

# Agenda

## Leadership Roundtable Meeting

November 16, 2022

7:00 – 9:00 PM

Knowlton Hall

1. A welcome by –Bill Falletti, First Selectman 7:00-7:05
  - a. Introduce moderators and their role:
    - i. Mike Gantick (Our Town, Our Future Committee) OTOF
    - ii. Jeff Silver-Smith (Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC)
  
2. Participant Introductions: (2 minutes or less) 7:06-7:30
  - a. Introduce yourself
  - b. The organization you represent
  - c. Single most important issue facing Ashford, going forward, in your estimation
  
3. General Goals and Objectives 7:31- 7:45
  - a. Follow up to November 2019 Meeting
  - b. Highlight Accomplishments since POCD 2015 and Leadership Mtg 2019
    - i. Reference Objective Summary
  - c. Use of community input to assist in updating current Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) for 2025 required update
  - d. Identify and create Future Goals and Objectives- Assign actionable measures to responsible parties
  
4. Breakout discussion groups (Groups based on important issues identified in Agenda 2c) 7:46-8:15
  
5. Questions to keep in mind:
  - a. Do we like what Ashford has accomplished in past 5 years?
  - b. What are the three most important things you want to see in Ashford's Future
  - c. How can planning help you? What obstacles do you anticipate?
  - d. How can you support and be a part of this Process?
  
6. Summarize Input from Breakout Groups: 8:16- 8:45
  - a. Review Breakout Ideas (listing major results and conclusions)
  
7. Proposed next steps and general comments: 8:46-8:55
  
8. Close meeting 8:59

# ASHFORD 2022

## Accomplishments of Boards and Commissions in Response to POCD 2015

### 1. Governance

#### a. Improve citizen involvement, intra- Town Communication, inter Town Communication

- i. Town Website updates
- ii. Text my Gov initiative
- iii. Town Meetings, Board and Commission meetings by virtual technology
- iv. Video recording of meetings available to public
- v. Ashford Citizen publication maintained
- vi. Use of Senior Center for town organizations- Ashford Women's Group, Recreation Department functions

#### b. Ensure that Town and Board of Education functions are using shared and new resources efficiently.

- i. Communications with neighboring municipalities and area networks (NECCOG, Eastern Highlands HD, etc) to cost share in technology, software, equipment.
- ii. Review and access municipal job descriptions and function for proper staff coverage to meet residents needs.

#### c. Assess adequacy of infrastructure systems, including communications

- i. Gained agreement with local Internet provider for expansion of Broadband in under served areas of town

#### d. Continue to provide recreational programming to encourage Town pride and involvement

- i. Monthly events scheduled by Rec Department (both traditional and new programs)
- ii. Updated Pickleball facilities
- iii. Holiday events in cooperation with Camp Conn/RI

### 2. Public Health and Safety

#### a. Seek cost savings solutions to equipment upgrades (Fire and Rescue)

- i. Designated AARPA funds for equipment and upgrades

### 3. Education

#### a. Adhere to Goals and Objectives of the School Improvement Plan for 2022-2023

- i. First Wednesday invite to community for Coffee and Conversation with Ashford School Admin team.

#### **4. Economic Development**

##### **a. Retain and expand commercial Development in West Ashford**

- i. New businesses into Ashford (Dollar General, Antero Healthcare, Neurology/Headache practice, Dentist practice)
- ii. Updates of current businesses (Cumberland Farms, Route 44 Beer Wine and Spirits, Ashford Dairy Bar)

##### **b. Warrentonville area center of civic activity in Ashford**

- i. UConn design of slowed traffic flow through area
- ii. Updates to TOB, Knowlton Hall, Lighting in Pompey Hollow

##### **c. Development of Caddlerock property (previously Wagen Shed Area)**

- i. Property now owned by town
- ii. Seeking plans for development once finally remediation is complete

##### **d. Development of Interstate Interchange SPA**

- i. Continue to seek and market area with developers, businesses

#### **5. Housing**

##### **a. Utilize subdivision regulations to protect scenery and rural character of the Town**

- i. Continue fee in lieu of open space for existing subdivisions

##### **b. Address Lake Chaffe and Ashford Lake lots**

- i. Implemented new zoning regulations specific to Lake districts (Chaffe, Ashford)
- ii. Implemented new zoning regulations for Short-Term rental controls

