



# TOWN OF WOODBURY

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## Board of Selectmen Joint Land Use Meeting

*Saturday, January 10, 2015 ♦ 9:30 a.m.*

*Senior/Community Center*

### MINUTES

**Present:** William Butterly, Martin Overton, Barbara Perkinson, Kathy Castagnetta, Hiram Peck, David Potts, Mary Tyrrell, Bob Clarke, Bob Travers, Mike Novak, Susan Cheatham, Dick Leavenworth, Frank Sherer, Marc Kroll, Katy Sherer, Maureen Donnarumma, Beverly Deickler, Eileen Denver, Sue Windesheim, Joann King, Joe Donato, Wayne Anderson, Adam Goldberg, , Lori Hart, Alex Desorbo, Gary Testa, Bonnie Sherman, Vince McDermott, Joel Serota, Nancy Grasing, Robert LaBonne, Jr., David Taylor, John Pitari, Linda Leigh, interested residents, and a member of the press.

First Selectman William Butterly convened the meeting at 9:41 a.m. After the Pledge of Allegiance, a moment of silence was held in memory of John Chamberlain. He then proceeded to introduce Hiram Peck.

Mr. Peck discussed that an application was submitted in December to the American Institute of Architects in order to create an illustrative plan for Main Street to promote economic growth and sustainability by looking at commercial development in Town. He explained they should consider if what they have in place now is as good as it could be (is it serving the residents as well as it could, is it stabilizing the tax base/increasing the grand list, are the regulations encouraging the appropriate type size and amount of economic growth, etc.). Demographics are an important factor and Mr. Peck went through the data for Woodbury. Understanding how people want to live and where/how they want to shop is important. They will need to consider infill and redevelopment. Design is integral in finding out what they want to do and how they want to look in the future. He touched on "complete streets" and that streets should not be just for automobiles. Based on the demographic numbers, retirement considerations are important. How are they going to deal with the aging population in the future? Are there facilities in Town for them?

Mr. Peck then introduced David Potts, an Environmental Scientist, to discuss advanced wastewater treatment solutions. This was to address any questions on the Town Center/Middle Quarter area to see what can be done and how they could address limitations to properties with respect to septic systems.

Mr. Potts was asked if he could give a sense of what the capabilities of different technologies are, what could be done and what the limitations of the options are (i.e. pros and cons with regard to septic systems). He gave a brief introduction of his company (GeoMatrix) and what types of companies they handle giving examples of businesses in Connecticut that they have worked on. They are consultants to technology to engineers and contractors. If you improve a

septic system's performance without digging it up there are a lot of advantages from a cost perspective. The basic principles are the more surface area and more oxygen and more treatment the better the septic system performance. It was explained that wet and dry accelerates decomposition and that gas density is important. Soil Air systems allow water and gas to move through the system at an accelerated rate, the right amount of oxygen is important. GeoMatrix treats wastewater by putting air into the soil, and then they flow the water through the soil. GeoMat is a process where water is stored in a tank and pumped intermittently. One can control failing septic systems with oxygen. Stone can be shaped to have more contact with the soil. GST can be done under parking lots, it comes in different sizes. Without a blower there is more surface area and a smaller footprint. This system can use a lot less land. It was explained that void space in the ground is not as good as filling and draining, there is more gas exchange. To expand a use in Connecticut, you can add about 50% to the use before you have to expand the system. In really tight spots where every inch counts they use a manufactured media, GEO U, with this they can save about 50% of the space.

Mary Tyrrell – Inquired about what the relative costs of these systems are versus other systems. Mr. Potts responded that the stone system is less than traditional concrete. If you can fix what's there that is encouraged. They try to figure out why a system failed before they fix it.

Gary Testa – Asked what the effects of grey water are on these systems. Mr. Potts didn't think it was important. Systems are failing because of too many bugs. You should not put anything extra into a septic system. Nowadays, the challenges of water is pharmaceutical compounds, complex compounds that bugs don't know how to eat.

First Selectman William Butterly – Had questions about off-site septic systems, if there are concerns for that and can they be used. Mr. Potts said you can have community systems if managed properly. He suggests you build 100%, run 50% and rest 50%. He explained that nitrogen is an issue.

Hiram Peck discussed development and how much you can put in a different area and how to go from the vision to regulations. They can use consultants and staff, public workshops, seminars and charrettes. They can create tools regulations, form based codes, design guidelines, etc. Photos of Simsbury were shown describing how the area didn't lose its character. The process needs to start with preparation and pre-design. The next step is to create a vision and then revise the regulations. He described in detail the zoning approach in Simsbury starting with a hand on design session. A conceptual framework map was created. This established parameters for the design work and included a preliminary analysis of appropriate future land uses and connections in and around the town center. A graphic long range plan was developed of what they wanted the Town of Simsbury to look like. Form based has two parts: an illustrative plan and a regulated plan. Regulated plans and height maps make enforcement easier. What they see now in Simsbury is people are coming in with buildings that are more appropriate to what they are trying to do. Mr. Peck explained that it's easy to build a community consensus. It is important for the public to participate. Concepts should be generated and reviewed by the public, alternatives given and reviewed by the public, refinement done and again reviewed by the public to come up with a final plan. Everything being transparent. Appropriate regulations can then be finalized. The design guidelines are

not regulations, zoning needs to rewrite the regulations. It was noted that this is a 2-3 year process to get to the final plan and it's important to get the public involved.

