Received 11/13/26
1:54 PM Jodi Moore, ATC

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, November 4, 2026
7:00 P.M.
Third Floor Town Hall and via Zoom
MINUTES

Call to order
Chairman DeFelice called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call
In attendance: Chris Balay, Janet Morganti, Frank DeFelice, Jim Piotrowski, James Martinelli, Michael Fumiatti, Peter Lynch (left early), Kyle Mosher, Phil Augur, Josh Eddinger, John DeNunzio, Trish Dynia

Absent:, ,

Others in attendance: Robin Newton: Town Planner, Brendan Rea: First Selectman, other members of the public

Seating of Alternates
none

Amendments to Agenda
none

Approval of Agenda
A motion was made by C. Balay, seconded by J. Morganti to approve the November 4, 2026 meeting agenda with the addition of the approval of a bill for Joe Carta and Tyche Planning under item 10. All aye, motion passed.

Public Comment
Richard Parmelee made a public comment suggesting the boards and commissions in town report financial standing monthly

Town Planner/ZEO Report
R. Newton noted ZEO report sent to commission members
R. Newton meeting with RIVERCOG next Friday to discuss Regional Housing Needs Assessment

Receipt of Applications
None

Public Hearing: Town of Durham Planning & Zoning Commission, Adoption of Plan of Conservation and Development
A motion was made by C. Balay seconded by P. Lynch to exit the regular meeting and enter public hearing. All aye, motion passed. All members seated for the regular meeting remain seated for the public hearing

Chairman DeFelice explained that the town is required to revise the POCD every 10 years. R. Newton presented powerpoint outlining requirements for the POCD and how it will be used in coordination with State and Regional plans. Noted focus on Housing, Transportation, Historical and Cultural Assets, Environmental Protection, Conservation, and Agriculture. Noted that Potential Future Land Use map guides long-term planning and zoning decisions by identifying general areas for potential growth and land-use changes. Areas are not parcel specific and do not imply zoning changes.

F. DeFelice read the legal notice for the public hearing into the record

Written Public Comment
- Donald Bozzini wrote to oppose commercial corridor expansion
- Mike Fusco from New Haven Road wrote in support of protecting open space, farmland, and historic resources, and improving pedestrian safety and flood resilience. Stated that there were not public workshops throughout the process. Expressed concern for development along state routes and effect on value of homes and the residential

character of the area. Also noted that the draft does not address data centers or large scale, high-intensity uses. Expressed concern for increased dangerous traffic

- Complete Streets Commission met on October 8th and sent comments and suggestions. Discussed conservation of wild birds on White's Farm. Suggested:
    - modifying subdivision regulations to require sidewalks and new developments in areas which could link sidewalks.
    - accessible sidewalks on both sides of main street from Higganum Road to Oak Terrace
    - rapid flashing beacons at all crosswalks not located at traffic lights
    - Complete pedestrian bike route along Pickett and maiden lanes and install crosswalks
    - Review and implement engineering standards for maintenance and improvement to existing roads in Durham to maximize pedestrian accessibility and safety and install traffic and speed enforcement cameras
- Dave Anderson commented with concerns about the effect commercial development along state routes will have on groundwater and septic. Specifically noted that data centers cause constant noise, heavy water use, and enormous strain on the local electric grid. Suggested that the POCD explicitly state that data centers and similar large scale industrial uses are inconsistent with the plan. Also noted that increased commercial development will create traffic and congestion on roads not built for that use.

Public Comment

- Brendan Rea noted that the BOS endorses the POCD but noted that the board would like the commission to consider future sewers in the Main street area. Suggested that if there were sewers in the Main Street area, there could be more businesses which would improve the tax base. It was noted that written comment from the BOS on this issue were received.
- Marilyn P (name unclear) noted there is no consideration for solar on Page 12 under Energy. On Affordable Housing plan page 17 suggested solar as a method to make homes more affordable. Also suggested that on page 19 foot and bicycle traffic should be considered. Also noted spelling error on photo caption on Page 23. Noted her historic property on Main Street is not included. Suggested ecotourism as an asset of the town, noting Bobolink festival, flora, and geology in town
- John Forlini commented on the proposed expansion on Route 17, noted that there is limited discussion with property owners who will be affected and no consultation on the expanded corridor. Suggested safeguards instead of blanket adoption of commercial use
- Nancy Forlini made a comment supporting previous comments on solar and tourism and suggested that there be less focus on development and more on conservation. Noted recent non-conforming use was approved based on a plan to fix the building and the building is still the same. Expressed concern that recommended corridors of potential economic development will not be regulated properly. Noted map shows overlap of economic development and proposed conservation. Noted page 88 clerical error, North Branford Road should be New Haven Road
- Bob Booz commented that since RiverCog must approve changes, all the effort of the commission and the feedback of the public is subordinate to RiverCog
- A Main Street resident (name unclear) commented that Main Street is a residential neighborhood and should not be considered for future development. Supports improved sewer and affordable housing. Noted that Main Street already cannot support current businesses.
- William Kohlhepp, member of Connecticut River Area Health District, commented in appreciation of the plan's focus on protecting drinking water. Supports inclusion of affordable housing in the plan, noted that commission did not discuss this topic at length.
- Heidi Johnson spoke in support of the Fusco's points. Expressed concern for impact on natural resources, noted Superfund site and suggested that Durham consider addressing data centers and preventing that type of development
- Lucy Meigs commented in support of ecotourism. Noted endangered and botanic species. Also noted inconsistencies in the tables. Stated that there was emphasis on Haying at White's Farm, suggested more emphasis be put on the conservation of that area as wild space. Provided notations in POCD where farm is referred to as Hay Land
- A member of the public (name unclear) commented on the mowing of White's Farm and accident where mowing was completed before the end of the fiscal year, damaging birds and eggs and mowing flowers which support breeding of wildlife including pollinators. Noted that over 100 people come to White's Farm weekly to birdwatch, walk dogs, hike, etc. Provided documentation and goals prepared by herself and Susan Longbren (resident and member of the Garden Club) Suggested adding a list of native and invasive species and language which describes tourism at White's Farm

