

**TOWN OF FARMINGTON, CT**  
**Farmington Village Center Committee**  
**August 1, 2018**

**Present**

Bruce Charette  
Nancy Nickerson  
Portia Corbett  
John Renehan  
Michael Gurski  
Brian Connolly  
Kevin Ray  
Betty Coykendall

**Staff:**

Kathy Eagen  
William Warner  
Rose Ponte

**A. Call to Order.**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

**B. Introductions/Organizational Process.**

Chairman Charette gave opening remarks and members of the committee introduced themselves.

**C. New Business.**

**1) To review and adopt the Rules of Procedure.**

Motion was made and seconded (Nickerson/Connolly) to approve the attached charge of the committee. Adopted unanimously.

**2) To review the charge of the committee.**

Chairman Charette reviewed the charge of the committee with the members. Chairman Charette explained that notes and minutes will be posted on the Town's website and a FAQ fact sheet will be developed and posted on the website to keep the community informed of the committee's work. Bill Warner presented the attached PowerPoint presentation, explaining the 3 phase approach to planning for Farmington Center. He gave an overview of the Farmington Center's planning and vision activities that have been completed to date and explained the work that will take place during the third phase. Most of the discussion focused on the pros and cons of acquiring the Parson's parcel from the State.

Questions from various committee members involved:

- The waivers that are granted to municipalities that own parcels of land that are subject to the Transfer Act.
- The possible purchase price of the property
- The need to better understand the easements on this property

- Next steps in the process

Overall most discussions centered on the benefits of controlling and acquiring Parsons.

**3) To create a sub-committee of the Farmington Village Center Committee to review the charge regarding quality of life enhancements.**

Chairman Charette explained the study area boundaries. He explained that this subcommittee will work towards developing standards to connect the entire study area with a unified theme, and improve the area with sidewalk beautification, gateway features, public art, and universal design components. Committee members expressed the importance of developing standards that enhance our brand and sense of place.

Motion was made and seconded (Nickerson/Corbett) to create a subcommittee with the following members: Portia Corbett, Betty Coykendall, Brian Connolly and John Renehan. Adopted unanimously.

**4) To discuss the committee's next steps.**

It was decided that the committee would schedule two meetings in September in the hopes of making a recommendation to the Council by the end of October.

**D. To establish the committee meeting schedule.**

The committee scheduled a meeting for September 4, 2018 at 7:00 PM to solicit comments from the community. Following the community meeting the committee will then meet on September 17, 2018 at 7:00 PM to develop a recommendation to the Town Council.

**E. Public Comment. - No Comments.**

**F. Adjournment.**

A motion was made and seconded (Renehan/ Gurski) to adjourn the meeting. Adopted unanimously meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Rose Ponte  
Economic Development Director

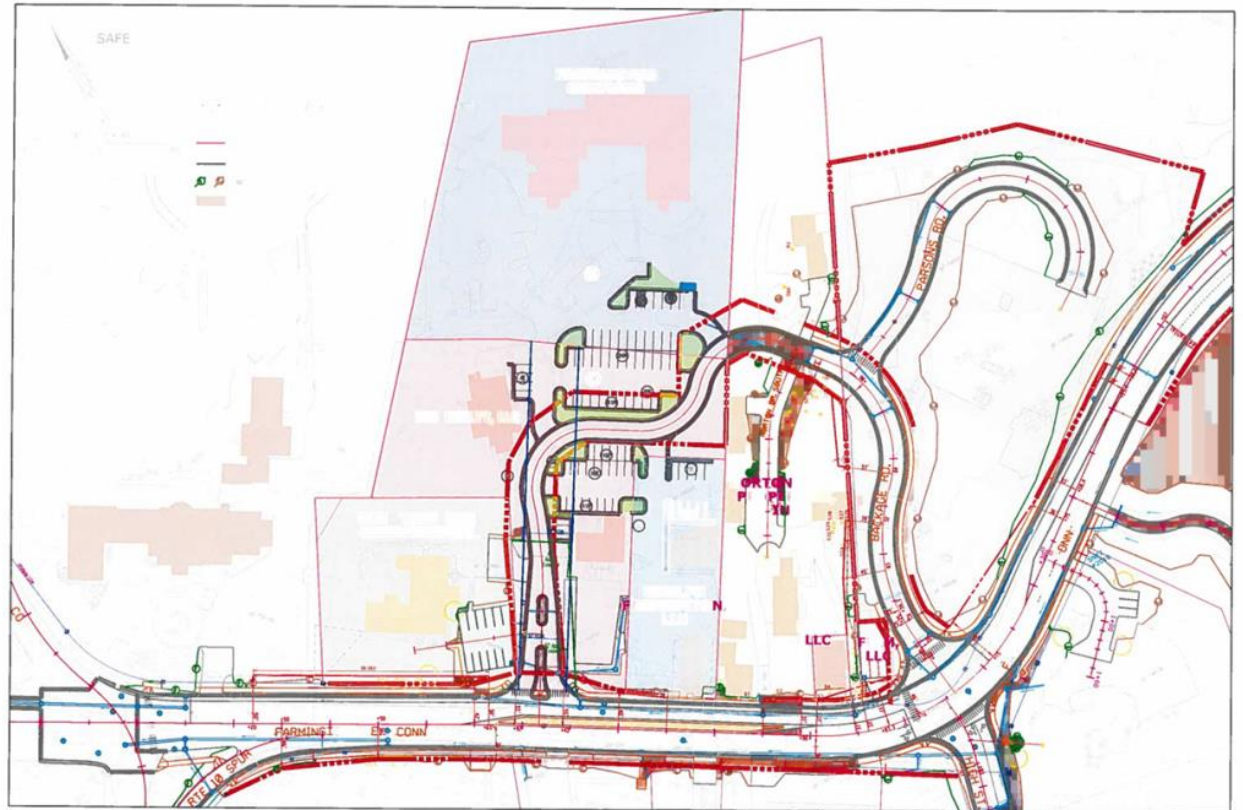
cc: Committee Members  
Bill Warner, Town Planner  
Kathleen A. Eagen, Town Manager  
Paula Ray, Town Clerk  
Anna Savastano, Management Assistant

