

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL WORKSHOP  
HELD BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
FEBRUARY 26, 2009**

**ROLL CALL:**

Members Present: Eugene Sierakowski, Vice Chairman  
Joseph Diminico  
Kevin Dougan  
Salvatore Mancini  
Andy Kidd

Alternates: Eric Prause  
Matthew Galligan  
Adam Gootkin

Also Present: Mark Pellegrini, Director of Neighborhood  
Services and Economic Development  
Renata Bertotti, Senior Planner  
Gary Anderson, Senior Planner

Time Convened: 6:30 P.M.

Chairman Sierakowski opened the workshop by saying that at the previous workshop, the Commission asked staff to provide certain housing related information to the Commission. He said the purpose of this workshop was to review that information. In particular the Commission asked for information on the existing housing stock in the Town of Manchester; information regarding to the ratio of single-family and multi-family housing; a ratio of owner-occupied to renter-occupied housing; and information regarding certain aspects of the quality of life in Manchester. He said the Commission had further asked staff to prepare a map of vacant and underdeveloped land in Town and a report on how Manchester compares to some other communities in the area.

Ms. Bertotti said staff prepared a PowerPoint presentation to address the key questions and that Gary Anderson would start the presentation. Mr. Anderson showed a chart of the percentage of single-family housing and compared Manchester to several other towns. Mr. Sierakowski asked why the nearby towns of Marlborough, Bolton, South Windsor and Glastonbury were not included. Mr. Anderson explained the communities chosen for comparison were selected after reviewing two studies that categorized towns similar to Manchester as far as demographics, population density, tax base, tax base growth, and other relevant factors.

Mr. Anderson said 55% of units in Town were single-family units, 11% were duplexes and the rest were multi-family units ranging from three-unit houses to 50+ unit apartment buildings.

Mr. Anderson showed trends in owner-occupied vs. renter-occupied units from the 1960's to the present. Mr. Anderson explained there were two time periods when the percentage of rental housing showed strong growth. One occurred in the 1960's and the other in the 1990's. After examining building permits data, he said staff found that twice as many multi-family units were permitted in the 1990's as were single-family units. During this period many of the Cheney mills

apartments and luxury apartments in the north end of Manchester were built.

Mr. Anderson showed the location and the ownership of duplexes. Fifty-nine per cent of duplexes in Town have an owner occupant. Mr. Pellegrini noted the location of the duplexes corresponds with the historical development pattern of the Town.

The Town's overall owner occupancy is 54%, with the most owner-occupied housing located in the southwestern, south and northeastern corners of the Town. The northwestern and central sections of the Town contain a lower percentage of owner-occupied housing. Mr. Diminico noted that there was a 1% discrepancy between the data shown here and on the previous slide. Mr. Anderson indicated that the data on the previous slide came from the 2000 U.S. Census and is somewhat outdated.

Mr. Anderson showed a map representing the percentage of single-family detached homes in the Town. Neighborhoods of exclusively single-family detached homes are mostly located along the southern and eastern ends of the Town. Similar to the previously shown map, the areas in the northwestern and central areas of the Town had lower percentages of single-family detached homes.

Mr. Diminico asked if staff knew what percentage of single-family homes in Town were rented. Mr. Anderson responded that staff did not have that information but could look into it.

Mr. Anderson said the Town average median age of housing structures was 53 years with the oldest housing being located in the center of Town. The median housing age in the East Side neighborhood is 92 years old. The Robertson neighborhood contains housing with the lowest median age.

Ms. Bertotti presented information on density. Manchester's population density of 2,086 persons per square mile was in the middle when compared to other, similar communities. Ms. Bertotti noted the densest community in the sample group was West Hartford and Wethersfield was slightly more dense than Manchester.

Ms. Bertotti showed growth and projected growth information for Manchester and similar communities. Between 1990 and 2008 Manchester's population grew 10.2%. However, the projected five-year growth is only 1.9%. The 10% growth was likely due in part to the fact that between 1990 and 2008 Manchester experienced a significant influx of luxury housing units in the Buckland Hills area. Ms. Bertotti showed a map highlighting land that is currently either vacant or underdeveloped. On the next map the vacant or undeveloped areas were overlaid on the proposed land use map from the Plan of Conservation and Development. Ms. Bertotti said the total amount of the developable land in Manchester amounts to approximately 1,418 acres including wetlands.

