions  
124 if they can see concrete numbers. He suggested a sustainability coordinator help with  
125 consulting decisions for the schools or public works.  
126

127 **Jami Lewchik, 4 Flintlock Ridge, Simsbury**, suggested using CDC's latest guidance  
128 on air filtration changes, especially in the schools. The governor has funding for these  
129 air filters. She stated "equality" is treating everyone the same, "equity" is the  
130 understanding that everyone has different circumstances and backgrounds, and you  
131 make accommodations for that, but "justice" is the removal of systemic barriers that  
132 cause the inequalities in the first place, and although we have DEI efforts there are no  
133 JEDI efforts.  
134

135 **Ellen Gilbert, 126 Hopmeadow Street, Apartment 3E, Simsbury**, reiterated that  
136 the POCD should not last ten years. She stated that with the building of apartments,

there is going to be population growth that will impact the schools, and she does not see anything in the POCD to accommodate that.

**Mark Scully, 29 Notch Road, West Simsbury**, spoke behalf of the Sustainability Committee and emphasized sustainability being involved in building and development processes and be a part of the regulations and standards.

**Greg Banks, 5 Greenwood Lane, Simsbury**, stated that he did not see any mention of the Town Forest Pond in the POCD, and it is need of repairs, such as irrigation.

**MOTION:** Secretary Rice made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Campolieta, to close the public hearing regarding the 2022-2023 Plan of Conservation and Development. The motion carried unanimously. (6-0-0).

**MOTION:** Secretary Rice made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Campolieta, to place the discussion and possible adoption of the draft 2022-2023 Plan of Conservation and Development for the November 14<sup>th</sup> meeting, and the November 28<sup>th</sup> meeting, pending the organization of the comments. The motion carried unanimously. (6-0-0).

### **III. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Campolieta made a motion, seconded by Secretary Rice, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously. (6-0-0).

Chair Leavitt-Smith adjourned the meeting at 8:22 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda Blaze  
Commission Clerk