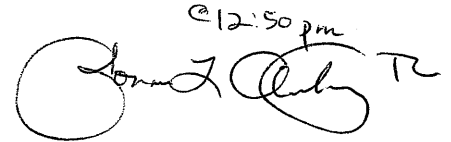


**TOWN OF SOUTH WINDSOR
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION**

RECEIVED APR - 1 2024

@ 12:50 pm


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FEBRUARY 27, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: Stephen Wagner, Robert Vetere, Alan Cavagnaro, Kevin Foley, Michael LeBlanc, Stephanie Dexter, Paul Bernstein

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Michael Ouellette

STAFF PRESENT: Michele Lipe, Director of Planning; Michael Lehmann, IT Support; Joshua Stern, Recording Secretary

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

REGULAR MEETING

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Wagner called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Alternate Commissioner Ouellette was seated for Stephanie Dexter.

MINUTES: 2-13-24 Regular Meeting

In the second full paragraph of page 4, Wagner suggested changing “Wagner noted that EV-ready and EV-capable spaces would count toward the 10% threshold” to “Wagner wondered whether EV-ready. . . .”

The minutes were approved by consensus with the above correction.

NEW BUSINESS: Discussion/Decision/Action regarding the following:

Discussion regarding the Plan of Conservation and Development with consultant SLAM:

1. Recap of Public Workshop

Pat Gallagher, AICP, of SLAM, presented **Exhibit A**. He briefly reviewed the project schedule.

The second Community Workshop on the POCD was held January 30 and generated results consistent with the first workshop and the survey. Attendees were shown the Draft Planning Program, which the Commission had reviewed at its December 12, 2023 meeting, and were asked to label their highest and lowest priorities with regard to conservation, development, and infrastructure. For conservation, several respondents prioritized open space acquisition through subdivisions or grants, establishing a P.A. 490 local option, and extending the trails. Farmland solar collectors and the demolition delay ordinance were seen as lower priorities.

In the development section, support was expressed for ensuring housing growth is in alignment with the capacity of the schools and other Town facilities. Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in the Sullivan Avenue corridor and the Town Center were also seen as priorities, as was supporting brownfield redevelopment efforts. Lower priorities included improving the appearance of the Route 5 corridor, façade and landscaping improvements along Route 5, and certain proposals involving housing. Regarding infrastructure, priorities included encouraging the incorporation of green energy, efficient water usage, expanding biking and walking options, and finding a permanent home for the Parks & Recreation Department. Some lower priorities were exploring alternative transportation options, developing a Town roadway classification system, and prioritizing freight rail.

2. Coordinated Vision/Growth Management Strategy

Gallagher said some attendees of the workshop had asked about the overall vision of the POCD. He feels the coordinated growth management strategy, encompassing development, infrastructure, and conservation policy, is central to the Plan’s vision.

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- Future Land Use Policies Plan

The Future Land Use Policies Plan serves as a guide to the Commission's visions for different neighborhoods of town. It delineates different categories (residential, commercial, industrial) and intensities of use but is not a zoning regulation, and it is a generalized plan, not a parcel-by-parcel breakdown. The aim is to align the Sewer Policies Plan with the intensities of use.

Chair Wagner asked about the vacant parcel on Wheeler Road. Gallagher said the Future Land Use Policies Plan marks this parcel as Buckland Gateway, indicating the vision for it is consistent with other parcels along Buckland Road, although the current zoning is different. He said the Commission should discuss whether they view the parcel as part of the Gateway Zone or a different use.

Commissioner Bernstein asked why attendees of the workshop had negative views toward farmland solar collectors. Gallagher said he thinks it was due to a misunderstanding of the roles of the Town and the State Siting Council. A town does not have the authority to approve or deny a commercial solar farm; when the Siting Council recently approved a solar farm in Simsbury, the Town of Simsbury negotiated an agreement that the land would be deeded to the Town once the solar panels are no longer operating. At Wagner's request, Gallagher said a sidebar could be added to the POCD explaining this process. Bernstein said he is struck by the small amount of open space left in town and said the Commission should think before developing it.