When the wetlands are excluded and the map is overlaid on the Plan of Conservation and Development Proposed Land Use map, the top three categories representing very low density residential, low density residential, and medium single-family density residential areas represent 80% of the developable land in Manchester. Very low density residential includes 898 acres of land; low density residential includes 127 acres of land; and medium single-family density residential includes 138 acres of land remaining for development. These three categories are available primarily for single-family detached housing development. Land available for multi-family development included medium density residential with 42 acres remaining and medium-high density residential with .6 acres remaining. Ms. Bertotti added that there is also some

remaining land in industrial and mixed-use categories. Potential redevelopment of the Parkade or Spencer Street area however, were not included in this calculation.

Ms. Bertotti said staff calculated the maximum possible build-out on the remaining developable land by deducting wetlands and leaving other areas, such as upland review areas or slopes, accounted for. The developable land acreage was then multiplied by the accompanying maximum allowed number of units from the proposed land use map in the Plan of Conservation and Development. Under this maximum scenario, a maximum of 2,104 single-family detached units could be built on 1,162 acres of developable land. Another 312 units could be built on land designated for multi-family housing, she said. Assuming all of the new single-family units will be owner-occupied and that all of the new multi-family units will be rental, our current ratio of 54% owner-occupied to 46% would change to 57% owner-occupied to 43% rental units, she said.

Mr. Kidd asked if there had been any analysis on those areas of redevelopment such as the Parkade, Spencer Street and perhaps others where there might be some redevelopment in the future. Ms. Bertotti said staff did not project redevelopment in those areas. But, if the maximum build-out occurred at the Parkade and at Spencer Street, the ratio of owner-occupied to renter-occupied would essentially revert to current ratio.

Mr. Anderson added that in doing research for a possible HOMEConnecticut application, staff looked into the potential of housing at the Parkade and estimated that 400 units could be built there. Mr. Dougan said the data suggested the Commission's focus should be on redevelopment. The owner to renter occupied chart showed a strong trend that the Commission should keep in mind when deciding on how to address the areas of redevelopment. Mr. Diminico asked if Mr. Dougan was concerned with density as well. Mr. Dougan responded that density was not his primary concern, but the increasing percentage of rental occupancy was. He said the Commission may need to look at new types of zoning in some locations.

Mr. Anderson proceeded to present maps showing quality of life data. The Commission indicated that access to services was a quality of life measure. The first map showed access to public transportation, defined as housing within one-half mile of a bus stop. Eighty-three percent of the town's housing units have this level of access to public transportation. The central areas of the Town are served very well and several neighborhoods have 100% access to public transportation. The following map showed access to shopping and commercial services. The central areas of town again had best access to those services while the overall Town access to those services was 82%.

Mr. Anderson showed the percentage of households within one-half mile of parks, playgrounds and playfields, illustrating a majority of housing in town has very good access to parks, playgrounds and playfields. In the Town as a whole, 88% have access to these services.

Mr. Diminico asked what counted as parks, playgrounds or playfields. Mr. Pellegrini responded that most recreational spaces counted. Any neighborhood with a school would show as having accessibility to a park, playground or playfield. Community parks were also included.

The following map showed the number of property code violations per 100 properties. Mr. Anderson explained that it was possible to have several violations per one property. The violations could range from tall grass to damaged gutters to more serious violations, he said. The code violation map was noticeably comparable to the age of structure map, where there were more violations and the oldest structures in town.

On the next map Mr. Anderson showed the number of part one crimes per 1,000 residents. He explained the part one crime map showed where more serious crimes such as robbery, burglary and assault occurred. By far, he said the most affected area was in Buckland Hills, which is also the most commercially developed area in the Town. Most of these crimes were likely commercially related, he said. Mr. Sierakowski asked if part one crime included theft. Mr. Anderson responded that it did. Mr. Kidd asked if it was possible to remove the crimes that were related to the Buckland Hills Mall area. Mr. Diminico asked which area was the central area that had 67 crimes per 1,000 residents. Mr. Pellegrini responded that that was the area of Manchester Memorial Hospital and the Parkade.

