

Public Hearing
Cheshire Planning and Zoning Commission
Monday, February 9, 2026 – Town Hall – Council Chambers – 7:00 PM

I. **Call to Order**

Chairman Kardaras called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

II. **Roll Call**

Matt Bowman called the roll

Present: John Kardaras, Chairman; Earl Kurtz, Vice Chairman; Matt Bowman, Secretary; Casey Downes, Jim McKenney, Chris Affie,

Alternates: John Hilzinger, Anita Blake, Paul Calaluce

Absent: Sean Strollo, Tom Selmont, Jeff Natale

Staff member present: Michael Glidden, Town Planner

III. **Determination of Quorum**

Following roll call, it was determined there were enough members present for a quorum.

IV. **Pledge of Allegiance**

V. **Business**

Unfinished Business

1. **Application for a re-subdivision on behalf of Birdsey Development, LLC, Applicant. Applicant is requesting a 25-lot re-subdivision at the property located at 466 Academy Rd. (Assessor's Map 58, Lot 45) and 0 Academy Rd. (Assessor's Map 58, Lot 47) Zone R-20.**

M. Bowman recused himself.

Ryan McEvoy, licensed professional engineer with SLR Consulting, addressed the commission. R. McEvoy explains that they have provided responses to the only remaining comment that the town engineering department had regarding sightlines, that they are in accordance with town and DOT standards for stopping sight distance.

R. McEvoy explains that they are proposing a sidewalk to be on one side of the through road and the cul-de-sac which is in accordance with recommendations from the engineering department. He states that they have received a memo from the engineering department which explains in further detail the reasoning. M. Glidden reads the memo from the Town Engineer into the record. He explains that the reason the Town Engineer came to this conclusion of recommending the waiver is because it is a through street with a cul-de-sac that is not connecting to anything else. E. Kurtz asks if they can ask for there to be a sidewalk on Wiese Rd. M. Glidden explains that that would be considered an off-sight improvement and the applicant would have to agree to that. C. Downes brings up that the development across the street has sidewalks on both sides that also don't connect anywhere. C. Affie asks about where school children would be picked up. M. Glidden explains it is a through street so the buses would drive down it. J. McKenney asks if there is any possibility for connectivity in the future. M. Glidden states that there is not an existing sidewalk network in the area and there are no plans expand it.

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Sean Henri, of 1375 Half Moon Rd., addressed the commission. S. Henri states that he doesn't necessarily agree with the Town Engineer's reasoning and that they need sidewalks for safety and for better quality of life.

Alana Sejdic, of 390 Cedar Lane, addressed the commission. A. Seidic states that there are a lot of children on Wiese Rd. that would benefit from having sidewalks on that road.

The public hearing was closed.

2. Application for a Special Permit on behalf of Doug Levens, Executive Director of Cheshire Community YMCA, Applicant; Applicant is requesting a Special Permit pursuant to Section 30 of the Zoning Regulations for a gym and fitness center located at 435 North Brooksvale Rd. (Assessor's Map 77, Lot 12) Zone R-20.

Doug Levens, of 72 Chipman Dr., addressed the commission. D. Levens explains that they are looking to get a change of use for the subject property. He states that they would like to do some fitness programs until they are able to do renovations on the property. M. Glidden explains that this meets the regulations.

The public hearing was closed.

3. 2026 Plan of Conservation and Development

Robin Newton and Johnell Clarke from Tyche Planning and Policy Group addressed the commission. R. Newton explains that a Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) is a statutory document that's required to be done by every town in CT every 10 years. She further explains that they had met with various stakeholder groups to get valuable feedback.

J. Clarke explains that vision of the plan and shares the four vision statements. She reads the goals for strengthening the quality of life and the actions that would help to achieve these goals. R. Newton reads the goals for a diverse and resilient development pattern and the actions that would help to achieve these goals. R. Newton reads the environmentally sensitive goals and the actions that would help to achieve these goals. J. Clarke reads the connected and accessible goals and the actions that would help to achieve these goals. R. Newton explains that these are the goals and policies that are found in each chapter. She states that at the end of the POCD there is an implementation plan that spells out the goals and policies and who would be responsible for implementing them.

