

# Planning Implementation Committee Report – Planning and Zoning Commission / Town Planner

February 22, 2022

The POCD contains an Action Agenda. The recommendations related to the PZC and/or Town Planner are identified below. For clarity I have highlighted the Items accomplished in green, the items in process in Yellow and the items which have not been started in red. I intend to discuss the items in RED with the Planning and Zoning Commission to determine if they are interested in pursuing them.

Section	Action Item	Timeframe	Lead (1)	Lead (2)	Support (1)	Support (2)
Higganum	Extend the Higganum Village District to include the Scovil Hoe Buildings (former DOT garage) and the property in between.	ST	PZC			
Higganum	Encourage the re-use of vacant under-utilized buildings in Higganum.	ONGOING	PZC			
Higganum	Create a pedestrian plan to connect the Reservoir to Higganum Cove.	MT	PZC		CC	
Tylerville	Develop a cohesive look for Tylerville with improved wayfinding, lighting, building design guidelines, etc.	MT	PZC		TP	
Tylerville	Create a pocket park or public gathering area or community open space in Tylerville.	MT	PZC			
Haddam Neck	Create a working group of PZC and Haddam Neck representatives to review current Zoning Regulations in light of the unique land characteristics and sparse settlement patterns found in Haddam Neck. Determine if special district zoning is appropriate.	ST	PZC			

Haddam Neck	Investigate the current zoning designation of the former Connecticut Yankee site as Industrial and consider a less intense zoning classification.	ST	PZC			
Small Commercial & Industrial Areas	Complete the creation of the industrial park at the intersection of Route 9 and 81 by rezoning the parcel (6.5 acres) between the existing industrial park and the commercially zoned property to Industrial Park Zone.	ST	PZC		EDC	
Small Commercial & Industrial Areas	Evaluate the possible locations of additional industrial land. Identify locations that are not disruptive to nearby residential uses and roadways, and establish an industrial zoning district with performance standards that ensure long term compatibility.	MT	PZC		EDC	
Small Commercial & Industrial Areas	Create a 'Route 81 Commercial Corridor Zone' that allows the current commercial uses to continue while encouraging cohesive, attractive, development.	MT	PZC			
Small Commercial & Industrial Areas	Explore zoning options that would allow and encourage more mixed-use development in these areas, with apartments over ground floor retail.	MT	PZC			
Small Commercial & Industrial Areas	Catalogue all lots within these commercially zoned areas that have strictly residential buildings and/or uses. Rezone these parcels as residential districts to better reflect their actual use. Maintain commercial zoning for lots that have current commercial uses.	MT	PZC			
Rural Residential Areas	Create an Open Space Zoning Classification and rezone land that is deed restricted as conservation lands to that zoning classification.	LT	PZC			
Rural Residential Areas	Reduce street lighting in this area, and encourage or legislate "dark skies" policies to reduce light pollution.	MT	PZC		CC	
Getting Around	Undergo a wayfinding campaign for Haddam sites, such as The Old Town Hall, Field Park, Haddam Meadows and other attractions, that has a cohesive style and can direct tourists to destinations in town.	MT	PZC		PW	

Where We Live	Explore the development of a new zoning district that allows "cottage-style" development - smaller homes on smaller lots.	MT	PZC			
Community Support	Work with the new Water Pollution Control Authority to develop a Facility Plan that can be used to apply for clean water funding to extend public water and/or sewer service to Higganum and Tylerville.	MT	PZC		TP	
Community Support	Identify lands close to goods and services that would be suitable for public senior housing to retain our seniors in Haddam	ST	PZC			

The POCD also includes Goals and Strategies within the text of the document for the Places of Haddam.

### HIGGANUM

With regard to Higganum the following strategies are identified and the following work is underway:

On Scovil Hoe Buildings

- **Extend the Higganum Village District to include the Scovil Hoe Buildings (former DOT garage) and the property in between.**

Rather than simply rezoning the area to Village District the Commission adopted an ***Adaptive Historic Re-Use Regulation*** which allows a myriad of uses on the property but also includes assurances that the historic character of the buildings will be preserved / enhanced.

