

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
TOLLAND, CONNECTICUT
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 9, 2012

MEMBERS PRESENT: Marilee Beebe, Chair
Sue Errickson, Vice Chair
John Hughes, Secretary
Dave Barrow, Regular
Bill Eccles, Regular
Mike Tuley, Alternate
Dave Fluckiger, Alternate

OTHERS PRESENT: Linda Farmer, Director of Planning & Community Development
Kevin Bouley, TECDC President, EDC member and member of
UConn School of Engineering Advisory Board
Glenn Chalder and Heidi Samokar of Planimetrics, LLC
Steve Werbner, Town Manager
Town Council members
Economic Development Commission members
Tolland Economic and Community Development Corp members
Design Advisory Board members
Public

1. **Call to Order:** Marilee Beebe called the meeting to order at 7:30p.m. in Council Chambers. She introduced the new Commission and introduced the Boards and Commissions in attendance—members of the Town Council, the Economic Development Commission, the Tolland Economic and Community Development Corp., the Design Advisory Board, as well as Glenn Chalder and Heidi Samokar from the consulting firm, Planimetrics.
2. **Public Comment:** Bob Rubino of 296 Weigold Road said he strongly encourages and endorses revisiting the proposed Technology Zone and that the success of the plan is dependent on everyone working together. He noted that Tolland focuses on education of its youth, and this is very important for Tolland youth as it could provide wonderful job opportunities for them down the road. He added that because UConn has a Technology Park Project, many people are incorrectly assuming that 195 will automatically become the Technology Corridor, but it could be Route 44 instead, so they need to act now.
3. **Public Hearing(s):** None
4. **Action on Public Hearing(s):** None
5. **Other Agenda Items**
 - 5.1 **Tolland Technology Zone** – Presentation by Kevin Bouley on proposed UCONN Research Park. Ms. Beebe introduced Kevin Bouley, President and CEO of NERAC who serves on both the EDC and TECDC and on a number of advisory committees at UConn, including the

Tech Park Vision Committee. Mr. Bouley provided a Powerpoint presentation prepared by students at the UConn School of Engineering on the proposed Research Park. While he cautioned that the presentation was not an official UConn or State position on the Park, it provides a good start for informational purposes. Mr. Bouley said the proposed Tech Park, announced in April, 2011, will have one million square feet of research space in the north campus with a groundbreaking for a Collaboratory in 2012. The Tech Park will have an emphasis on such fields as aerospace and defense, energy and environment, bioscience and biotechnology, electrical and electronic equipment, chemicals and others.

Mr. Bouley said the Innovation Collaboratory is expected to come on live in late 2014 or early 2015, and there are expectations for new buildings and ground-breakings every one to two years for the next 20 to 25 years. He said there is an expectation for cost-sharing of proposals with a \$40 million equipment fund. He outlined major industry partners and examples of collaboration between major corporations, and he reported on the primary and secondary research methodology used to put the presentation together.

Mr. Bouley said the Park model suggests long term leasing arrangements will be the most preferable and prominent arrangement, and income streams will come from leases, investments, gifts and grants, and services. He said amenities such as walking trails, a fitness center, restaurants and business support services to those working in the Park will be valuable as they will help to create a sense of community. There were a number of recommendations presented for the Park, including a leasing model which would call for the University to own the land, but the Technology Park to own the buildings. Under this model, the University would find tenants. He also presented information on a research model, equipment sharing model and market positioning.

Additionally, the presentation recommended making the Storrs community a greater business hub, creating a synergy with the Greater Mansfield Downtown Partnership. Mr. Bouley said other Park amenities such as creating an entrepreneur-in-residence consulting program would be desirable. He explained that this is what NERAC presently does. Other amenities would include venture consulting, legal services, wi-fi access, daycares, a hotel, copy center and coffee shop. He said the Park creates a compelling argument for Tolland for a short stay hotel and conference center.

The meeting was opened to questions and comments. Town Council member Sam Belsito asked if this Park was expected to have 1 million square feet of research space, how would Tolland expect to compete with that. Mr. Bouley said we don't want to compete with it. Rather, we want to collaborate with them. Mr. Belsito asked where Tolland would fit in. Mr. Bouley said we need to create a vision and at this point we don't need an end game plan. He suggested we could come up with one thing this year and one each successive year that would bring us toward our goal. For example, he said it could be possible to build an environment that houses spin-off businesses. Another example might be to implement public transportation from UConn to Tolland. A third example might be creating affordable housing for graduate students and others who work at the Park.