Gallagher displayed a draft Residential Densities Plan, which shows the densities of all residential and Mixed-Use Opportunity areas of town. Among the areas it marks as Mixed-Use Opportunity are the Town Center core and most of the Buckland Gateway. The Commission decided to extend this categorization along the east side of Buckland Road between Deming Street and the Town Center. With regard to open space, Commissioner LeBlanc said the map does not differentiate between open spaces used as recreation and undeveloped parcels that serve as buffers between neighborhoods; he expressed support for preserving these buffers as open space.

Gallagher said the Mixed-Use Opportunity areas generally align with the housing opportunity areas identified in the Affordable Housing Plan, though the match is not exact. Wagner noted that the MAHZ can be implemented if desired. Wagner and Gallagher discussed whether to make the Wheeler Road property a separate category in the plan, or to keep it in the Buckland Gateway but specify that it is not intended for mixed-use development.

Gallagher then outlined the intentions for each of the categories delineated in the Future Land Use Policies Plan.

Rural-density residential areas, under 1 unit per acre, are mostly along the Main Street corridor and in the central and northern parts of town; these areas contain significant farmland and undeveloped land and are either not sewerred or in the limited sewer service area. Low-density residential areas, with 1-2 units per acre, contain mostly single-family homes, with some institutional uses and undeveloped lands; medium-density residential areas, with 2 or more units per acre, contain a mix of single-family homes, condominiums, cluster-housing developments, age-restricted housing, and institutional uses. Both of these categories are in the primary sewer service area.

The Buckland Gateway Zone is intended to maintain a business focus, with developments that serve as a regional draw. Limited mixed-use and multi-family residential uses are also envisioned here; the Commission had previously discussed focusing on housing projects that have already been approved. The Town Center core is envisioned as a step down in intensity from the Gateway Zone, with a focus on the village-style concept established in the previous POCD. The area would maintain a business and civic focus, with limited residential opportunities in the upper floors of buildings per the existing overlay zone. The Town Center periphery aligns with the Center North Overlay Zone and is intended to contain housing that supports the core.

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The plan also contains a Neighborhood Node category for the small convenience areas along Oakland Road and Pleasant Valley Road. These are intended to support the surrounding neighborhoods with small-scale retail and service, with no residential uses. In response to a question for Wagner, Gallagher said there are existing commercial zones in both of these areas.

Sullivan Avenue is divided into three areas in the plan. In the east, the focus is on retail, services, and offices, with a step down in density from the Buckland area; with the recently approved overlay zones, there are limited opportunities for mixed-use residential here, with a redevelopment focus. The transition area between the east and west parts of Sullivan is currently zoned commercial but is intended to contain a mix of business and industrial uses, with a recommendation in the POCD to consider adding an overlay zone here. For the west stretch of Sullivan, the focus is on manufacturing and industrial uses mixed with some commercial uses, with a lower intensity than the Route 5 corridor.

The uses along Route 5 largely align with its current industrial zoning; the area is intended as a major tax generator and regional employment center, largely retaining its current mix of uses. In response to a question from Wagner, Gallagher said the plan's Sullivan Avenue West delineation ends at the rail line, and the Route 5 delineation extends up the Rye Street corridor. Most areas to the west of Route 5 are rural or low-density residential.

The Route 5 cross street nodes at the intersections of Governors Highway and Pleasant Valley Road contain commercial uses such as restaurants and gas stations that support the employee base; the POCD envisions that these areas will remain as such rather than gaining industrial uses. Route 5 North serves as a transitional area and aligns with the Route 5 overlay zone; it mostly contains single-family dwellings, with the opportunity for limited commercial uses. The business park in the southeastern corner of town is currently zoned industrial, with one residential development, and abuts residential areas on two sides. The POCD intends it as a lower-intensity small business incubator area with light manufacturing and office uses.

The areas classified as open space in the plan include Town-owned open space, State land, land trust properties, subdivision open space, and cemeteries. The plan does not classify utility rights of way as open space; Gallagher said they are perceived open space, or open areas without formal open-space protections, and suggested adding text to the plan explaining this distinction.

Wagner asked if the Route 5 North area could connect to the East Windsor sewer system. Gallagher said East Windsor's sewers extend close to the town line, so it was decided to move Route 5 North into the primary sewer service category to open up that possibility.