- **Support the redevelopment of the Scovil Hoe Mill Complex by working with State agencies, especially ConnDOT and DECD. Focus on environmental remediation of the property to get ready for reuse.**

In the last year we have conducted all environmental studies and secured \$1.8 million in clean up funds. In 2022 we will bid and conduct the environmental remediation. We have also secured a very experienced and well capitalized developer to renovate the buildings and secure tenants. This will re-energize the building, bring new uses to the center and generate jobs and tax revenue.

#### **On the Town Garage**

- **Investigate new sites for a town garage in order that the existing town garage be moved outside of the Village.**
- **Budget for and conduct a Needs Assessment Study for the Town Garage and budget for land acquisition for a new location for a Town Garage.**

The Town Engineer has reviewed 3 sites for a possible garage and they all had various problems. (Rutty Ferry, Firehouse, East Coast Salvage) The First Selectman is open to looking into other sites should one come forward. The Capital Plan includes a placeholder for funding a new Town Garage if a site is identified and approved.

#### **On Sewers**

- **Use the Wright Pierce 2012 Sewer Study as a basis to create a sewer plan for Higganum.**
- **Establish Public Private Partnerships between the Town and property owners in Higganum, to encourage the development of sewers to generate redevelopment.**
- **Form a water and sewer authority for Haddam (WPCA). Explore and determine the best, most financially sound solutions for water, sanitation, and power in Higganum Center, and begin raising funds for implementation.**

The acquisition of HES after adoption of the POCD was a real game changer. Previous studies have discussed bringing sewer from Middletown or building a treatment facility in the Center. Both are very expensive and multi-year design and permitting projects.

With the HES property we began investigating a community septic system with State Health and Environmental Protection. Both were very supportive. This led to an application for a \$125,000 state STEAP grant. We have now created a WPCA and selected Nathan Jacobson to create a sewer plan and design a community septic system to service the center. The Capital budget contains funding for the first phase of construction once design is complete. With new federal infrastructure funding available we will begin looking into a community water system.

### **On Higganum Cove**

- **Create an entity that will guide future decisions and management of the Higganum Cove. This may serve as an oversight facility until the ownership of Higganum Cove is finalized.**
- **Finalize the ownership of Higganum Cove, to either the Town or a non-profit entity that can manage and optimize the site for historic and environmental education.**
- **Create a pedestrian plan to connect the Reservoir to Higganum Cove.**
- **Establish a strong visual connection between Higganum Center and the Cove through tree management, streetscaping, and signage.**

In 2020 the Town Planner began taking a very active role regarding the maintenance and management of the Cove. The Land use Department received funding in the budget to maintain the property which had become an overgrown mess. The Board of Selectman created the Higganum Cove Advisory Committee. The Committee members have decades of experience in Higganum and specifically with the Cove.

The charge of the Committee is all encompassing and includes :

- A. Future use (including linkages to other open spaces and the Center)
- B. On-going maintenance;
- C. Desired improvements;

- D. Rules and regulations; and
- E. Community awareness and promotion of the unique features of the property.
- F. Seek public and private funding for improvements to the property
- G. Submit annual budgetary request to the First Selectman for inclusion in the annual budget process.

The committee recently solicited proposals from Landscape Architects to complete an overall master plan for the Cove and is seeking \$100,000 in the capital budget to begin implementation in 2022-23. The Committee is also seeking to double of its operating budget to maintain the Cove.

#### **On Vacant Buildings**

- **Actively market vacancies in Higganum Center to compatible small businesses. Work with existing home businesses in town to grow their business and 'graduate' to vacant storefronts.**
- **Encourage the re-use of vacant under-utilized buildings in Higganum.**

Publically owned - Scovil Hoe - see above

HES - has been listed for sale or lease for almost 6 months with no meaningful interest. Will begin a public discussion regarding future uses.

Privately owned - Citizens Bank - on the market but still leased to Citizens.

