

## Commission on Connecticut's Development and Future

### Regular Commission Meeting

Monday, February 6, 2023

3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

Room 1E of the Legislative Office Building or Virtual Via Zoom

In attendance: Martin Heft (Chair), Rep. Eleni Kavros DeGraw, Anika Singh Lemar, Donna Hamzy, Steven Kleppin, Benjamin Wenograd, Gregory Ugalde, Francis Pickering, Elizabeth Gara, Rep. Roland Lemar, Timothy Hollister, David Barkin, David Elder, Sen. Ryan Fazio, Rep. Geoff Luxenberg, Rep. Tony Scott, Sen. Christine Cohen, Sen. Tony Hwang, Rep. Kathy Kennedy, Jennifer Perry

- I. Call to Order  
*At 3:03pm Martin Heft called the meeting to order.*
- II. Attendance  
*Quorum met.*
- III. Approval of January 9, 2023, minutes  
*Motion to approve minutes by Rep. Kavros DeGraw. Second by David Barkin. Voice vote. Minutes approved.*
- IV. Working Group Presentations
  - a. Model Code and Design Development presented by David Barkin
    - i. Recommendations:
      1. Funding to help develop model guidelines
      2. Enhance land use planning capacity at the state level through ORG and OPM
      3. Facilitate sharing of land use best practices
      4. Facilitate incorporation of best practices into municipal regulations, standards, and processes
      5. Improve coordination to support effective and efficient plan implementation
    - ii. *Smart Code Concepts* presented by Leslie Creane, City Planner of Groton
      1. Creation of great public spaces (parks, streets, parking lots, gas stations, street corners, sidewalks); goal is to "make it pretty and fun" with the addition of plants, benches, parklets outside of restaurants, etc.
      2. Form based codes regulate use but also looks at changes overtime, allowing the change to occur as is meaning you wouldn't have to destroy the building if it is sold for a different business purpose.
        - a. FBC's **are** pro walking, pro biking, pro human centered design.

- b. FBC's **are not** anti-use, anti-care, or one size fits all; they are calibrated based on needs.
  - 3. Comments post presentation
    - a. David Barkin: the zoning solutions could provide opportunities for better development and affordability in future housing.
- iii. *Neighborhood Street Design Guidelines* presented by Francis Pickering, Executive Director of WestCOG
  - 1. How to improve our communities for a more sustainable resilient and diverse future through street design.
    - a. Existing guidelines designed to provide specifications serving through traffic but did not consider local streets.
  - 2. Currently streets are designed by the “CT Highway Design Manuel”- intended to provide for the facilities.
    - a. Never conceived to be a design manual for neighborhood and local streets. Many municipalities must defer to the “CT Highway Design Manual” because they don’t have their own design manuals.
  - 2. Cost impacts
    - a. How we size our infrastructure has a real impact on the cost of our housing and the cost of our development.
  - 3. Environmental impacts
    - a. Asphalt-water cannot recharge into earth, it is runoff which picks up contaminants that are displaced into our water ways and drinking resources
    - b. More asphalt- higher summer temperatures
    - c. More asphalt- need for deicers
    - d. More asphalt- more GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions
  - 4. Street Design and Energy Use
    - a. Street designs can be reoriented without decreasing overall project density e.g., redesign homes so that homes benefit the most from the energy of the sun during the winter, and change orientation which is dependent upon street orientation
      - i. Addresses climate change, the cost of heating/cooling buildings
  - 5. Safety impacts
    - a. Wider, flatter, and straighter the street the faster cars drive, increasing safety risks. Wide streets are governed by local design standards, outdated.
  - 6. Neighborhood street design guidelines
    - a. Design manual for residential streets and access roads and driveways based on objective information and reflecting best practices.

- b. Apply to lower speed roads (<40 mph) and streets functionally classified as “local” access roads/driveways based on consideration of safety and mobility of all users, environmental sustainability, economy of construction and maintenance, community cohesion, land use, utility accommodation.

7. Comments post presentation

- a. David Barkin- the public act 21-29 clearly identified, as one of the 5 elements, creating a code manual for contexted appropriate streets that complement building types with the concepts of a form-based code we are reducing the cost of development and provide for more livable streets.

V. Questions

- a. Rep. Eleni Kavros DeGraw- Under the provided funding to engage a consultant or multiple consultants to develop code guidelines, is there any estimate of what a consultant of that nature might cost?
  - i. Martin Heft answers- around a few hundred thousand dollars.
  - ii. Kavros DeGraw comment- as she represents a community that did adopt form-based code her hope is that at some point during that process with the consultant, they would be able to look at the communities that did adopt form-based code and use them as a feedback loop. Look to towns that have successfully implemented it.
- b. Anika Singh Lemar- Would towns have the ability to layer on top of statewide code? What is the data on how much those street guidelines are affecting housing costs?
  - i. Leslie Creane answers- Not looking to create a zoning code for the entire state. The gold standard for form-based codes is smart code 9.2. It gives you the things that you should think about and consider. It should be by the municipality. They don't want to layer something over the entire state they want to allow for diversity in each community.
  - ii. Francis Pickering answers- Yes there is a demand shift in favor of multifamily housing over single-family housing. The primary problem that he has identified is there are relatively good design standards for higher functional classification highway facilities. We have neglected to look at the design standards for local roads. Apartment buildings and mixed-use would not be covered by local design standards because roads are already built. Upon the end of a road's lifespan, the idea is to rebuild and improve them when rebuilding them.
  - iii. Anika Singh Lemar comment- as a voting member of the commission I could not in good faith recommend or authorize the expenditure for a code that is unlikely to be adopted in healthy or helpful ways by local governments.

VI. Business

- a. Martin Heft thanked the committee as well as the full group for additional presentations.

- b. Submission 2023 Legislative proposals
  - i. Planning and Development Committee did a raised concept bill.
- c. Review of Commission Timeline:
  - i. Review all recommendations by July 1, 2023
  - ii. Draft Report – September 1, 2023
  - iii. Final Report – January 1, 2024
  - iv. Working group presentations
    - 1. January – State and Municipal Statutory Plan Process
    - 2. February – Model Code and Design Development
    - 3. March – Municipal Affordable Housing Plans
    - 4. April – State Consolidated Housing Plan
    - 5. May – Sewerage
- d. Next Commission Meeting – March 6, 2023

VII. Public Comment  
*No public comment.*

VIII. Adjournment  
*Chairs thanked everyone. Motion to adjourn. Second by everyone. Meeting adjourned at 4:18pm.*