Daniel Knudsen, of 48 Mt. Sanford Rd., addressed the commission. D. Knudsen states that he is here on behalf of the Cheshire Energy Commission. D. Knudsen explains that the POCD should address energy policy and that the Energy Commission would like to develop a comprehensive energy plan for the POCD. He highlights nine suggestions that he would like to see in the plan and provides links to other municipalities that include energy policies in their POCD.

Laura Monte, of 1181 Sperry Rd., addressed the commission. L. Monte states that the Environment Commission does not support the draft POCD because they weren't included in the conservation component. M. Glidden explains that the Environment Commission was given the same opportunity of the other commissions and a lot of the memo that was received from the Environment Commission was incorporated into the plan.

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74 Karen Schnitzer, of 18 Currier Place, addressed the commission. K. Schnitzer states that there is little
75 discussion of the major open space properties and how to manage them. She brings up that there has been
76 a lot of major changes in land use and that the town should have a policy regarding major land use
77 changes. This could look into biodiversity and uncover any hidden cultural or historical elements that
78 should be protected. K. Schnitzer reads other suggestions of goals that should be added into the
79 environmentally sensitive section of the POCD.

80 David Schrumm, of 369 Sir Walter Dr., addressed the commission. D. Schrumm brings up that the POCD
81 mentions wetland restoration and he state that that would be very expensive and doesn't work well. He
82 also brings up that Parks and Recreation should have their own grounds crew, HOA requirements,
83 infrastructure improvement, traffic, and why they shouldn't expand the sewer shed.

84 Sean Henri, of 1375 Half Moon Rd., addressed the commission. S. Henri states that the draft would be
85 stronger if each goal included and outcome statement describing what success looks like, a small set of
86 measurable key performance indicators, and an implementation approach. He also brings up that the goal
87 of expanding open space is a very broad goal and hard to measure.

88 Amy Russell, of 231 Argyle Rd., addressed the commission. A. Russell states that she thought the draft
89 would be more specific. She brings up that citizens of the town are concerned about traffic congestion and
90 safety, and the lack of public transportation. She suggests looking into how the linear trail can connect to
91 more places throughout town.

92 Joanna Giddings, of 503 Oakridge Dr., addressed the commission. J. Giddings mentions that she
93 appreciates how ADA compliance has been interwoven throughout the document. She brings up that she
94 is concerned about the lack of focus on Cheshire's ecosystem and that there should be mention of the
95 Cheshire Native Plant Resolution. J. Giddings also suggests that they should consider a program to help
96 residents identify problematic invasives on their property and to further people's education.

97 Cathleen Devlin, of 61 Lanyon Dr., addressed the commission. C. Devlin states that there was an error
98 regarding the ambulance service provider and that it should be revised to say Trinity Health. She brings
99 up that a demolition delay ordinance for historic houses has been stated in the POCD. She states that there
100 has not been education to the public on how this is going to affect properties in town. C. Delvin brings up
101 the proposed bridge behind the high school to the linear trail and that it should be done sooner rather than
102 later. M. Bowman explains how the concept for a demolition delay ordinance came to be.

103 Alana Sejdic, of 390 Cedar Lane, addressed the commission. A. Sejdic states that her biggest quality of
104 life concern in town is the traffic on Rt. 10. and that it should be included in the quality of life section.
105 She brings up that she has seen conflicting information about the population estimates of school children
106 with the new developments. M. Bowman and M. Glidden explain the breakdown of school children from
107 the different new developments.

108 Caitlin Wolken, of 279 Mountain Rd., addressed the commission. C. Wolken brings up that it was
109 mentioned that Mixville was going to be modeled after Bartlem and she states that it is a different kind of
110 park that should be left. She also mentions that traffic calming measures were listed as a 7-10-year goal
111 and that they should try to make that timeline sooner.

112 Kelsey Butler Waitkus, of 1244 Half Moon Rd., addressed the commission. K. Waitkus brings up that the
113 economic impacts to the residents should be mentioned more. She states that it would be helpful to see at
114 what point would the town need to hire a full-time fire department. K. Waitkus mentions that it would be

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important to understand the economic impact of Stonebridge Crossing before they move forward with other TIF areas.

Fiona Pearson, of 100 Strathmore Dr., addressed the commission. F. Pearson states that this POCD seems more comprehensive than the previous one. She brings up that the plan for Mixville park should be clarified in the plan so that the public is more aware of what is actually proposed. F. Pearson mentions that the town is working on a newsletter and encourages people to sign up for it once it is available so that they can be better informed on what is going on around town.

