

**Special Meeting of the  
Planning & Zoning Commission and  
Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) Steering Committee  
Thursday, May 27, 2026  
6:00 p.m.  
Robert F. Parisi Council Chambers – Town Hall  
Town Hall – 45 South Main Street  
Minutes**

**Call to Order**

Commissioner Fitzsimmons called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

In attendance were: Liz Davis, Wallingford Center, Inc; Dave Anderson, Parks & Rec Commission; Wesley Kromble, Wallingford Center Inc. Rich Benham, Planning & Zoning Commission; Jeff Borne, Conservation Commission; Jim Fitzsimmons, Chairman, Planning & Zoning Commission; Joann Hummel, Wallingford Senior Center Social Services; Elizabeth Verna, Resident; Jim Seichter, Planning & Zoning Commission; Joe Sanders, Amy Souchans, Land Use Attorney and Resident; Planning & Zoning Commission; Amy Torre, Land Use Specialist and ZEO; and Kevin Pagini, Town Planner; Jacob Robinson, POCD Project Manager, Colliers Engineering & Design; and Jackie Fernandez, Planner, Colliers Engineering & Design.

**Report on the Plan**

Mr. Robinson stated that this is the final meeting with the Steering Committee. He will meet with the Planning & Zoning Commission one more time to adopt the plan. He presented a PowerPoint and summarized the feedback from the final community engagement events and noted that the final public meeting is on June 11<sup>th</sup> to share the final document, the full process, and implementation. He noted that this is not the adoption meeting.

He reviewed the vision and goals of the project that are broken into objectives and then actions.

Ms. Souchans asked about the use of the word character, which is used in several different places. She recommended that the vision statement be changed to something like qualities, attributes, or features instead. The consensus of the group was to make that change.

Mr. Robinson then reviewed the new Future Land Use Plan. He noted that this plan is required by CT Statute 8-23. It offers a typology approach for similar land uses, where Land Use Subareas analyze land uses by geographic areas of the town. The previously reviewed land use recommendations are sorted by Future Land Use and Land Use Subarea. It was noted that this Future Land Use Plan begins on page 110 of the plan document.

Mr. Robinson presented the Plan Implementation section, which includes Administration, Short Term Actions, and Funding. This section describes the approach for implementation work, outlines baseline actions for the next 1-2 years, and matches actions/strategies with funding sources. He emphasized the importance of good communication. There will be annual progress reviews. There is an Excel spreadsheet identifying funding opportunities.

Mr. Robinson opened a discussion on the plan document, which is over 100 pages long. Comments made tonight or through the end of the week will be incorporated into the final plan.

Ms. Souchuns mentioned the word character and suggested moving away from that word. She also asked for the definition of a country store. Mr. Robinson replied that it is a small store that has the same form as the surrounding residential uses, so it looks like a residential use. Ms. Souchuns noted that it seems odd to highlight this when only three things are highlighted as being encouraged. She suggested in-home day care instead. It needs to be broader. Mr. Robinson welcomed other suggestions for small-scale commercial uses. Mr. Pagini suggested something like 'little to no expansion of intensity of currently allowed and previously existing commercial uses'.

Mr. Anderson asked if there were specific requests for recreational aspects and activities. Mr. Robinson replied that there were two big things people wanted: more and better trails and better staffing and maintenance of the existing amenities. There was also a request for more pickleball courts.

Mr. Krombel noted that, regarding housing, the plan feels very broad. He understands that we don't want to be super specific, but the plan seems to just say 'do more. Should we add a numerical value as a benchmark? Mr. Robinson noted that Public Act 25-1 will require that the Town create an Affordable Housing Plan that could be joined with the POCD or could be a separate plan. A numerical value could be added, but it hasn't come up before. Mr. Krombel asked if Wallingford's median rent would affect our ability to get grants for housing. Mr. Robinson replied that everyone is using the American Community Survey sociodemographic metrics for their POCDs. Mr. Krombel asked how to make the implementation successful. Mr. Robinson replied that reporting annually helps. Implementation depends mostly on the Town staff. Mr. Pagini reported that 80 to 85% of the actions from the last POCD were completed. Ms. Torre noted that Planning and Zoning would be responsible for reporting on the POCD annually. Different Departments and Committees can choose recommendations that they want to implement instead of assigning responsibility.

Mr. Borne referred to the environmental conditions mentioned in the report and asked for clarification of the open space. Mr. Robinson replied that they can change it to a publicly accessible open space. Mr. Pagini added that there are approximately 3000 acres of open space owned by the Town. He agreed that there is an open space that is not publicly accessible. Mr. Borne suggested changing the wording from the Quinnipiac River runs through Wallingford to the Quinnipiac River bisects Wallingford. He suggested adding to the introduction that the east boundary of Wallingford is a trap rock ridge. It is a significant formation and should be identified as an environmental resource. Mr. Pagini noted that it is Beseck Mountain and the Blue Trail, and they should be added. Mr. Borne referred to the land use sub-areas. Specifically in sub-areas 1 and 2, the Quinnipiac River doesn't show clearly. He suggested highlighting it. In the description of the sub-areas, he suggested adding that about half of the Quinnipiac River corridor is in sub-area 1, with the other half in sub-area 2. He also corrected Blue Hill Orchard to Blue Hills Orchard. He identified a couple of other parks that could be added. He asked if the Quinnipiac Linear Trail was mentioned in the report. He noted that sub area 4 and maybe 5 should mention that the Town Center is also where the Town started in 1670. He suggested adding the National Scenic Trail in sub-area 6. He also suggested mentioning the natural waterfall in sub-area 7.

