

Minutes
Planning & Zoning Commission
Special Meeting
Public Hearing Regarding Adoption of Wallingford
Plan of Conservation and Development 2026 - 2036
Wednesday, September 23, 2026
6:30 p.m.
45 South Main Street (Town Hall) Council Chambers

Chairman Fitzsimmons called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

Roll Call: Present: James Fitzsimmons, Chair; Jeffrey Kohan, Vice Chair; Joseph Sanders, Alternate; Richard Benham, Alternate; Casey Camire, Alternate; and Kevin Pagini, Town Planner.

1. Introductory Remarks

Chairman Fitzsimmons explained that this meeting is for the adoption of the Wallingford Plan of Conservation and Development for 2026 – 2036. He stated that this culminates more than a year-long effort with countless hours of preparation.

Jacob Robison, Colliers Engineering & Design, used a PowerPoint to provide a brief presentation of the process and findings. He stated that the Town was responsible for project management and delivery and thanked Kevin Pagini, Town Planner, for his efforts. Mr. Robison explained that he and his team have been the primary point of contact, led the community engagement activities, provided technical analysis, and developed the plan.

2. Summary Presentation: POCD Process and Development

Mr. Robison reviewed the phases of the project, which included community engagement, an analysis of existing conditions, and planning a future for Wallingford. He reviewed the engagement process, which included public meetings, stakeholder meetings, pop-up feedback events, and the survey. The survey had a higher response rate than they've ever seen. The Plan draft was reviewed at a public meeting, and comments were included in the final draft. He reviewed the existing conditions analysis, including housing, development, transportation, services & resources, and environment. He summarized the key strengths of Wallingford, including a walkable Town Center, engaged populace, natural areas, and regional draws. He summarized the key opportunities, including developing diverse housing, improving transportation infrastructure, reinvesting in community facilities, and improving communications. Mr. Robison reviewed the Visions, Goals, and Objectives of the report. He explained that the land use plan outlines general desired locations for land uses in the future. This is required by Statute 8-23. The POCD is a plan for the Town to implement ideas for education, collaboration, and milestone tracking. He explained the adoption process, which is defined in CT General Statute 8-23. This is the last step of the process.

Chairman Fitzsimmons thanked everyone for their contributions.

3. Public Hearing: adoption of proposed Wallingford Plan of Conservation and Development 2026-2036

Richard Partesano, 303 Highland Avenue, stated that he volunteers with Wallingford Works for Housing. He stated that the POCD is an excellent job. He is happy to see affordable housing as a major pillar. He asked why the potential for closing and/or building a high school was not included, as it will have a major impact on the town.

Annette Nunez, 17 Field Drive, read a statement. She has lived in her house for 42 years and is looking to downsize, but can't find anything in Wallingford. Wallingford needs to recognize the housing crisis. She added that people are afraid of "affordable housing". She asked that the town help people stay in town and have new people come into town.

Mary Mushinsky, State Representative, stated that she is co-chair of the Quinnipiac River Linear Trail Advisory Committee. She commended the report for the ways to address the housing shortage. She reported that the Quinnipiac River Linear Trail already has a master plan that includes a state-recognized greenway, and they intend to expand the trail south and north. She asked that this be added to the POCD. They are already pursuing funding. Mr. Robison suggested changing recommendation 26D to "update the current Quinnipiac River Linear Trail master plan to determine feasibility of connections to bordering municipalities and nearby trails and accessibility improvements to trailheads." Ms. Mushinsky promised to get a copy of the master plan to the Commission. Commissioner Kohan suggested adding a condition of approval that the Quinnipiac River Vision Plan be added to the POCD.

Sheila Davis-Cosgrove, 103 Colonial Hill Drive, commended the writing and the plan. She noted that from a grant perspective, this is very encouraging. She noted that the Quinnipiac River Trail Master Plan is an extension of the Vision Plan and also includes proposed extensions. The trails help economic development by supporting local businesses. She added that she was encouraged to see a mention of updating zoning for accessory dwelling units. This is a piece of the puzzle. She was discouraged because there was not much about sustainability, the environment, solar, or EV chargers. She added that better communication is a definite need. There are lots of ways to communicate to town residents. She encouraged annual reviews. She suggested that stakeholder numbers be expanded to get new voices. There are people in town that want to help. She added that the reinvestment in infrastructure and buildings shows the health and potential of the Town. This can stimulate other investment.