- Sewer Plan

Gallagher said the sewer plan is closely aligned with the Future Land Use Plan and the intended residential density of each area. He reviewed the intentions for the primary sewer service area, limited sewer service area, and conservation area, which the Commission had previously discussed at a joint meeting with the WPCA on January 16. In response to a question from Wagner, Gallagher clarified that the Future Land Use Plan does not delineate a high-density residential category. Low- and medium-density residential areas are in the primary sewer service area; Gallagher will add Mixed-Use Opportunity areas to the primary service area as well. Wagner suggested replacing the term "conservation area" with "sewer avoidance area."

Gallagher noted that a potential exception had been discussed for open space subdivisions in limited sewer service areas, setting aside a greater percentage of land as open space in exchange for smaller lots that might be unable to accommodate on-site septic. Lipe said this practice could incentivize open space subdivisions where

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they are not required. She also suggested allowing exceptions in the sewer avoidance area for certain denser developments that would fulfill the POCD's goals relating to open space.

Wagner asked about the sewer mains along Strong Road. Gallagher said he thinks the residential subdivisions off Strong are sewerred, and the road passes through an industrial zone. The plan shows the sewer avoidance area beginning on Strong at the point where the industrial zone ends.

- Sidewalk Plan

The draft Sidewalk Priorities Plan is intended to be more generalized than the initial map, which showed specific sidewalk segments. The draft prioritizes sidewalks in:

- Commercial and medium-density residential areas;
- School walksheds, consisting of $\frac{1}{3}$ -mile buffers around the elementary schools, a $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile buffer around the middle school, and a 1-mile buffer around the high school;
- $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile buffers around the Town Hall, the library, and Town parks in higher-density areas (Nevers and Veterans Memorial Parks);
- Arterial roadways such as Buckland Road and Sullivan Avenue (but excluding Route 5);
- Connections between existing sidewalk areas, including at Avery Street and Foster Street, and connections to Bissell Bridge; and
- A buffer around the Cross Town Trail route.

In response to a question from Wagner, Lipe said she will verify whether the south end of the Cross Town Trail is accurately depicted on the map. Commissioner Foley asked what existing walkways are along Main Street between Pleasant Valley Road and Bissell Bridge. Gallagher said the multi-use trail that runs across Bissell Bridge connects to the Windsor River Trail, but these paths cannot be accessed from South Windsor except from the trail parking lot on Main Street. The plan proposes to connect them into the Town's sidewalk system by adding sidewalks on a portion of Main Street, as well as either Pleasant Valley Road or Chapel Road. Lipe said the Engineering Department is looking into a potential multi-use path on Chapel between Route 5 and Main Street. Foley said he has noticed little to no desire for sidewalks among Main Street residents; Wagner added that Main Street is easily bikeable as it is.

- Open Space Vision

Gallagher displayed a list of the commissions and other entities that play a role in the Town's open space network, saying the plan's aim is to combine their priorities into a coordinated vision. The draft Open Space Vision delineates existing and target open space properties as well as community facilities, which can connect existing and future open space areas. Also marked on the plan are P.A. 490 land, priority conservation areas, the Cross Town Trail, other greenway corridors, and the Connecticut and Scantic River blueways.

Some Commissioners asked about the possibility of adding a trail along the I-291 right of way, which is labeled on the map as a greenway corridor. Commissioner Foley also asked about the greenway corridor along the Connecticut River, which currently consists of privately owned land. Gallagher said it is identified in the plan as a potential trail route in case the land becomes available to the Town 10 years or more from now; he will clarify in the POCD that acquisition of this land is not imminent. Foley said the landowners have already expressed concern about vandalism and dirt bike traffic on those properties. Gallagher added that a greenway does not necessarily mean a multi-use trail.

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3. Next Steps

The target completion date for the draft POCD is March 15. Gallagher displayed an outline of the planned chapters of the POCD.