Design Advisory Board member Bill Byers said he is interested in developing an aesthetically appealing network of trails to complement development. Mr. Bouley said large research areas like Silicon Valley are compelling because they have been integrated into the community and are a part of the local culture. He said successful Parks incorporate the people aspect, the play aspect, and the sustainability aspect, to name a few.

Ms. Beebe said Tolland is a small player but located on a critical pathway to the Park and they need to look at spatial development patterns in town. She said they need the Town Council's support to develop a policy framework.

Mr. Bouley said he was recently contacted by a company in Oregon, whose owner is from Connecticut originally. The company makes sustainable energy products and it is growing. They are interested in relocating to Connecticut, near UConn. Mr. Bouley said they are actively pursuing a relationship with them to help the company relocate. Because the company wants to be close to UConn, they could very well relocate to Tolland.

Mr. Belsito asked if Tolland can get on a path within three years, and, if so, where would funding come from? Mr. Bouley said they could, and that NERAC, in fact, already is on that path by working to build a culture of entrepreneurship. He said like most people, entrepreneurs and CEOs like to be around similar-minded people and they need to make a concerted effort to build entrepreneurships.

Mr. Rubino agreed with Mr. Bouley saying if Tolland wants to attract entrepreneurs, then Tolland needs to be attractive to them.

Mr. Bouley noted that a bus runs four times a day from the Storrs campus to the Farmington campus and asked what might happen if the bus made a stop in Tolland as well. He said they need to exploit their location.

Ken Hankinson of 54 Johnson Road said if UConn builds the Park, the people and services will come. He said an important part of the process for Tolland will be to constantly communicate their vision to the town to help avoid any stiff resistance.

George Mantak, Chair of the Economic Development Commission, said he has been on the EDC for 24 years and one of the problems he has experienced is that because Town Council and PZC terms have only two-year tenures, there is often not enough time to get things done. He said this is an opportunity to get the Town Council on board from day one. He suggested that the PZC should move toward a plan rather than regulations. Ms. Beebe explained that the reason regulations are important is because they already have regulations in place that don't necessarily fit with this vision and if they don't make changes, they may be forced to accept some types of development proposals they would prefer not to have. She said the emphasis will need to be on inclusivity. She also reminded everyone that they need to keep reminding the public that the town can only encourage types of development but they are not developers themselves.

Mr. Byers said the term “regulations” has an inhibitory, restrictive connotation for people. Michael Cardin, former PZC Chair, said the town does have a Plan of Conservation and Development for a guide. He said the hallmark of the Tolland Village Area is it’s flexibility in the regulations. He said he hopes the changes to the Gateway Design District and the proposed Technology Corridor will model the TVA regulations. Ms. Beebe said the draft State Plan of Conservation and Development talks about regionalization and the concept of a transit node works well with that concept.

Economic Development Commission member Chris Fields said she is a 32-year resident in town and said she has been thinking of Tolland in terms of “destiny.” She said Tolland has been developed in a conscientious way and UConn could be an important part of the town’s destiny. She said they should not be afraid of it.

Mr. Hughes said he agrees with Mr. Hankinson that communication to the public will be a critical piece. He said when construction of the UConn Park begins, it will have an immediate impact on their road infrastructure that they need to be ready for.

Town Council member Ben Stanford said he expects both Routes 195 and 44 will have an equal opportunity to benefit from the Park and it’s more just a matter of who gets first dibs.

Ms. Farmer noted that the towns of Coventry, Mansfield, and Tolland have submitted an application for a \$100K cost-sharing grant for an economic development staff person. It was submitted to OPM at the end of the year.

Glenn Chalder of Planimetrics said Tolland needs to focus on what it can capture and on what it has. He said they need to capitalize on their locational advantage and that this could spur development of the TVA. He said he sees regulations as “enabling” rather than “prohibiting” and they could pay dividends for Tolland. He described three circles, one inside the other, with incubator activities at UConn in the central circle. These, Tolland could not compete with. However a larger circle around that first circle would be research affiliates, which would create economic opportunities for Tolland. The largest circle would include amenities and opportunities for transit that would also both benefit Tolland.