Mr. Kidd asked what methodology was behind the neighborhood delineation. In particular he was curious about how the east side neighborhood was delineated. Mr. Pellegrini responded that the delineation was done several years ago as part of the neighborhood planning process. Mr. Sierakowski added that the part one crimes map closely corresponds with the population density. Neighborhoods that had a low residential density generally had a low crime rate, he said. The map also reflected the areas of single-family housing having a low crime rate, and areas of multi-family housing having higher crime rates. Mr. Pellegrini responded that the central neighborhoods also have more commercial development. It was difficult to distinguish which crimes were a result of the high residential density and which crimes were the result of a higher concentration of commercial activity in the area. Mr. Dougan added that it appeared the map corresponded with the residential density map.

Mr. Anderson discussed part two crimes per 1,000 residents. This map showed crimes such as drug offenses that were less serious but occur more frequently. Part two crimes was concentrated in the central neighborhood and somewhat less in the Buckland Hills area.

The next set of slides presented was on fiscal impacts of housing development. The first slide Mr. Anderson showed was on per capita property tax. He said Manchester was on a lower end of the towns that were considered in the study as far as per capita tax. Mr. Anderson said in 2003, the Town produced a development impact report in which the staff studied density, number of school children, and the value of the properties in areas and developments in the Town. He said the report shows a resulting property tax revenue differential. Mr. Pellegrini explained that these numbers were achieved after the education costs were deducted and was a remaining revenue for all other town services such as snow plowing, police, etc.

Mr. Diminico said he would like to see this report updated. Mr. Sierakowski said he would also be interested in seeing the updated report. Mr. Kidd asked what the starting point was in the study and what the expected value in these developments was. Mr. Pellegrini responded that the starting point was the assessed value of the real estate.

Mr. Diminico asked whether the Planning and Zoning Commission should base their land use decisions on the cost of educating public school students. Mr. Mancini asked why the Center Street development showed a net cost of almost a half-million dollars. Mr. Pellegrini responded that it was a combination of factors, including the numbers of school age children located in the neighborhood and relatively low property values. Mr. Anderson noted that when all these developments were added together there was a net gain of \$1.2 million. Mr. Prause noted that among the developments shown in the report, not all were multi-family. He also noted some of the apartment complexes had a very low number of school age students.

Mr. Mancini asked if the majority of the areas and developments having negative revenue were

multi-family developments. Mr. Pellegrini responded that some are, but some are not. He said two developments, the Pavilions at Buckland Hills and Aspen Woods, together produced almost \$1.5 million of positive revenue to the Town in 2003, and the Town did not have to clean the streets, provide snow removal or refuse collection. Mr. Pellegrini added it was really a combination of factors and not just whether or not an area or development was multi-family or single-family.

Mr. Sierakowski said traditionally apartments do not appreciate in value as condominiums do. He said they devalue faster and more often than condominiums.

Mr. Anderson proceeded to the next slide which showed some fiscal impact findings. Notably, most new developments pay for school and utility costs. Mr. Dougan said the Commission should be cognizant of the economic downturn and that the Commission has a responsibility to consider the welfare of each resident in the Town of Manchester, and the costs of various uses should be considered. Mr. Pellegrini added fiscal impacts could be offset through methods such as increasing the non-residential tax base.

Mr. Prause added that the Commission should not discriminate against children. Mr. Kidd said we should be responsive to the needs of families and recognize that people should have a decent place to live. We also have to keep in mind that the Town of Manchester owner-occupancy rate is only 54%, he said. He cited the recent example of the Dye House on Pine Street. Although he did not like the fact that it was subsidized housing, the Commission did not have a choice to deny it because it was a permitted use. He added that he fears the Dye House will be added to the negative revenue column of properties in Town in a few years.

There was a discussion on how education is financed. It was noted that the State provide some reimbursement on a per pupil cost basis.

Mr. Anderson then reviewed income information for Manchester from 1990 to 2006. The numbers were not adjusted for inflation. There is great diversity in Manchester household incomes, including those of below \$15,000 to above \$150,000 annually, he said.

Mr. Anderson showed trends in adjusted household income. He explained this information was adjusted for inflation and that between 1999 and 2008 Manchester saw an increase in adjusted household income. This increase of 11.44% was significant compared to the -2.8% and -2.23 % drop in incomes in Hartford County and the State of Connecticut respectively. Mr. Anderson said this was the high end single-family housing in the south end of town and the luxury multi-family housing development in the north end likely accounted for this increase.