Commissioner Ouellette asked if some areas would be prioritized over others for sidewalks. Gallagher said it would likely depend on what funding is available, and the Town Council would likely have priorities. Wagner feels the school walksheds are a top priority; Gallagher noted that sidewalk access to schools can reduce bussing costs for the Town. Ouellette said several roads in town have gaps in their sidewalks, which he would like to see addressed soon; he feels adding sidewalks from Chapel to the trails is a lower priority. Lipe noted that the draft plan prioritizes general sidewalk projects (e.g. connecting schools to sidewalks, filling gaps) rather than individual roads, and said the Engineering Department has some grant applications already in progress based on the draft map.

Commissioner Bernstein asked how the public will be able to access the POCD in advance of the public hearing. Gallagher said the draft will have a similar narrative format to the 2014 POCD. Bernstein also noted that a draft of the “Vision for the Future” chapter was included in the meeting packet, suggesting that the vision statement be crafted to speak more specifically to what makes South Windsor unique.

Commissioner Foley said there will likely be opposition to sidewalks on Main Street and Chapel Road, and he does not consider them a priority. He expressed ambivalence about labeling the greenway along the Connecticut River on the Open Space Vision. Commissioner Vetere agreed that certain areas, including Ayers Road, should be prioritized for sidewalks; he and Commissioner Cavagnaro concurred that Main Street should be a lower priority.

Wagner noted the recent report that the Town’s school enrollment is close to capacity and wondered if the draft POCD overemphasizes housing. Gallagher said the “Vision for the Future” chapter addresses possible ways to meet the Town’s housing needs while minimizing the impacts to the schools, including prioritizing age-restricted housing and studio and 1-bedroom apartments. Commissioner Ouellette said additional housing would also put strain on the Town’s fire, police, and social services; Wagner said the Senior Center is often booked up as well, and a plan to increase senior housing should come with a plan for expanding the resources to serve that population. Gallagher said the possibility of expanding the Community Center is mentioned in the Draft Planning Program.

Commissioner LeBlanc concurred that it should be a priority to complete the sidewalks on Avery Street. He is unsure that it is necessary to place sidewalks along Ellington Road up to the Ellington town line.

The Commission decided to schedule a Special Meeting for April 2 to review the final draft of the POCD. The document will then be referred at the next regular PZC meeting, beginning the 65-day comment period.

PUBLIC HEARING – 8:30 PM (Continued from 2-13-24)

- 1. Appl 24-03P, Burnham Realty, LLC** – request for a Special Exception to Table 4.1.1.A and site plan approval for a 5,400 sf building in phase 1 and 1,080 sf addition in phase 2, for equipment sales and rental, on property located at 396 Burnham Street, I zone (continued from 2-13-24)

Andrew Bushnell, PE, Bushnell Associates, said the first phase would be 75’ x 72’ and would be used for storage and repair of small-scale rental construction equipment. Burnham Realty also owns the adjacent buildings at 410 and 430 Burnham Street, which house Able Tool & Equipment; the proposed building would be an expansion of Able Tool’s operations. The second phase would be added onto the southeast corner of the building, to be used as office space or an additional storage or repair area.

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The parcel is 6.69 acres. The development is proposed on the front portion of the property; the rear portion consists mostly of wetland, with a portion in the 100-foot upland review area. The Inland Wetlands Agency approved the application at their February 21 regular meeting. 6% impervious lot coverage, including a paved driveway and a gravel parking area, is proposed. The area of disturbance within the upland review area is approximately 0.58 acres. 12 regular parking spaces and one handicapped space are planned, with the parking area to be surrounded by a 6' chain-link fence with privacy slats. A dumpster area is proposed on a concrete pad and would be screened by the fence.

The building would be served by the existing utilities on Burnham, with planned underground electric, cable, and telephone connections. Most of the roofs pitch to the back of the property to divert water, with the parking area to be graded in that direction as well. Bushnell explained the function of the water quality basin and said a rain garden would be added at the front of the property to capture the roof water from phase 2; a trench drain would be added on the driveway as well. He noted the landscape and lighting plans submitted with the application and said there would be no light pollution off site, with lighting concentrated in the parking area; the light poles would be 12'.

