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CITY OF DANBURY
PLANNING COMMISSION

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PLANNING COMMISSION*

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2023 PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT (“POCD”) OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES MAY 17, 2022

Although there was not a quorum to conduct business, the committee wanted to keep on its scheduled track so it was determined that FHI Studio would make its presentation as per the agenda. Meeting notes and not official minutes would be prepared for this meeting. Since there was no quorum and no official conduct of business, the meeting minutes of April 19, 2022 were not considered for approval.

The web based meeting hosted on Zoom was called to order by Sharon Calitro, City of Danbury (“COD”) Planning Director, at 4:08 PM.

Present were Oversight Committee Members, Perry Salvagne (PC), Helen Hoffstaetter (PC), Sharon Calitro (COD Planning), Jennifer Emminger (COD Planning), Shay Nagarsheth (COD Business Advocacy), PJ Prunty (Chamber of Commerce), Richard Janelli (Board of Education), Timothy Nolan (COD Public Services), Brigid Guertin (Danbury Museum & Historical Soc.), and Paul Rotello (City Council). Present from FHI Studio were Francisco Gomes.

Absent: Arnold Finaldi (PC Chairman), Bob Chiochio (PC), Kevin Haas (PC), Gary Renz (PC), Fernanda Carvalho (COD Health), Matthew Cassavechia (COD Emergency Services), Ed Siergiej (Former Env./Lake Commission), Juan Rivas (ZBA), Candace Fay (ZC), Vincent DiGilio (City Council), and Fred Visconti (City Council).

Sharon Calitro welcomed the Oversight Committee and turned the meeting agenda over to Francisco Gomes from FHI Studio (“FHI”).

Francisco briefly reviewed the agenda for the meeting, which includes a review of the draft land use and environmental resources and economic development implementation recommendations, a discussion of potential strategies for City Services and Facilities and Cultural Resources and a review of the project schedule.

Francisco discussed the Land Use and Environmental Resources recommendations and summarized the goal as discussed in the April meeting. In support of this goal, numerous strategies and actions were identified. Strategies include ensuring the City's zoning regulations direct development towards areas that can support development without adversely impacting the City's environmental resources; develop an Open Space and Conservation plan with the aims of ensuring the protection and effective management of City-owned open space and identifying open space that may be targeted for acquisition, adopt and implement low impact policies, and practices; continue the protection of environmentally sensitive areas; actively work towards protecting and improving water quality of the Still River and other waterways in the City; improve stewardship of forests and tree canopy on City-owned open space and right-of-ways; continue to promote sustainable stormwater management and floodplain management to be resilient and adaptable to a changing climate; and improve the management and oversight of the City's land use and environmental resources.

Francisco next discussed the Economic Development recommendations and summarized the goal as to leverage Danbury's unique assets to support economic development that provides opportunities for all of Danbury's residents. In support of the goal, numerous strategies and actions were identified and discussed. Strategies include to foster an environment that is supportive of economic development and provides opportunities for growth and development of businesses in the City; consider funding an economic development strategic plan for the City to help define economic development priorities and target industries, workforce development strategies, and assess organizational capacity to undertake economic development programs and initiatives; consider extending the Downtown Central Business District north and south to allow for new, higher intensity growth while protecting Downtown's historic buildings; continue to invest in downtown through infrastructure and streetscape improvements, façade improvements, public spaces for events, and marketing and attracting people to the Downtown; develop a campaign and communications that promotes Danbury as a place of innovation and activity; review and update the City's commercial zone regulations to ensure the regulations provide sufficient flexibility to allow development that responds to current and future market conditions; consider conducting corridor studies or area plans for corridors within the CG-20 and CA-80 districts to help align economic development priorities with needed infrastructure improvements to adequately support future growth; strengthen Danbury's marketing to outside businesses and investors highlighting the City's economic strengths; partner with WCSU, NVCC, the Chamber of Commerce, and major employers in the City to encourage workforce development, training, employee pipelines, and the potential for innovation or entrepreneurial activity; explore ways to increase employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for disadvantaged groups in the City; implement the recommendations of the City's Affordable Housing Plan.

The next topic area discussed was City Services and Facilities. The draft goal is to provide high quality and sustainable services and facilities that meet the needs of Danbury's residents and are sufficiently robust to accommodate the needs of a growing City. In support of the goal, numerous strategies and actions were identified and discussed. Francisco briefly summarized how the recommended strategies and actions were developed from discussions with the Committee, focus group meetings, interviews with key stakeholders, and consultant team recommendations. Strategies include prepare a City Facilities Master Plan to assess capacity to

meet current and anticipated program needs and to identify energy and other efficiency improvements that are needed; expand the capacity of Danbury's schools to meet student enrollment needs; continue to preserve, enhance, and maintain parks and recreational facilities; expand the capacity and service offered through Danbury's Library; improve resources of the City's Health and Human Service's Department to ensure that Danbury continues to meet the needs of residents; ensure that Danbury's Public Safety services have the resources to meet the needs of the community; maintain Danbury's airport in a state of good condition and make investments necessary to meet the needs of the local aviation community and support the airport's role as an economic driver; support sustainability including energy efficiency and renewable energy sources across all City facilities; continue to protect and maintain the City's drinking water supply and distribution infrastructure; continue to make needed investments in the City's wastewater collection and treatment infrastructure; and proactively work towards obtaining and securing funding through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) as a means of financing needed improvements to City facilities and infrastructure.

The last topic area discussed is Cultural Resources. The draft goal was identified as protect, promote, fund, and continue to act as a steward for Danbury's cultural resources. In support of the goal, numerous strategies and actions were identified. These include, promote and enhance the viability of historic and architectural resources for their continued use or for new uses; restore and repurpose City-owned historic properties; provide continued support for the protection of historic resources in Danbury; provide more support for the arts in Danbury; develop a marketing campaign for Danbury that features and promotes its cultural resources; and revive Danbury as a place that is home to events.

The remaining project schedule was discussed and reviewed. June's meeting will include review of the draft future land use map, review draft section of the plan, and review draft section of the implementation plan. The next meeting is scheduled for June 21, 2022.

The meeting adjourned at 6:01 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer L. Emminger
Deputy Planning Director