Mr. Anderson showed the industries present in Manchester and wages in those industries corresponded with the "housing wage". Industries such as manufacturing and health care paid above the housing wage, while industries like accommodation and food service do not. For a one-person household, a person working in retail accommodation and food services and transportation and warehousing would qualify for affordable housing programs. For a family of four, the only industry that paid an average wage that would not qualify for housing assistance was manufacturing.

Mr. Anderson presented a map showing the percent of households earning less than \$25,000 per year by neighborhood. The lowest percentage of low earners live in the southwest corner and other outer areas of the Town. The more central areas of the Town had more low earners.

Mr. Anderson showed households reporting to earn more than \$100,000 per year. The highest percentage of high earners live in the southern and eastern sections of Town. Mr. Anderson pointed out that some households reported earning \$100,000 or more per year in every Manchester Neighborhood.

Mr. Anderson showed a slide on Manchester rental trends. He said each year staff perform a rental survey, a snapshot of what the average rents in Town are. The following slide showed the average rent for an efficiency studio was \$850.00, the monthly income needed to afford an efficiency studio was \$2,833 and an annual income needed to afford an efficiency studio was approximately \$34,000. Some of rental the survey includes utilities and some do not, he said. If utilities are not included, a wage earner would have to earn more to include that apartment.

As for how much money families of different sizes could afford to spend on housing, in the Greater Hartford area, the median income for a family of four is \$81,100. Based on 30% of a monthly income spent on housing, a family would have \$2,028 for housing. If the family earns 80% of that, its annual income is \$61,500 and that family would have \$1,538 for housing costs. Mr. Anderson pointed out that the median income in Manchester was almost exactly \$61,500 (80% of the area median). He also pointed out housing costs include utilities and not only rent. Mr. Anderson said each year the State of Connecticut produces an affordable housing appeals list. The State looks at how many deed restricted units, public housing units, CHFA mortgages and Section 8 vouchers are in each town. That number is then compared to the total housing stock resulting in a percentage of affordable housing in the community. Mr. Pellegrini said the information is collected to determine which towns are subject to the affordable housing appeals law. The Statute establishes a special appeals procedure for affordable housing. It does not apply to towns with 10% or more of their housing being affordable. The State had set 10% as a threshold, but not a goal. Mr. Mancini asked what affordable means. Mr. Pellegrini explained that it is generally defined as housing that costs 30% or for people earning less than 80% of the median income of an area.

Mr. Anderson showed the location information on the assisted housing in the Town of Manchester. Mr. Pellegrini clarified this map does not show CHFA mortgages. The location of Manchester Housing Authority units were shown. Mr. Anderson explained that MHA manages elderly, disabled and family units as well as Section 8 vouchers.

Housing sale prices by town for comparable communities were presented. Mr. Anderson pointed out that due to the housing crisis, no community was exempt from a drop from peak in housing sales prices with an exception of West Hartford which saw no change. Mr. Anderson added he thought Manchester's drop in peak was similar to that in the State as a whole.

Mr. Sierakowski said the Commission saw a large amount of data and received a significant amount of information. His recommendation to members of the Commission was to think about density and remaining land, and to create specific bullet points on what members want to do with the remaining developable land and with the areas of redevelopment. He asked Mr. Pellegrini to summarize what the staff would prepare for the next workshop .

Mr. Pellegrini said staff would prepare a map of potential redevelopment areas; information on owner-occupied vs. renter-occupied and single-family vs. multi-family in Glastonbury, Bolton and South Windsor. He said staff would try and get information on how many single-family homes are currently being rented. Updating the fiscal analysis would take longer because staff would need to get information from different sources. That analysis was not likely to be ready

for the next workshop.

Mr. Sierakowski asked if staff could provide information on the rental properties in town. The information should include the age of the property, and an assisted category. In those four categories he said he would like to know how many units were in each and what the rent was for each. He said the goal of having this would be to show there is affordability within our rental housing stock that may not be accounted for.

Mr. Pellegrini said collecting the rent information is problematic. Collecting this information by the age of the property would probably be easier and that would be something staff could do. He said staff would provide the numbers per age of the property.

I certify these minutes were adopted on the following date:

April 20, 2009  
Date

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Eugene Sierakowski, Chairman

NOTICE: THE CASSETTE TAPE RECORDING OF THE BUSINESS MEETING CAN  
BE HEARD IN THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT.

OFFICIAL TAPE NOS. 1021 & 1022