Rossi Office Building - working with Rossi for re-use, interested developer

## HADDAM CENTER

With regard to Haddam Center the following strategies are discussed and the following work is underway:

- 1. Encourage a limited amount of new civic development to occur in Haddam Center in order to reinforce this village as the center of civic activity in Haddam.*
- 2. Encourage new civic buildings and renovation of existing buildings to respect the historic architecture, landscapes, and viewsheds of Haddam Center.*

**Haddam Jail** – This is a huge challenge. The Town Planner has shown it to several developers and the renovation costs are too high. A very successful restaurant group with nine locations was very interested until COVID19. We need to address the disconnected septic issue and establish a reliable water source. We can't expect a tenant to renovate the buildings AND install a new septic and well.

- 3. Explore design and management options that would make the streets of Haddam Center friendlier and safer for walking and biking, including the repair and expansion of the sidewalk network.*
- 4. Continue to advocate for lower traffic speeds and traffic calming along Saybrook Road (Rte 154) in Haddam Center, including more obvious crosswalks to make it safer for people of all ages and abilities to cross Saybrook Road.*

**Sidewalks** – Haddam Center is the oldest section of Town and is in a National Historic Register. We need to highlight that fact and promote it. The Town Planners experience with the Farmington Village Historic District really showed how historic assets can add so much value to a town.

This sidewalk reconstruction project is 100% funded by the State of CT and includes signage, landscape, benches etc. The final plans have been submitted to the CTDOT for final approval. A grant from Eversource allowed us to hire the historical society to research key historical elements, which will be incorporated into the project. In October of 2021 we bid the project and will award the project for Spring 2022 construction.

## TYLERVILLE

With regard to Tylerville the following strategies are discussed and the following work is underway:

- 1. Encourage the development of commercial uses that complement and capitalize on the presence of the Connecticut River, the Essex Steam Train, the Goodspeed Opera House, and other nearby attractions.*
- 2. Focus on developing a partnership with the State Department of Transportation for redeveloping its large facility on the southern end of Tylerville, should the state cease to use the DOT garage on the property.*
- 3. Work with East Haddam on creating economic development initiatives that are “win-win” for the Tylerville/Goodspeed area, including capitalizing on the existing food and beverage oriented businesses in Tylerville.*
- 4. Encourage new commercial and sensitively scaled higher density residential development to occur in Tylerville in order to reinforce this area as a significant town center. Levels of development that require public water and sewer should not be allowed until such infrastructure is operational.*
- 5. Where possible, pursue efforts to protect the remaining open space surrounding Tylerville and to preserve the historic settlement pattern of compact villages surrounded by open land.*
- 6. Continue to negotiate with the State of Connecticut on future uses at Eagle Landing State Park that are more conducive to local tourism and community events.*
- 7. Encourage continued actions that will enhance the cohesiveness and appearance of Tylerville Center, such as signage, landscaping, dark sky-friendly lighting, and other village design features and improvements.*
- 8. Continue to build and maintain sidewalk and bicycle infrastructure, improve multi-modal transit access, and otherwise expand non-private vehicular options to make it easier to get around Tylerville, and between Tylerville and nearby neighborhoods and natural, recreational, and historic assets, including non-vehicular access across the swing bridge to East Haddam.*



**Sidewalks on Bridge Road/ Roundabouts** – late in 2020 CTDOT announced they will be constructing a pedestrian crossing cantilevered off of the swing bridge to connect Tylerville and East Haddam. This gave our sidewalk project much more significance. **In 2021**, we completed all appraisals, negotiated and acquired all the required easements along Bridge Road. In October of 2021 we bid the project and will award the project for Spring 2022 construction.

The DOT is moving forward with round about at the intersection of Bridge and Saybrook Road and the Swing Bridge rehab. All three projects are well coordinated, including matching street lighting and landscape elements.

**Multi-family in Tylerville** – In 2020 the Planning and Zoning Commission amended the Tylerville Village Regulations to permit multi-family development. As a result, the Commission received and approved a 56 unit development on Brooks Court and a 42 unit complex on Bridge Road. The Brooks Court developer is in the process of applying for 32 additional units. All engineering is complete.

Both projects have been reviewed and approved by the Architectural Review Committee (ARC). When built these projects will be a very significant addition to the grand list and add residents to the area and diversity in Haddam's housing stock which is critical.

**1572 Saybrook Road** – This is the historic home at the corner of Brooks Court. The owner has secured approval from ARC to expand the existing house and potentially 2 additional buildings. The uses would be retail / office/ restaurant.