Jonathan Hryniewicz, Project Manager, Aldrich Construction, showed the floor plans and elevations for both phases. The building would be gray on top and white on the bottom to match the buildings at 410 and 430 Burnham. Hryniewicz reviewed the history of the three parcels, including the fact that the original building at 410 was destroyed by a fire in 2020. He also showed street views and aerial footage of the three properties.

Director of Planning Michele Lipe provided the Planning report.

1. Request for a Special Exception to Table 4.1.1.A and site plan approval for a 5,400 sf building in phase 1 and 1,080 sf addition in phase 2, for equipment sales and rental, on property located at 396 Burnham Street, I zone.
2. The applicant's proposal is to build the larger facility in phase 1 for additional storage space for concrete equipment and products associates with the Able Tool Facilities on adjacent properties. His narrative indicates this facility may become a stand-alone retail operation with the Phase 2 construction. The hours of operation are Monday – Friday 7:00 am – 5:00 pm.
3. Equipment sales are allowed in the I zone by Special Exception. Criteria for approval include:
 - The proposal is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Plan of Conservation and Development.
 - The application has met the requirements of the zoning regulations.
 - The land is physically suited to the proposed use.
 - Minimal, if any, adverse environmental impacts are created.
 - No traffic or other hazards will be created.
 - The impacts on the capacity of the present and proposed utilities, street, drainage systems, sidewalks, and other elements of the infrastructure will be minimal.
 - There will be minimal or no adverse effects on existing uses in the area.
 - Surrounding property values will be conserved.
 - The character of the neighborhood will be maintained or minimally disrupted.
 - The general welfare of the community will be served.
 - There is a balance between neighborhood acceptance and community needs.
 - Historic factors are adequately protected; or due consideration to preservation of historic factors has been demonstrated.
 - The overall physical appearance of the proposed development is compatible with surrounding development and the Commission's goals for the neighborhood/corridor.

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- The architectural design is aesthetically pleasing and blends well into the surrounding area.
- 4. The Commission may impose additional conditions in accordance with these regulations in order to ensure that all applicable criteria enumerated above and/or within a particular use category are satisfied.
- 5. Applicant proposal is to site size is 6.7 ac acres; however, the buildable area is closest to Burnham Street. This building proposed in phase 1 is approximately 55 feet from the front property line and will be expanded to 37 feet from the property line with the phase 2 addition.
- 6. Proposed impervious coverage is 6%; 65% allowed. The applicant will be constructing a water quality basin along the frontage and existing pavement to achieve water quality treatment measures.
- 7. Our parking requirement for this building is 11 spaces, 11 spaces have been provided.
- 8. New lighting includes building mounted wall pak and pole lighting. A cut sheet has been provided showing the fixtures are dark sky compliant and a photometric diagram showing lighting levels.
- 9. There are regulated wetlands on this lot; however, no new impacts are wetland anticipated. The IWA/CC acted at their Feb 21st meeting recommending a bond in the amount of \$3,000 for the establishment and maintenance of erosion and sedimentation controls; \$15,000 for the establishment of the stormwater structure and \$5,000 for establishment of wetlands plantings.
- 10. The site is served by public water and public sewer. The sanitary sewers will be subject to both MDC and South Windsor's WPCA approval. The applicant will also need a curb cut from the Town of East Hartford for the new driveway since Burnham Street is owned by the Town of East Hartford.
- 11. The Fire Marshal has reviewed the site layout and has no comments on the plans.
- 12. ADRC reviewed the site plan on Thursday, Feb 1. The applicant's intent is to match this building with the two other building on Burnham Street. The committee was pleased with the design as submitted.
- 13. The Town of East Hartford was notified as required. They have not contacted us with any concerns on the plans.
- 14. If this application is approved, the planning department has no additional modifications to request.

Lipe added that the plans have been revised according to comments from the Engineering Department. The Project Engineer reviewed the revised plans and was satisfied, though it will be recommended that the Town Engineer review the final plans.

Chair Wagner asked for public comments for or against the application. Hearing none, he asked for Commissioner questions and comments.