Joann Hummel noted that the data included the HUD programs, Section 8 Programs, Housing Authority, along with all the other median rents, so it will appear to be lower than what most people are receiving. She likes the idea of a timeline for what we will be doing about affordable housing.

Elizabeth Verna referred to the Development Plan, numbers 3, 8, and 9, on page 111, and asked if colors could be added to help visualize where these sections are within the sub-areas. It is in the future land use recommendations section. She asked about the way the report describes homes, i.e., worker homes

and starter homes. She suggested calling it something else, like workforce housing. Affordable housing may not be a first home. She agreed that the market for rental housing is identified as too low, as it is not a reality. She added that the page about witchcraft bothers her. It is not representative of Wallingford. She suggested finding something more interesting. Mr. Robinson replied, promoting it as a tourism attraction is a great opportunity for economic development. Ms. Verna suggested a fun fact section instead. She noted that the Oakdale Theater and Choate bring tourism to Wallingford. Ms. Davis noted that it is a driver of some sort for people who come in from out of town. It was a big attraction before COVID. Planning of related events is currently being discussed. Mr. Benham added that he has the same last name as the witch, and their property was across the street from where the Post Office is. He has had many conversations across the state regarding Winifred Benham. Many know the history.

Joe Sanders suggested taking the phrase “involving witchcraft and the occult’ from page 105, as it makes it look like Wallingford celebrates the occult. Instead, make it about the history. He pointed out that Amy’s name is misspelled. He stated that his understanding is that this report is not just to meet the State requirements, but that this is actionable going forward. If so, it is important that everything in the report is a thoughtful inclusion, so it will be a useful tool. He noted that the term Affordable Housing is used a lot but is not defined. Everyone has a different opinion on what that means. We need to define it. He referred to page 12. It indicates that Wallingford’s housing costs and rental is lower than those in the surrounding areas. He noted that we didn’t create the problems we have, and we can’t solve them in isolation. The housing problem is not unique to Wallingford. He noted that the implementation is still vague. It needs to define stakeholders, action, and be cautious of the places where we have studied. He asked why reverse diversity is in the report. Is it a State requirement? Mr. Robinson replied that it was presented in the socio-demographic data as part of the American Communities Survey. Mr. Sanders wanted to avoid unfair narratives. He would like reconsideration of why that’s there and if it’s useful. He noted that the survey results represent 1.6% of the residents in town, so we have to be careful about what we draw from that. He suggested finding a way to emphasize our low poverty rate. How do we shape our efforts to ideally enable high homeownership?

Mr. Pagini asked if the zoning maps in the sub areas be labeled on the maps to make it easier.

Chairman Fitzsimmons referred to the picture on pages 45 & 46, subsection 4 land use areas. This picture is not from Wallingford. He suggested finding a Wallingford neighborhood picture instead. He referred to page 73, sub area 5, Moses Y Beach is spelled wrong. He mentioned that the Town is ready to invest in a full-time traffic engineer, and this plan should reflect that. It was noted that it is already in the report under objective 27 J in the transportation goals. He suggested mentioning that Route 5 is in desperate need of improvements. Mr. Pagini noted that it is currently being studied. Chairman Fitzsimmons thought it should be included in the plan anyway. It was suggested that we can add to objective 27A. Mr. Robinson agreed to mention the ongoing study. Chairman Fitzsimmons suggested adding continue to explore widening Rte 5 to be two through lanes throughout.

Mr. Krombel referred to page 117 of the PDF version, numbers 8 and 9, about industrial and light industrial. At the end of both of those paragraphs, it says there are no recommended changes to the future land uses in the area. He asked about the IX zone’s recent rezoning. Are we missing an opportunity to put something in as an idea instead of stating no recommended changes? Mr. Robinson clarified the location.

Ms. Souchuns noted that the downtown apartment overlay is being deleted. So by the time this is implemented, that zone won't exist. Mr. Robinson noted that it has already been removed from the draft.

Mr. Sanders referred to page 117 of the PDF on 8 and 9, the statement that there are no recommended changes to future land use in this area may be a problem for Planning & Zoning. He asked if we needed to say that. Would it be better not to say anything? Mr. Robinson stated that it is necessary to specify that, unlike other of the future land use areas, there are no recommendations in the document. Ms. Souchuns agreed and suggested that it be changed to read action items or implementation items. Mr. Pagini thought the intent was that there are no recommendations to increase intensity in the area, but not to rule out less intense development. Chairman Fitzsimmons stated that he is not opposed to saying nothing. Any zoning change would have to be consistent with the POCD. He agreed to take that sentence out. It was noted that it appears in 3 as well.

Ms. Verna stated that she is not comfortable with the way affordable housing is defined on page 29. Non-market rate is better. Ms. Souchuns agreed. Ms. Verna stated that there has to be consistency in the definition of affordable housing.

Mr. Pagini added that for future land use, there should be something mentioned about expanding senior housing.

Chairman Fitzsimmons thanked the members of the POCD Steering Committee for their efforts.

Mr. Robinson reviewed the next steps. The final public meeting will be on June 11<sup>th</sup>. The Statute 8-23 process takes a while, but the process is anticipated to be completed by September.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cheryl-Ann Tubby  
Recording Secretary