Mr. Byers said he would expect that as the Park develops, they will see some traffic coming into Tolland from the Worcester area as well. Mr. Chalder said there was a time that Connecticut threatened to become an economic cul-de-sac, but this is changing as UConn is becoming a bigger part of the knowledge corridor.

Town Manager Steve Werbner said they need to consider the terminology they are using and whether they want to look only at things that can benefit Tolland individually or if they want to look at benefits as part of a region. He said they need to look at how other towns like Mansfield and Coventry are impacted and whether they want to look at getting grants for Tolland alone or with other area towns. They need to consider the best approach. He said in his earlier experience with the towns of Manchester and South Windsor, it may have been better to have taken a more regional approach with the retail development that straddles the

two towns. He noted also that Mansfield is currently looking at infrastructure to support a hotel.

Mr. Chalder said the next big question will be to ask how the State looks at this. Ms. Beebe said she would expect they will want to request a meeting with the Lt. Governor to discuss Tolland's opportunities and get advice on how the Governor's office views this effort. Mr. Werbner said it would be best to refine what they want before going directly to the State.

Heidi Samokar of Planimetrics suggested the town take a hybrid approach with the vision and marketing kept at a local level, while taking a regional approach with funding. Ms. Farmer said they will also need to look at the local impact on their road system and other infrastructure.

Mr. Eccles asked what specific things they should be looking at doing now. He asked what they want to come away with tonight and suggested in the short term they might want to look at opportunities for providing lodging and meeting space for consultants who will be coming to the area for this project.

Ms. Farmer agreed that they need a road map and noted that the new Vice President for Economic Affairs has expressed a willingness to talk to Tolland about such plans.

Mr. Rubino said Ms. Fields comment about destiny is a good one and he would not want talks about costs to paralyze the town into inaction. He noted that Tolland has some excellent talent that they should be marketing, noting that there exist 621 patents originating out of Tolland, while other neighboring towns have not generated nearly as many. Mr. Barrow said marketing Tolland should also be a part of the conversation with the Lt. Governor.

Mr. Cardin said going forward he had a few recommendations. He suggested that the Council might be able to offer developers incentives such as a waiver of some fees to kick start development in the TVA. He said they should also discuss seed money for roads and infrastructure in the TVA with the Lt. Governor, as well as seed money for a transport hub. He said they should also look at creating flexibility in the regulations for the Technology Zone, as he said it will be key for spin-off ancillary businesses to view Tolland favorably.

Mr. Belsito said it will be important to make Tolland attractive to entrepreneurs to bring their businesses here. He asked Mr. Bouley to expound on why he located NERAC in Tolland. Ms. Beebe agreed, adding that they will need money for planning assistance. Mr. Bouley said he did not own the company when it first located in Tolland but he did help in siting its location. He said they chose Tolland because it was close to UConn, and had quick access to I-84. He also noted that the fastest growing company in Connecticut is located in Tolland and it is here because, as he stated earlier, entrepreneurs and CEOs want to be located near like-minded people.

Mr. Mantak reminded people that they need to look not only at the proposed Technology Zone when looking for funding, but rather from the Green all the way out to UConn. He said it needs to be a cohesive effort.

Mr. Werbner said they need to resurrect the corridor study from I-84 to Anthony Road, and the Tolland Village Area as a hub for initial development when they approach the Governor's office for planning assistance. He noted that they will need to look again at sewer infrastructure and the water diversion permit.

There was consensus to write a request to the Lt. Governor to discuss three main items, economic development seed money, utility permit issues, and planning a transit corridor. There was consensus also to do some outreach to Coventry and Mansfield officials as well as UConn for regional opportunities.

A brief recess was taken at 9:40p.m., and the meeting resumed at 9:45p.m.

5.2 Endorsement of the Tolland Economic Development Action Plan adopted by the Economic Development Commission on October 5, 2011. Ms. Beebe said she found the Plan to be a great comprehensive document. Mr. Mantak said they capitalized on work completed in the community up to the present, updating the last five years.

Mr. Eccles asked about the Plan's reference to restriction of uses in 2.7. He asked if the EDC intended to limit further development of new businesses but not existing businesses. Mr. Mantak said the idea was to grandfather all existing businesses and not restrict them from expanding or growing those existing businesses so long as they adhere to current regulations, but they don't want to expand uses that they want to restrict.