Ann Belcher, of the Cheshire Housing Authority, addressed the commission. A. Belcher states that they need help contacting private developers. She asks that if they are applying for an application with an affordable component that it be a requirement to share their contact with the Cheshire Housing Authority.

The commission and staff talk about the next steps. R. Newton explains that the POCD is a broad level document of concerns throughout town. Policy issues that are put in the document are meant to lead a conversation for individual boards and commissions that may have regulatory authority over those items. She explains some of the points that were heard tonight could lead to some minor edits.

The commission took a 12-minute recess. C. Downes left at 9:15PM.

4. Stipulation for Judgment proposed in the matter of 869 W. MAIN ASSOCIATES, LLC v. CHESHIRE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION concerning the real property located at 869 West Main St. (Assessor's Map 49, Lot 72, 76, and 301) Cheshire, CT.

Jeffery Donofrio, Town Attorney, addressed the commission. J. Donofrio explains that this is an appeal of the commission's denial from back in September 2024 of an application to rezone the subject property. He further explains that the application was submitted pursuant to Section 44A of the Cheshire Zoning Regulations and states the requirements of this section. He states that in order to deny an application the denial must be to protect substantial public interests and health and safety matters. Also, the public interests have to clearly outweigh the need for affordable housing and the substantial public interest issue is not capable of being addressed by reasonable changes to the plan.

J. Donofrio states that if the zone change petition is approved, either through the approval of the settlement agreement or through litigation, the applicant will have to return for a special permit and site plan approval from the commission. The commission's denial of the zone change was based on that it would result in the loss of a commercially zoned property and that the traffic impacts of the proposed community would create a safety issue. The appeal is based strictly on the record of the proceedings that were conducted back in 2024. J. Donofrio explains that the applicant proposed various traffic improvements, including timing adjustments of traffic lights. The town has been exploring different traffic management alternatives and has engaged its own independent engineers for a double roundabout that is in the process of being reviewed by DOT.

J. Donofrio clarifies that this stipulation for judgment only applies to the zone change and the commission would not be waiving any future special permit and site plan application. He explains that if the town proceeds with the roundabout solution 869 West Main Associates LLC would give \$200,000 towards the town's design cost for the roundabouts. Further if the project is approved and the roundabouts are to be constructed, 869 West Main Associates LLC would donate a portion of its land at the northwest property to facilitate the roundabouts as long as it doesn't cause the project to be non-compliant. The last term in

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the settlement would be to consider a proposed amendment to 44A that allows the opportunity to reduce the number of affordable units if a significant contribution to a public space or amenity is provided.

E. Kurtz asks about when the concept of the roundabout came about. J. Donofrio explains that the town had hired Barton and Loguidice a few years ago to look at traffic solutions for this area. SLR Consulting, engineering firm for the applicant, also worked on the design of potential roundabouts.

J. Kardaras asks J. Donofrio based on his experience in this matter if it his professional recommendation that they accept the settlement. J. Donofrio states that it is his recommendation to accept the settlement.

Caitlin Wolken, of 279 Mountain Rd., addressed the commission. C. Wolken brings up concerns regarding the principal of the LLC being a sitting council member at the time and questions if this would be a conflict of interest. C. Wolken asks if down the line they find that a roundabout is not the best solution for this area would they still receive the money for traffic calming measures in this area. She also mentions that they shouldn't ask to consider having fewer affordable units. J. Donofrio explains that applications have to be processed based on the zoning regulations and applicable law and not based on who the applicant is. He states that it is an administrative record-based appeal and the planning commission can only consider the regulations and the record.

J. McKenney states that if a little of the land has to be given up, he does not want to see that lower the number of affordable units. J. Kardaras explains that if/when they come in for a site plan approval, they only have to consider it and does not commit them to anything.

M. Bowman asks if they can change the wording to say traffic improvements instead of traffic circle. A. Gomes, Hinckley Allen, council for the applicant, addressed the commission. A. Gomes states that she does not see a problem with changing traffic roundabout to traffic improvements. She explains that the intent of the payment is to facilitate the design of the roundabout and recommends saying "the roundabout or other similar traffic improvements at this intersection."

The public hearing was closed.

VI. Adjournment

MOTION: E. Kurtz made a motion to adjourn the public hearing meeting, seconded by C. Affie.

The motion was passed unanimously by commission members present.

Attest: Colleen Costello