Commissioner Cavagnaro expressed support for the rain garden and sustainability features. He asked about the applicant's statement that the building may become a standalone retail facility with the phase 2 buildout. Derek Bauer, owner of Able Tool & Equipment, said all interactions with customers would take place at phase 2, with the first phase to consist only of storage. He expects that as the business grows, the location could become a tool repair outlet. Cavagnaro asked how many new employees are expected. Bauer said phase 1 would only occasionally require employees to load and unload trucks; he expects phase 2 would add at least three employees. Bauer said phase 1 would not generate regular car traffic, but it is hard to say how much traffic the facility would generate in the long term. He estimated that one to two trucks would bring deliveries per week, and he does not expect trucks to idle for long. Cavagnaro asked about the schedule for the three light poles in the parking area. Bauer is unsure whether these lights would be on timers, but said the building lights would likely stay on all night for security.

Commissioner Vetere asked about the timeframe between construction of the two phases. Bauer said the timing depends on several factors, but he estimated that construction of both phases would take three to four years; he expects that there would be a pause in construction between the two phases. The parking area would not need to expand when phase 2 is built.

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Commissioner Bernstein asked about Able Tool & Equipment. Bauer said Able Tool is a dealer for a number of construction equipment lines; the company sells, rents, and services small machinery, almost all of which is below 10 tons. Customers can visit the site to purchase equipment or drop it off to be serviced. Bernstein asked how close the location is to residences. Lipe said the property is in the Industrial zone; there are some residences in the same zone to the west of the property, as well as nearby houses across the East Hartford border. Bernstein said he thinks the business model is unlikely to disturb the neighbors. Chain-link fencing with black vinyl and privacy slats would be used to stay consistent with 410 and 430.

The public hearing was closed on this item at 9:16 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING (continued): Chair Wagner called the regular meeting back to order at 9:16 p.m.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

NEW BUSINESS: Discussion/Decision/Action regarding the following:

1. **Appl 24-03P, Burnham Realty, LLC** – request for a Special Exception to Table 4.1.1.A and site plan approval for a 5,400 sf building in phase 1 and 1,080 sf addition in phase 2, for equipment sales and rental, on property located at 396 Burnham Street, I zone

Commissioner Bernstein made a motion to approve the application with the following modifications:

1. Prior to commencement of any site work, a meeting must be held with Town Staff.
2. No building permit will be issued until the final mylars have been filed in the Town Clerk's office.
3. This application is subject to the conditions of approval of the Inland Wetlands Agency/Conservation Commission, including bonds in the amount of \$3,000 for the establishment and maintenance of erosion and sedimentation controls; \$15,000 for the establishment of the stormwater structure and \$5,000 for establishment of wetlands plantings.
All bonds must be in one of the forms described in the enclosed Bond Policy.
4. An as-built plan is required prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy per Section 9.1.3 of the Zoning Regulations.
5. All plans used in the field by the developer must bear the stamp and authorized signature of the Town of South Windsor.
6. The building street number must be included on the final plan.
7. Pavement markings must be maintained in good condition throughout the site drives and parking areas.
8. All free-standing signs and/or building signs require the issuance of a sign permit before they are erected.
9. The sanitary sewers will be subject to both MDC and South Windsor's WPCA approval.
10. Engineering comments dated 2/1/24 must be incorporated into the final plans.

Seconded by Commissioner Cavagnaro. Motion passed unanimously.

BONDS: Callings/Reductions/Settings: None

OLD BUSINESS: None

APPLICATIONS OFFICIALLY RECEIVED:

1. **Appl 24-05P, Francisco and Katy Rivera dba Bake Me Happy** – request for a 5-year major home occupation for a cottage bakery, at 222 Graham Rd, A-20 zone

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OTHER BUSINESS

Michele Lipe noted the upcoming Annual Conference of the Connecticut Federation of Planning and Zoning Agencies, as well as certain upcoming training seminars. She has also contacted the Town Attorney about the possibility of a general training session for the Commissioners in April or May.

Lipe also noted that Senior Environmental Planner Jeffrey Folger will be retiring at the end of this week.

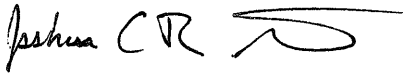
CORRESPONDENCE/REPORTS: None

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Bernstein moved to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Cavagnaro. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Joshua Stern, Recording Secretary