# A VISION FOR FARMINGTON CENTER

## 3 PHASE APPROACH

- Conditions as they Existed in 2014
- Phase 1 & 2 Gateway Committee - 2014 – 2017
- Role of Town Plan and Zoning Commission
- Phase 3 – Going forward

MAY 2014



# NO PLAN FOR AREA AFTER DOT

## Top 10 Reasons to Plan

1. Multiple small properties with multiple owners
2. Most properties not in the historic district
3. Hodgepodge of uses and zoning classifications
4. Area is underutilized
5. Area is highly susceptible to change
6. Market is strong for new development after DOT
7. State DOT road project will permanently alter the character of the study area.
8. Future use of Parsons property
9. Most significant gateway into town
10. This gateway does not reflect Farmington's image of charming historic buildings and high quality new development

# Main driver - future use of Parsons property



# What will a Vision and Plan for Farmington Center accomplish?

- It will define and promote a vision for a better place.
- It will put forward Farmington's goals for the center of the town.
- It will give developers direction to assure a result that matches the vision.
- It will build consensus which will be very important in creating a strong sense of place in Farmington Center.

# PHASE 1

- Work with DOT– to improve the project and get it right the first time.
- Securing control of the Parsons parcel – June 2015  
Special Act No. 15-1
- The cornerstone of a successful plan is strong public participation component
- Listening to what people want for their town.



# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – SPRING 2015

- March 26<sup>th</sup> - SWOT analysis (over 200 participants)
- March 27<sup>th</sup> - Urban Design Classroom(over 60 participants)
- March 28<sup>th</sup> - Model building (over 100 participants)
- September 11 - Final presentation (over 100 participants)

**Broad cross section of the community - definitely not “all the same faces”**

# STRENGTHS, WEAKNESS OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS (SWOT) ANALYSIS

Brainstorming session with over 200 residents. Invaluable list of ideas, thoughts and opinions from the people of Farmington.

- **62 Strengths** – Historic, the River, Miss Porters
- **60 Weaknesses** – no sense of place, not walkable, gas stations
- **93 Opportunities** – Walkable, Town Green, Parsons, village scale
- **49 Threats** – DOT, doing nothing, inappropriate development, traffic

# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION



# FINAL PRODUCT – THE START OF A VISION



94 page document memorializing the 3 days  
and making great recommendations

# PHASE 2

## Parsons property – Due Diligence

- Eliminate as much uncertainty as possible.
- Refine the vision for the property
- Be prepared to get the best developer and the best development possible;

# PHASE 2 SUMMARY

Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment for Parsons site – DOT completed clean up for entire property, transfer act.

