

POPE LAND DESIGN COMMITTEE

SPECIAL MEETING

OCTOBER 15, 2024 – 10:00AM (VIA ZOOM)

1. Call to Order. Present: Ray McGuire, Tim Sinclair, Lisa McAuliffe, Vivian Garfein, Abeth Slotnick and Curtis Rand.
2. **Approval of Agenda. So Moved** by A. Slotnick, seconded by V. Garfein and unanimously **Approved.**
3. **Approval of Minutes of September 5, 2024. So Moved** by A. Slotnick, seconded by T. Sinclair and unanimously **Approved.**
4. Discussion: Next Steps – the PLDC going forward  
R. McGuire reviewed minor changes made to the second draft of the Interim Report going to the BOS. The only significant changes are to the sections dealing with wood turtles and with expansion of the Committee (PLDC). As previously discussed, R. McGuire suggested adding representatives from the Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC) and the Historic District Commission (HDC); A. Slotnick agreed. There was another suggestion to add someone from the Village Coalition whom R. McGuire and C. Rand have met with, Mr. Jon Newcomb. R. McGuire made a **Motion: To Invite the Chairs of the PZC & HDC to Nominate a Member of Their Commissions to Serve on the PLDC and to Specifically Invite Jon Newcomb to the PLDC, as well.** The Motion was seconded by A. Slotnick, **With All in Favor.**  
With regard to the wood turtles, R. McGuire and C. Rand met with Dennis Quinn and also had a conversation with Attorney Timothy Hollister from the Town's law firm. C. Rand commented that Dennis Quinn is not working for the Town; another person who was suggested cannot do the project; there is a third person who is willing to do the project and knows a lot about wood turtle habitat. C. Rand suggested that the best thing to do is get someone who is a skilled field biologist to try to evaluate the wood turtle population in the spring, the habitat and connectivity. R. McGuire commented that the wood turtle is a State Species of Special Concern and the CT DEEP maintains a Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB). Advice is needed on how to protect the wood turtles; R. McGuire and C. Rand will pursue the person to start to do the analysis. V. Garfein commented that Michael Klemens had offered to give his expertise, not to be retained. There was further discussion including, the possible delay to recreational activities and the impact turtle corridors might have on the location and number of some housing units and recreation. A. Slotnick asked if the DEEP has any in-house expertise to offer; C. Rand has talked to someone at DEEP about the general plan. R. McGuire noted the importance of understanding the wood turtle issue and pointed out that there is no clear legal path to get a conservation plan for wood turtles; the responsibilities to the DEEP are not clear and that

organized plaintiffs and others could make this a problem for moving the project forward. C. Rand mentioned that there is a herpetologist with field knowledge and hopes this matter could be resolved simply by this expanded Committee, by getting a handle on specific habitat from a professional. R. McGuire will get the name of the herpetologist and speak to him, to see if he can be of any assistance.

V. Garfein suggested also moving forward with a traffic study, based on 64 units of housing, to learn what issues there may be. R. McGuire will pursue finding consultants for a traffic study, to be funded privately, if not by the town. L. McAuliffe asked if the cost could be shared by the town and the Housing groups; A. Slotnick pointed out that the Housing groups do not have site control and suggested the traffic study should be part of the master plan stage. L. McAuliffe asked C. Rand about his concern for paying for this; C. Rand suggested they might need more than just a concept for traffic engineers, including alternatives. V. Garfein mentioned changes to the existing lot lines that might allow recreation to move forward. L. McAuliffe commented that there are 2 parts to this: changing the lot lines could help get the basketball court and skating rink get done; the second part of the issue is moving a tennis court off of Community Field and the loss of a soccer field there. The proposed timeline is to start the basketball court project in the spring of 2025, on the same footprint; the tennis court change would be in 2026. A. Slotnick proposed getting the wood turtle situation clarified to figure out if anything needs to be re-arranged so that the recreation work can get done. C. Rand commented that there would need to be a town vote, from the financial standpoint and P&Z; if the bids for a new tennis court could go into next year's budget then that would get general approval. There was further discussion about time constraints; the need to resolve the turtle issue; and reaching out to others for ideas being useful. C. Rand suggested that capital funds could be found in 2025 and 2026 for the recreation projects, once the locations are settled; L. McAuliffe added that the final location issues must be resolved, before repairs are made. R. McGuire will try to speak to the wood turtle person. C. Rand will start looking at engineering firms for the traffic study.

5. Public Comment – None

6. **Adjournment. So Moved** by A. Slotnick, seconded by T. Sinclair and unanimously **Approved**.