#### Question & Answers:

Susan Cheatham – How does the Historic District relate to this since they are responsible for the buildings in the district and the setting? Historic structures are important to maintain the character of the town. Mr. Peck explained that the Historic District is a critical part of the process that this is an all-inclusive design exercise and the Historic District is extremely important.

Frank Sherer – What's the next step and when do we do it? Mr. Peck explained that their application was just accepted by the American Institute of Architects and that a series of architects will come to town.

Bob Kolesnik – How will we know when they're coming and what they're looking at? Mr. Peck explained that they'll come for a preliminary visit; information will be given ahead of time. Woodbury will give them what to focus on (i.e. MQ, MSD, etc). The selectmen will let us know. They can expect that in early spring AIA will come for a preliminary meeting and then later in the fall for a full team meeting. Subsequent to that meeting, they will report back to the selectmen and it will all be very transparent.

Expert advice is valuable to our planning and zoning. The AIA wants public support. Mr. Peck asked that each of the Land Use Commissions write a letter of support. There's a \$5000 minimum fee which Mr. Peck promised the BOS that he would raise or would pay himself.

Eileen Denver – What's recommended to get this information out to the public to state that this is a good thing? Mr. Peck said that Simsbury used the Town website, separate websites were set up so people could voice opinions, a blog system for questions, community TV, and explained that it's imperative that the press gives accurate and good information.

Alex Desorbo – What is the AIA work product going to be? They'll come with a series of architects, landscape architects, and graphics. Their final report should say this is what we heard, what we can do moving forward, and give us a recipe to move forward. Again, this is a 3-5 year program. Due to time and cost, it will take time. It depends how serious land use commissions get about it. They'll be here in the Fall and the report will probably come out by the end of the year.

The value of study is \$150,000 – \$180,000 and the Town is getting it for \$5,000 – with more money, they can do more.

Joe Donato – Once a plan is in place, what's the incentive for the property owners to take down buildings or revamp? It was explained that they can't make them do anything, however if they come in to do something, what they do will need to be according to the plan. Economic development plans are available. There are facade improvement programs and infrastructure improvement programs available. There are lots of different things that can be done for economic development. Connecticut Main Street is a valuable organization, as well as the chamber of commerce.

Bill Butterly – This is a guideline, not being pushed down people’s throats. Woodbury is fast becoming the food court of Fairfield county; let’s see what other businesses we could bring to town.

Katy Sherer – To what degree do you look at infrastructure? Utilities need to be brought in and be part of the process. Some towns have talked about putting utilities behind buildings. The various utilities should be part of whole consensus building process.

Lori Hart – Are Architects facilitating this or who is? Mr. Peck was not sure. Architects want to know where the people are coming from to optimize their time. Not sure how that will work

Bert Stevens – This is a 3-5 year process what is the cost and where will they get the money? Mr. Peck said in Simsbury they put together four grants at the same time. There are state and federal grants that might be available. DEEP grant, Ct Trust of Historical Preservation, DOT grant. They should talk to state and federal officials.

Bob LaBonne – Stated that fundraising could be done and noted how he is involved with several organizations that have been able to raise money.

Several offers of donations were made at the end of the meeting.

**Brief Overview of Successes and Challenges– Commission Chairs (or designees):**

- a. **Planning Commission** – *Bob Travers*: Mr. Travers noted his excitement about having a full-time Town planner. The Planning Commission elected to cancel three meetings this year due to lack of business. They approved one subdivision and have dealt with a few performance bond issues. He noted that the Planning Commission is also the Water Pollution Control Authority so they will be dealing with concerns about the community septic system at Lake Quassapaug and they are looking to implement features of the plan of development.
- b. **Zoning Commission** – *Bob Clarke*: Mr. Clarke noted that the Zoning Commission increased meetings to two meetings per month. One devoted to regular business and one for on-going zoning regulation change discussions. They are looking to reorganize the Middle Quarter District combining eight zones into one.
- c. **Inland Wetlands Agency** – *Mary Tyrrell*: Ms. Tyrrell stated that the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency meets twice a month. There has not been a lot of activity, but there has been some enforcement. The agency has gone on several walks. They are looking forward to working with the new enforcement officer, the new planner and the new engineering consultants, Milone and MacBroom.
- d. **Zoning Board of Appeals** – *Joe Donato*: Mr. Donato stated that the ZBA meets once a month. They are concerned with clarification of sign regulations and feel that they should have the authority to make variances in the MSD district.

- e. **Historic District Commission** – *Susan Cheatham*: Ms. Cheatham noted that the phone company replaced the roofs on their two buildings. Changes to the GIS Historic District overlay on the north end of town have been made to correct. They are looking at updating their regulations. This year the Historic District replaced the four Historic District signs in town through a grant.
  
- f. **Conservation Commission** – *Dick Leavenworth*: Mr. Leavenworth stated the big topic is the reservoir purchase. He discussed briefly the history of the Conservation Commission. Open space is a priority. There have been three open space priorities over the years which included the reservoir, the expansion of Orenaug Park and the Hollow. They purchased the hollow, added to it and added to orenaug park and now they are looking into the reservoir. Attention to the environment will continue.

Kathy Castagnetta, Town Planner – Ms. Castagnetta explained that they just hired a new Land Use Enforcement Officer who will be a great addition and help to the office.

First Selectman Butterly thanked everyone for coming and ended the meeting at 11:53 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Anne Firlings  
Administrative Assistant, Land Use Office

RECEIVED & FILED  
IN WOODBURY, CT  
This 16 day of Jan 2015  
at 12:07 o'clock P M  
Fred L. Carl  
Town Clerk