Market Analysis – small neighborhood retail, restaurants and multi-family rental

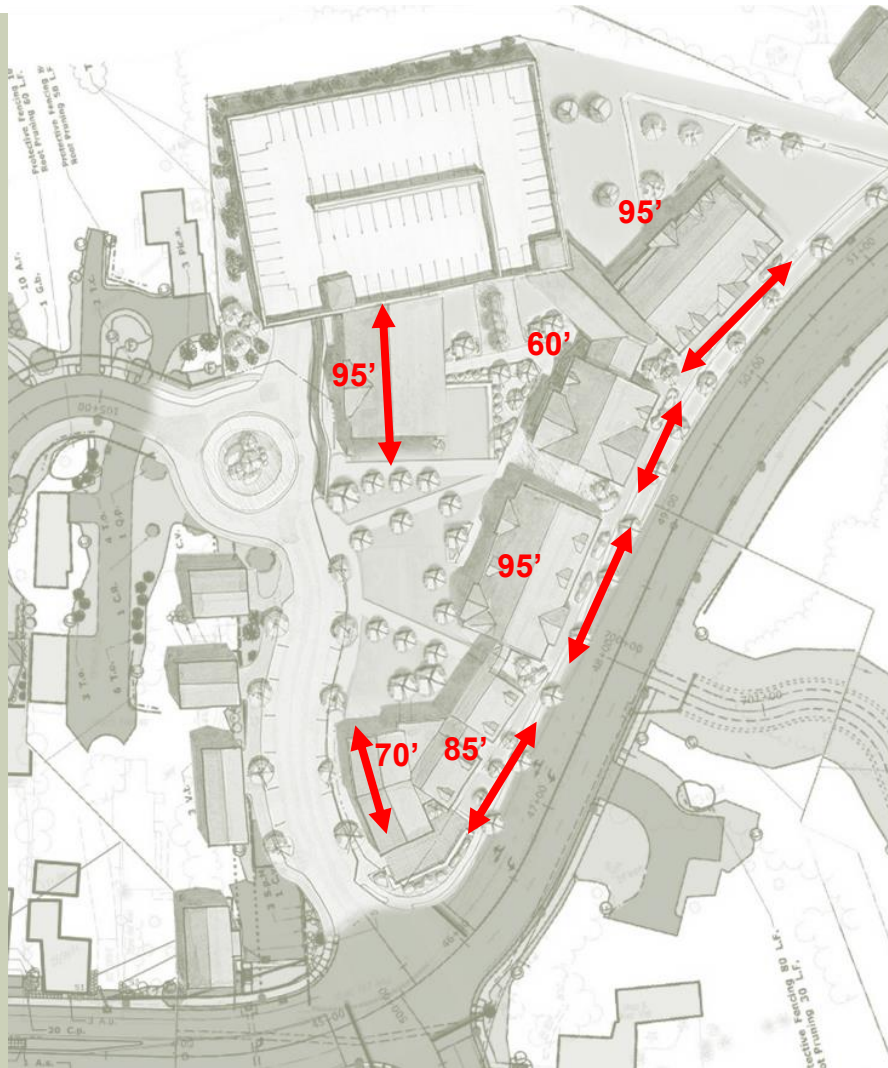
Conceptual plan and renderings based on public participation – attractive gateway into town, public gathering space along backage road,

Traffic and Parking Demand Analysis– Traffic Study completed - development at the scale envisioned will not have adverse impact on RT 4 traffic

Design guidelines – much more comprehensive, approved by PZC.



# SCALE COMPARISON



*Elm Tree Inn*



90 Foot Long Façade along  
2 ½ Story

*Hillstead Museum*



2 ½ Story  
110 Foot Long West Façade



# Scale Comparison

*Main Street - Chester*



**200+ Foot Long Façade along Main Street**

*Main Street - Stockbridge*



**200+ Foot Long Façade along Main Street**

*West Main Street - Litchfield*



**500+ Foot Long Façade along West Main Street**

# SB COUGHLIN PLAN



# SB COUGHLIN PLAN



# ROLE OF THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

- Adopt concept plans in Plan of Conservation and Development as guide to future development. **DONE**
- Adopt new Village District Design Guidelines **DONE**
- Tweak Farmington Center Zoning Regulations
- Rezone areas along RT 4 zoned B1 Business to Farmington Center/Village District Zone.
- Be prepared for future development.

# Current Zoning

## Farmington Center Zone

- Mixed use zone – retail, restaurant, office, apartments, condos, attractive public spaces;
- Higher density “downtown style development”;
- Ideally retail and restaurant on first floor, apartments & office on upper floors;
- 2 and 3 story buildings close to and framing the street;
- Minimal setbacks, 80% lot coverage
- Shared parking