Sue Errickson/Dave Barrow motion to endorse the Tolland Economic Development Action Plan adopted by the Economic Development Commission on October 5, 2011. Motion was unanimously approved.

5.3 **P&Z App. #819 – T&S of CT LLC** – Subdivision request to create one new rear building lot. Location: westerly side of Goose Lane at the Coventry Town line. Commission to set Public Hearing date.

Ms. Farmer explained for new members that in the regulations, all new rear lots require a Public Hearing. She said this request meets the minimum lot size and has been approved by the Inland Wetlands Commission. Bill Eccles/Sue Errickson motion to set the Public Hearing for P&Z App. #819 for January 23, 2012. Motion was unanimously approved. Mr. Barrow noted that he will be recusing himself for that application.

5.4 **Budget** – review proposed 2012/2013 PZC budget. The Commission discussed the number of meetings budgeted for the clerk and agreed to keep it at 28 PZC meetings and 4 DAB meetings. They discussed the amount budgeted for professional services noting that they don't have any outside consulting assistance and the \$2,000 figure originally budgeted can get used up very quickly. Mr. Freeman, liaison to the Town Council said the PZC is one

department that can prompt growth within the town and part of having a sustainable budget is nurturing revenue growth. After some discussion, the Commission agreed to request an increase in professional services to \$7,500.

Bill Eccles/Dave Barrow motion to endorse the proposed 2012/2013 PZC budget with an increase to \$7,500 for professional services. Motion was unanimously approved.

5.5 **Goals** – Review revised PZC goals. There was discussion whether or not to add Item 5.6 in this agenda to the goals in Section 2, or if the concept is too specific, and whether to expand on Section 3 to include this evening’s discussion. The Commission plans to finalize the list in the next couple of weeks, and would like to act on, approve, and publish the list of goals for January 23.

5.6 Discuss inclusion of drive-through regulations in the Gateway Design District. Ms. Beebe explained that the drive-through concept was primarily for a pharmacy use in the TVA. There was consensus to put this on the agenda for January 23 for a broader discussion. This will be a jumping off point for the other NCZ, and they may discuss food service establishment drive-throughs at that time.

5.7 Designate an Economic Development Commission liaison. Dave Barrow volunteered for this position. Bill Eccles/John Hughes motion to designate Dave Barrow as liaison to the Economic Development Commission. Motion was unanimously approved.

6. **Approval of Minutes** – Approve minutes of December 12, 2011 Regular Meeting. Ms. Farmer said on Page 4, Item 7.1 that the first sentence should say the town had *applied for a \$100K Regional Economic Development grant, which will allow the towns of Coventry, Mansfield and Tolland to hire consultants that will assist the three towns to possibly piggyback on the UConn initiatives.*

Sue Errickson/John Hughes motion to approve the minutes of the December 12, 2011 Regular Meeting as amended. Motion was unanimously approved.

7. **Activities and Updates:** None.

8. **Town Staff Comments**

8.1 CRCOG – Sustainable land use code update – Ms. Farmer said that next week, Clarion Associates, which has been writing a sustainable community development code, will be visiting CRCOG towns to look at both barriers to as well as good examples of sustainable development. She will be identifying stakeholders to meet with them. Ms. Farmer also met this morning with other communities to discuss piggybacking on the CRCOG \$4.2 million sustainability grant.

8.2 **Bonding** – Zoning & Subdivision Regulations update. This item is still being worked on.

9. **Announcements – Upcoming Meetings**

9.1 January 25th, 2012 – Tolland Village Area – Presentation and discussion with Town Council, EDC, and Design Advisory Board at 7:30p.m. in Council Chambers. Ms. Farmer said this meeting will help bring new members up to speed. She said Heidi Samokar of Planimetrics will give an overview of the TVA and Steve O’Neill who put together a traffic study will also be on hand to answer questions.

10. **Reading of Correspondence:** None.

11. **Communications and Petitions from Commission Members:** Ms. Beebe asked that Ms. Farmer reserve a space for an Executive Session on the January 23, 2012 agenda to discuss pending litigation.

12. **Public Participation:** None.

13. **Adjournment:** Bill Eccles/Sue Errickson motion to adjourn the meeting and pay the clerk at 10:25p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Annie Gentile
Clerk