Commissioner Kohan: Motion to close the public hearing on the adoption of proposed Wallingford Plan of Conservation and Development 2026-2036.

Commissioner Camire: Second

Vote: Kohan – yes; Camire – yes; Sanders – yes; Benham – yes; Chairman Fitzsimmons – yes.

4. Deliberation/Discussion by the Commission

Commissioner Camire thanked Mr. Robison for leading the project. It's a well-made and well-focused document. He stated that if this doesn't lead to population growth, he doesn't see the point. The action plan includes housing and development. We need to focus on what needs to happen. Young people can't afford to stay in town, and seniors want to downsize with no good options. He appreciated that Wallingford Works for Housing is called out in the report. He expects that in 10 years the town will have grown.

Commissioner Sanders stated that there have been comments that the Town didn't do much with the last plan and wondered why we didn't just recycle that plan. He noted that there has been tremendous outreach to the public. He thanked Mr. Robison for his work. He is concerned with the emphasis on only a couple of zones in town. We need to look at the Town as a whole. Some want the town to grow; others do not. He was pleased to see the emphasis on family. We can't replace what families do, but we can try to help the most vulnerable and continue to support our neighbors. We can create a small platform for families to thrive.

Commissioner Kohan acknowledged the efforts of Mr. Pagini and Mr. Robison in putting together this comprehensive plan. He noted that the Regional Planning Commission reviewed the plan last month and gave it rave reviews. There are a lot of State requirements that this plan had to meet, and he believes all have been met. He believes that the public and the Town administration had a lot of opportunity to provide input. He asked if there was any input from the Town Council or the Mayor after the presentation to them. Mr. Pagini replied no. Commissioner Kohan noted that there are mentions in the plan to review zoning regulations. We will have to take that up. He noted that to develop the remaining 4% of developable land in Wallingford, we need to look at water and sewer facilities. We need a map of what is needed to develop this land. Planning and Zoning will need to review the land use regulations in these areas.

Mr. Pagini reported that he is working with SCRCOG on a developable land inventory, which should be done in a couple of months. This is a requirement of the State.

Commissioner Kohan agreed that housing is the number one priority. He added that the impending school decision will impact how we move forward. Another priority is to look at the Watershed Interchange and IX zones. He would like input from the Water Division on those areas. He noted that subarea seven's list of allowed uses should include data centers, as they are allowed. We need to look back and see how well we did over the last 10 years. Zoning applications often reference the POCD. We are just sorting out priorities and stakeholders. This is a good plan.

Chairman Fitzsimmons stated that he agreed with all the other comments. The reality is that the Adoption is required and that this is an update to the plan done in 2016. The Statute requires a policy for future land use, housing, transportation, and more. The intention of the planning process is to document existing conditions in Wallingford, identify a future vision, establish goals, and identify a road map for future action. The plan serves as a guide for decision makers and community leaders and provides a comprehensive development framework to guide future investment. Policy statements in this plan must be consistent with the South Central Connecticut Council of Government's POCD and the State's POCD. Our plan does. He noted a correction on page 2 listing members of the Planning and Zoning Commission. He asked that Richard Benham be added since he is voting this evening. He thanked Town Staff and the public for their input. He noted that the survey had 1,275 responses and captured the sentiments of the Town. There was a concerted effort to reach out and get input. He thanked Mr. Robison for his efforts. This plan is a blueprint. He thanked the members of the Electric Division, Water and Sewer Department, Economic Development Commission, Don Crouch, the Mayor's Office, and Planning & Zoning Commission members. He stated that Wallingford is a great town. He agreed that housing needs to be addressed. He announced a Workshop on Monday, October 5th in the Library to discuss housing.