# Current Zoning

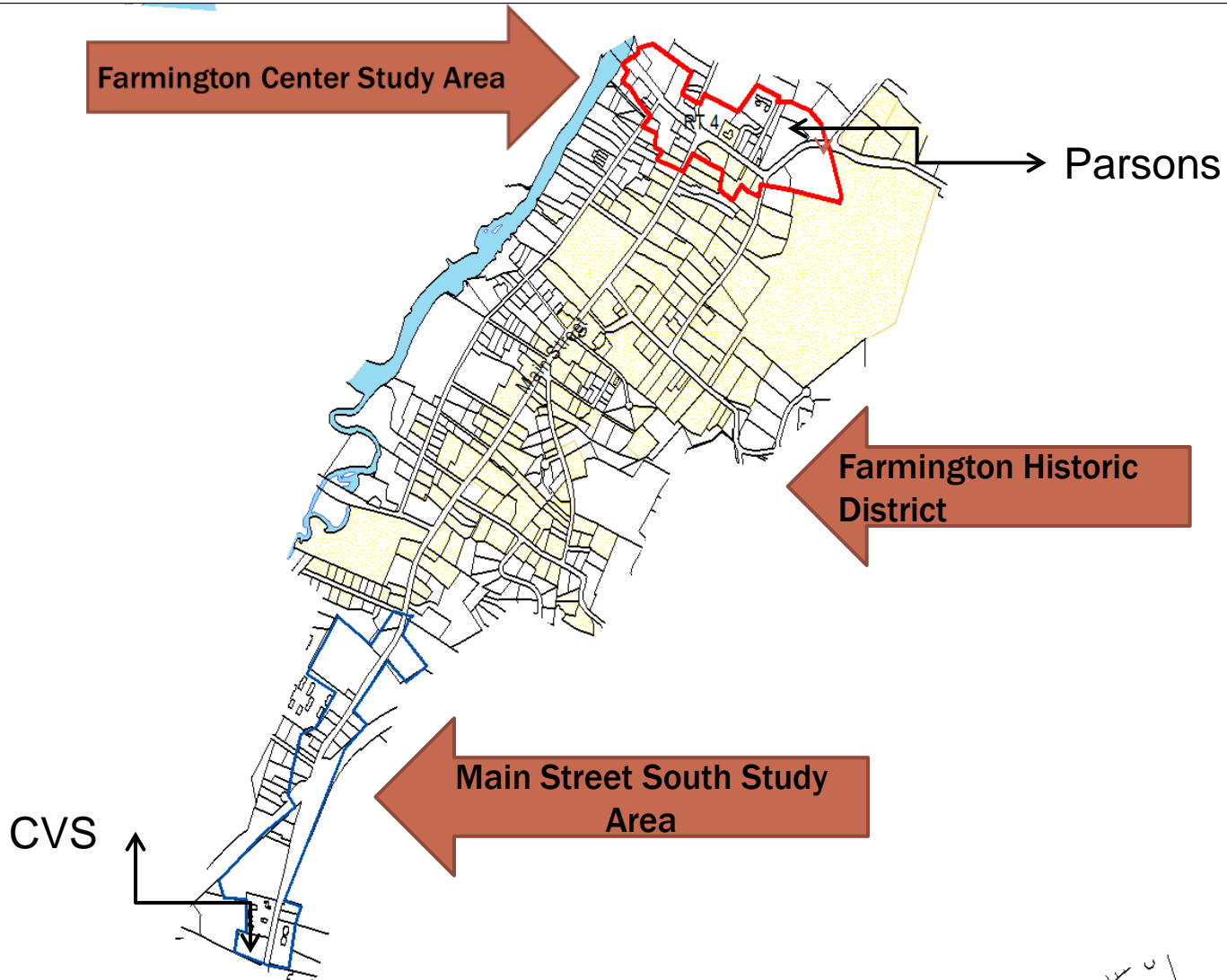
## Farmington Village District Overlay Zone

“The regulations establishing village districts shall protect the distinctive character, landscape and historic structures within such districts.”

- Design and placement of buildings;
- Color, size, height, location, proportion of openings, roof treatments, building materials and landscaping
- Proposed signs and lighting
- Maintenance of public views;
- Design, paving materials and placement of public roadways;
- Other elements the zoning commission deems appropriate to maintain and protect the character of the village district.

Conn. Gen. Stat. §8-2j(b)

# PHASE 3- STUDY AREA



# PHASE 3 - NEXT STEPS

- Connect entire study area with unified theme.
- Strive for constant improvement in entire study area – de-clutter, gateway features, sidewalks, beautification, quality of life improvements.
- Be prepared to acquire Parsons property from DOT - Summer 2019
- Recommend RFQ to select best possible developer to implement vision



# TOWNS ACQUISITION OF PARSONS

## Acquire

### Pros

- Town partners with developer of its choose
- Control over entire design
- Incorporate Public Spaces & public parking
- PZC control remains
- Transfer act

### Cons

- Purchase price (ability to recoup)

## Don't Acquire

### Pros

- Purchase price

### Cons

- State could keep property
- RFP for developer
- Market determine outcome
- Design only subject to PZC review and approval.
- Far less public input
- Transfer Act could complicate private development
- Private parking limited to businesses on site
- Could sit for very long time

# DOT PROCESS

## Step 1

- Town decides to purchase Parson's property
- Town notifies DOT of interest in purchasing the property
- DOT Commissioner declares Parson's surplus property

## Step 2 DOT

- DOT Property Division completes two appraisals. (Average of the two appraisals is the price)
- Offered to Town
- Survey is updated
- Agreement sent to the State Properties Review Board.

## Step 3 - Close

- Town Council determines source of funding
- PZC CGS 8-24 review
- Closing