##### **c. Continue to maintain a variety of housing options in Town**

- i. Development of Affordable Housing Plan to meet CGS 8-30 requirements and review of Zoning regulations that do not conflict with statues
- ii. Reviewed and updated zoning regulations in RA zone for ease of use and consistency of application

#### **6. Agriculture**

##### **a. As a town, support agricultural enterprises**

- i. Expanded property tax abatements
- ii. Approved innovative and value added agricultural growing facility
- iii. Boards and Commissions working in tandem with Ashford Agricultural Commission on agricultural issues
- iv. Continue to adhere to Public Act 490 to protect and preserve farmland

#### **7. Natural Resources**

##### **a. Forest Management- Encourage sustainable forest management for health and long-term Productivity**

- i. Educating landowners through various groups on best management practices
- ii. Supporting the use of land trusts and encourage the use of State and Federal programs
- iii. Encouraging camps, Yale Forest and other large property owners to protect their property from development by donation, conservation restriction sale of rights etc

**b. Protect Habitat diversity**

- i. Created green corridors by linking open space parcels- Langhammer and Fenton Ruby, Tremko and Rankin, JT Land trust

**8. Historic Resources**

- a. Protect historic buildings and sites in Ashford, especially historic villages
  - i. Town and Historical Society efforts on Tremko House
  - ii. Maintenance and repair of Cemeteries

**9. Energy**

- a. **Reduce energy consumption and increase use of energy from renewable sources in municipal buildings**
  - i. Solar installations on municipal buildings
  - ii. Energy assessments down on multiple municipal buildings
- b. **Foster partnerships for reduced energy consumption and promotion of renewable options**
  - i. Working with Ashford Clean Energy Task Force) volunteers, Conservation Commission
  - ii. Sustainable CT Bronze status achieved and maintained

## **Breakout Groups**

1. How to Increase Tax Base and Find other Sources of Revenue
2. How to Develop a Strategic Plan –Future Change for the Town
3. How to approach the need for more Senior and Affordable Housing in Town
4. How to Protect and Preserve the Environment , History and Rural Character of the Town
5. How to Engage Younger Residents in Town Issues

### **1. How to Increase Tax Base and Find other Sources of Revenue**

- a. Identify Grants
  - i. State, Federal, NGO(?)
  - ii. Documentation for alignment
  - iii. Use the BOE Experience
  - iv. Identify list of resources needed to qualify
- b. How to increase the Tax base
  - i. Expand use list in Zoning
  - ii. Examine revision of existing uses
- c. Fees and other sources of Revenue
  - i. Rental licenses agreements
  - ii. Whole town events that may increase revenues

### **2. How to Develop a Strategic Plan –Future Change for the Town**

- a. Objectives
  - i. General Communication
    1. reach consensus
    2. gather data(mutual interest goals)
    3. create goals
  - ii. Consensus to set direction on/for the Future
    1. Establish Communication Plan
    2. Identify Town resources/data
    3. Identify Town Stakeholders
    4. Identify Town Needs( short/long term)
  - iii. Rank/Prioritize Goals
  - iv. Outline Benefits and Communicate

### **3. How to approach the need for more Senior and Affordable Housing in Town**

#### **a. Challenges**

- i. Senior have concerns with housing and ability to pay taxes
- ii. Apartment complexes are a monopoly
- iii. Increased rental and lease fees
- iv. Apartments not well maintained and not senior friendly

#### **b. Things to explore**

- i. Research need for Town Planner/manager
  - 1. Cost concern/salary versus benefits
- ii. Forest Legacy Program
  - 1. Federal/state programs that purchase easements from property owners
- iii. How to address Seniors to remain in current housing
  - 1. Shared use facilities
  - 2. Mutual living in a large home
  - 3. Cluster housing-saves open space, forest land, farmland(work with P&Z and other Boards on this)
  - 4. Creative alternative housing-need further input

### **4. How to Protect and Preserve the Environment , History and Rural Character of the Town**

#### **a. What are some of the Challenges**

- i. Buildings are not as attractive as they could be; how buildings look help make town more appealing
- ii. What is the definition of " Character of the Town"?
- iii. Strip Malls all look different
- iv. The sometimes conflict between the Environment and Development
  - 1. Impacts versus benefits
- v. Rural appearance is also impacted by invasive plant species
- vi. Route 44/74 Corridor is not pedestrian friendly

#### **b. What are some options to consider**

- i. Development should be balanced
- ii. Need to consider Architectural Standards for building designs
  - 1. Other towns like Simsbury, Farmington, Windsor, Sturbridge have more architecturally pleasing centers

- iii. Investigate the availability of grants to control invasive maybe starting on town properties
  - 1. EQIP
- iv. Should include native species as part of the landscape especially for any new development
- v. Solar may need to be advertised again as a way to reduce energy dependence
- vi. Can Town establish a Historical District along Route 44/74 to maintain and continue older town feel?