- Lori Fusco expressed concern that the overly broad changes to commercial corridors in the POCD will allow developers to use that as a reason their business aligns with the POCD, costing homeowners or the town money in legal fees fighting developments.
- Eileen Buckheit (BOF Chair) agreed with BOS and noted that taxes increase every year and that increased development will bring in more tax money and lighten the burden on residents. Suggested that residents who oppose development attend BOF hearings
- A member of the public (name unclear) spoke in support of the POCD as an advisory document, noted it would still carry weight especially in real estate
- Brendan Rea spoke on North Haven Amazon drone delivery proposal, noted that some areas in Durham are within the radius and wants to make the commission aware. It was noted that Robin Newton is working on this issue
- A member of the public asked about the process of creating regulations which prohibit data centers
- John Mitchell expressed concern for the impact of data centers on the environment and asked who he can address via email. It was noted that questions can be submitted to the Town Planner, Robin Newton
- Lori Fusco made a comment in support of bringing in sewer infrastructure, suggested information be added which describes impact on homeowners such as costs, hookups, and monthly fees

Commissioner Comments

- F. DeFelice clarified that the Town does not ask RiverCog for permission, only for advisory opinions on intermunicipal impacts. It was also noted that the potential future land use map only shows possible areas of development
- Briefly discussed potentially adding data center language, it was noted that there is not language which would allow that type of industrial use and Durham's water system could not support it. Suggested adding language in the zoning regulations would be more appropriate, rather than the POCD
- J. Eddinger discussed sewer connection to Middletown, noted that Middletown sewer is a closed system. Durham could potentially connect to Mattabasset municipal sewer plant, but it is uphill which would require additional technology. Suggested goal of adding sewer in targeted locations such as Main Street and the industrial district on Route 68
- F. DeFelice noted that sewer would need to be pumped uphill. Discussed modifying infrastructure goals to include consideration of septic connection in Middletown. Expressed concern that improved sewer will open up more opportunities for development
- P. Augur discussed conservation commission suggestions which include language that clarifies that DEEP manages state land holdings in town and includes walking and bird watching as White's Farm activities. The commission generally agreed to keep those changes
- Discussed bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, F. DeFelice suggested minor changes to language, commission discussed
- Reviewed lists of historical assets, discussed whether to add house not included. It was suggested to work with Historic District Commission or remove list from POCD entirely. Agreed to remove list
- Discussed potential future land use map, noted approval process for zoning changes. J. Morganti noted that Main Street previously had businesses in homes and Durham has been economically stagnant with few options for development

A motion was made by J. Martinelli, seconded by M. Fumiatti to close the public hearing. All aye, motion passed

A motion was made by J. Martinelli, seconded by J. Morganti to return to the regular meeting. All aye, Motion passed

Payment of Bills

A motion was made by C. Balay, seconded by M. Fumiatti to pay the following bills:

a) N. Charest, Recording Secretary
    a. #057 08/31/2026: $125.00
b) Tyche Planning
    a. $4,000 for Plan of Conservation and Development work
c) Joe Carta, ZEO
    a. $1,350 for the period of 7-1-2026 to 10-31-2026

All aye, motion passed.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

a) August 19, 2026

a. A motion was made by T. Dynia, seconded by J. Morganti to approve the minutes of the August 19, 2026 meeting as presented. Motion passed.

Approval of 2027 PZC Meeting Dates

A motion was made by C. Balay, seconded by M. Fumiatti to approve the 2027 meeting dates as presented. All aye, motion passed

Miscellaneous

F. DeFelice announced that RiverCog is working on an initiative called "Marketing Our Region" to improve advertising for tourism. Commission briefly discussed reasons people might come to Durham

Adjournment

A motion was made by J. Morganti seconded by J. DeNunzio to adjourn. All aye, motion passed; meeting adjourned at 9:15p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Nick Charest
Town Clerk, Recording Secretary
To View Zoom Recording:
https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/AdZh_ye1Ytjo9qHm8wnTIgH-xytDevj2351Dfg7K5AVhm2AR8FJbUiiF4IRxmHdv.KNcDc2ajmCXgroHq