5. Possible Action to Adopt the Wallingford Plan of Conservation and Development 2026-2036

Commissioner Kohan: Motion to adopt the Wallingford Plan of Conservation and Development 2026 – 2036, dated June 5, 2026, revised to September 23, 2026, subject to the following amendments, to be effective Wednesday, September 30, 2026:

1. Amend on page 104, thematic area “*Environment*,” the following additional actions under objective #17:
 - c. *Establish guidelines and update regulations as needed for the use of rodenticides and pesticides in public spaces. Expand to private businesses as needed.*
2. Amend on Page 104, thematic area “*Environment*,” the following additional actions under objective #18:
 - c. *Establish guidelines and update regulations as needed to minimize and/or eliminate impacts of low-frequency noise*
 - d. *Review regulations and establish guidelines for solar array fields with a focus on protecting and enhancing wildlife habitats and corridors.*
3. Amend on Page 35, under the key finding, “*Agricultural Uses*”, the following additional language to be added to Paragraph 5 after the word *considered*:

Current agricultural uses should be supported so they can continue to operate into the future. Allowing agricultural businesses to diversify their operations so they can remain economically feasible should be considered ***while balancing the protection and enhancement of wildlife habitats and corridors.***
4. **Changes to language:** Add a bit more discussion to the WI/WPD zone and add more discussion on Electric Division.
5. **Addition of the DEEP Forestry Management Grant as a grant funding source on Page 119.**
6. **Correction on Page 2: correct spelling of “acknowledgement”.**
7. **Correction on Page 2: add Richard Benham as a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission.**
8. **Include the Quinnipiac River Trail Vision Plan to expand the trail toward North Haven and farther north.**

Commissioner Camire: second

Commissioner Sanders asked about the origin of the amendments. Commissioner Kohan reported that he suggested them. Commissioner Sanders indicated that he had not seen them prior to this and they should have the opportunity to discuss them. Chairman Fitzsimmons noted that they were in the meeting packet.

Commissioner Kohan noted that he has added conditions on rodenticides and pesticides on applications in the past.

Commissioner Camire asked if there are existing State guidelines on pesticides. Commissioner Kohan replied yes, and that other towns have adopted similar rules to protect wildlife. He noted that everything in the POCD is a suggestion. He explained that numbers 2 and 3 are forward-looking amendments to help protect natural resources.

Commissioner Sanders suggested changing the wording from “establish” to “recommend”. For item number 1 C, he is not comfortable with the phrase “expand to private businesses as needed.” For item number 2, the suggestion seems to throw obstacles to bringing regulations forward. He doesn’t like “establish” in this document.

Commissioner Camire stated that the “as needed” wording gives flexibility to the Commission to determine need.

Chairman Fitzsimmons suggested replacing “establish” with “recommend”.

Commissioner Kohan accepted that amendment to the Motion. The revised motion reads as follows:

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1. **Amend on page 104, thematic area “Environment,” the following additional actions under objective #17:**
 - a. *Recommend guidelines and update regulations as needed for the use of rodenticides and pesticides in public spaces. Expand to private businesses as needed.*
2. **Amend on Page 104, thematic area “Environment,” the following additional actions under objective #18:**
 - a. *Recommend guidelines and update regulations as needed to minimize and/or eliminate impacts of low-frequency noise*
 - b. *Review regulations and establish guidelines for solar array fields with a focus on protecting and enhancing wildlife habitats and corridors.*
3. **Amend on Page 35, under the key finding, “Agricultural Uses”, the following additional language to be added to Paragraph 5 after the word *considered*:**

Current agricultural uses should be supported so they can continue to operate into the future. Allowing agricultural businesses to diversify their operations so they can remain economically feasible should be considered ***while balancing the protection and enhancement of wildlife habitats and corridors.***
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8. **Include the Quinnipiac River Trail Vision Plan to expand the trail toward North Haven and farther north.**

Commissioner Camire: second the amended motion

Vote: Kohan – yes; Camire – yes; Sanders – yes; Benham – yes; Chairman Fitzsimmons – yes.

Chairman Fitzsimmons declared the plan adopted.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Kohan: Motion to adjourn the Special Wallingford Planning and Zoning Commission for Wednesday, September 23, 2026, at 7:55 pm.

Commissioner Camire: Second

Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl-Ann Tubby
Recording Secretary