## 5. How to Engage Younger Residents in Town Issues

- a. Obstacles of getting Involved
  - i. Work multiple jobs
  - ii. No time
  - iii. Don't believe they're needed or valued, they think "it's beyond me"
  - iv. They don't understand what "that" committee does
  - v. Motivated by kids activities (recreation)
- b. Ways to Communicate
  - i. Communications(one-way)- K-12 email
  - ii. Ashford Citizen-everyone gets a copy
  - iii. Events- in person presence
  - iv. Twitter(school uses)
  - v. Apps that push out info
  - vi. Reinforce support/need in Ashford Citizen
  - vii. Create article in Citizen about younger residents
  - viii. Periodically write up or do video of what is involved in volunteering
  - ix. Outreach with "TextMyGov"
  - x. Attend sport activities or the PTO to recruit
  - xi. Do a targeted mailing
  - xii. Provide Welcome Packets to new families in town
  - xiii. Reach out to retired folks for volunteering as well
  - xiv. If someone knows younger residents in town tell them WE NEED THEIR HELP

## Organizations, Individual Priorities and/or Challenges-Opening Comments by Attendees

- **Tax Collector-** new technical school, walking trails for seniors, and before and aftercare for children
- **Small Business Owner-**need to preserve Ashford's Rural Character, protect sensitive environmental areas and wildlife
- **Terry W.-** need to find a way to preserve and utilize the Ashford Academy
- **Farm/Ag. Commission member-** Need to develop a Strategic Plan for the Town and work to improve the tax base
- **BOF member-** There is not enough available funding to meet the needs of the community; need to pursue more grants for programs and projects
- **ACC/Sustainable CT( Loretta W.)-** Need to look at Ashford as a whole; balance needs
- **Social Services( Melissa M.)-**Critical times right now with community members needing assistance for rising costs of heating fuel and electricity; Need to address housing crisis and rising rental costs as many apartments have been bought by a private company
- **BOE(Dave)-** Need to continue to work on helping prepare youth and HS students for Life
- **Eastern Ct Sportsmen Club(Danny Q.)-** continue to work on promoting better relationships with sportsmen and property owners;continue community involvement programs like the Annual Kids Fishing derby, Game Dinner, Clam Bake; Need to find a way to fill vacant store fronts in Town; restaurants needed; find way to improve the tax base
- **John C.-** Need to get younger residents involved in town boards/commissions/civic organizations
- **BOS( William F.,FS)-** Need to change formula of tax base, shift burden ; some potential developments could help; Improved Communication in Town is important, new "TextMyGov" offers residents a way to stay connected with town on both routine and emergency information
- **P&Z member-**Need to find sources of revenue;expand the tax base;need to maintain the towns infrastructure
- **Garden Club member-** Need to increase tax base but not impact character of the town
- **Pollinator Group member-** the challenge is that environmental degradation is becoming more wide spread and Need to support areas that encourage pollinators to thrive
- **Brian B.-** Need to continue to develop relationships and resources to deal with the new challenges
- **Senior Housing( Kit)-** Need to develop more low/affordable housing in Town
- **Bike Advocate( Nord Y.)-** Bicycle safety remains important especially with schools kids; need to continue to work on developing bike lanes in town
- **P&Z member-** Need to develop more affordable housing in town
- **Gwen H.-** Need to preserve rural character and historical characteristics in town
- **Historical Society (Joan B. )-**Need to preserve town history, cemeteries and work on developing a Town Museum
- **Business Owner( Margaret C.)-**the I 84 and Route 44/74 corridors offer great opportunity to expand the tax base; town has great natural and community resources; need rally resources to attract more businesses yet protect rural character



### November 2022 Leadership Meeting Next Steps

1. Capture Open Forum Input
2. Capture Breakout Groups Issue Input
3. Share Meeting Feedback with Attendees, Boards and Commissions
4. Review Current POCD Objectives for each Section and place as a standing Agenda item on all Board and Commission Meetings -Take this Initiative back to all Boards and Commissions