

POPE LAND DESIGN COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING

MARCH 6, 2025 -10:00AM (VIA ZOOM)

1. Call to Order. Present: Ray McGuire, Lisa McAuliffe, Tim Sinclair and Abeth Slotnick. Attending: First Selectman Curtis Rand, PZC Chair Michael Klemens and Land Use Director Abby Conroy.
2. **Approval of Agenda. So Moved** by A. Slotnick, seconded by T. Sinclair and unanimously **Approved.**
3. **Approval of Minutes of February 6, 2025. So Moved** by A. Slotnick, seconded by T. Sinclair and unanimously **Approved.**
Chairman Comments: R. McGuire expressed his thanks to former Committee member, Vivian Garfein, for her all of her work on this Committee.

4. Presentation by Jocelyn Ayer, Director, Litchfield County Center for Housing Opportunity (LCCHO).
Ms. Ayer suggested that the Pope property (on Salmon Kill Road) could be a demonstration of the NWCT Affordable Housing and Conservation Collaboration initiative, as the site can accommodate both of those uses. The LCCHO has grant funding available for one project which could also include technical assistance resources to help the Committee move forward with the next steps on this project. Additional studies needed include: Water and Sewer capacity; Traffic impacts; Survey for Vernal Pools and Wood Turtle Habitat. This information would be provided to the Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC) prior to taking a proposal to them for an 8-24 referral review, to determine if the proposed uses are consistent with the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). Ms. Ayer has reached out to professionals to assist with these studies to ask for cost estimates for the work; she has not heard back from all of them yet. After the studies, the LCCHO would also provide funding and technical assistance for additional community and stakeholder engagement during this phase of the project, as this is a key part of the AH and Conservation Collaboration work. The LCCHO would work as quickly as possible with this Committee to get the next steps completed.

5. Discussion: Next Steps

R. McGuire commented that this Committee is trying not to slow down the recreation development, while the work on housing continues. Ms. Ayer responded that recreational use has been covered; the LCCHO is more about the studies for AH and Conservation and noted that recreation is a key part of the Pope property development. R. McGuire asked Curtis Rand what actions it would take to get the LCCHO involved; Mr. Rand responded that if Ms. Ayer has funding for studies, that's acceptable, but proposals for the land would have to go to the Town

and PZC first. Mr. Rand commented that they can take this idea to the Board of Selectmen (BOS) soon and that the Community Field Study just came in. L. McAuliffe explained that if the tennis courts are moved, they will lose the baseball field and the multi-sport field; there are no changes to Concept 6 planned. Mr. Rand pointed out that this is Town property and wants to know if this (working with LCCHO) is OK with Mr. Klemens and Ms. Conroy. Ms. Ayer noted that, if the Committee is interested in the AH/Conservation demonstration project, she would take that to her grant subcommittee for their approval. R. McGuire asked if there are any disadvantages to being a demonstration project; L. McAuliffe expressed that she wants to hear from Mr. Klemens and Ms. Conroy. Mr. Klemens indicated that the PZC and the Land Use Office are consistent on the sets of studies for an 8-24 review, including: Utility Infrastructure; Traffic Capacity, with a broader plan than the current one which would include 2 entrances; Biological Constraints of the Site, including Wood Turtle Conservation. At some point, an archeological study would need to be done, after locations of development are determined. R. McGuire asked if the LCCHO is able to finance the studies. Ms. Ayer responded that she will get the refined cost estimates; they can probably do a lot of it. Mr. Rand suggested that Town has just found out what the water capacity is for fire needs and further study of water capacity will depend on the number of bedrooms planned; the sewer capacity study for Lakeville is in progress and will be expanded to include the Pope property. J. Ayer suggested that someone “package” and explain the water and sewer capacity in an understandable way, based on the information available now. Ms. Ayer suggested that the vernal pools and Wood Turtles studies are critical to do first, as that will further refine the areas to be developed; the other studies to follow will inform each other in the process. Ms. Ayer will think about the next steps and get the refined scope of work for the traffic study. Mr. Klemens commented that they need to keep in mind sewer, water and access from 2 points for planning and safety purposes; all of the options need to be on the table. As far as the Wood Turtle is concerned, the Federal listing as an endangered species is probably on hold; however, it is of great concern to the State. Mr. Klemens added that development is manageable, as long as everyone keeps an open mind to design possibilities and let the data inform them. There were questions about which study should be done first. Mr. Rand indicated he would need more information on doing a traffic study, but thought it would be helpful if the LCCHO would pay for it, if it was approved by P&Z; Ms. Ayer will talk to the traffic consultant. Mr. Klemens commented that the Wood Turtle study will be done in a couple of months; they need to sort out where the limits of the turtle habitats are located. Mr. Klemens added that there are also 2 potential access points to consider involving bridges from the village side and noted that the dry brook bed should not be considered for any use. Ms. Ayer commented on the timing of the traffic study; there may need to be traffic counts in the spring and summer. R. McGuire summarized the proposed work to be done. Ms. Ayer commented that additional community engagement is important, but the studies need to be done first; she will get back to the PLDC with a timeline and refined cost estimates. R. McGuire asked for a **Motion to Approve Participation with the Litchfield County Center for Housing Opportunity, as Presented by Jocelyn Ayer, and Conditioned on Submitting Refined Cost Estimates to this Committee.** The Motion was made by A. Slotnick, seconded by T. Sinclair, and **Approved, With All in Favor.**

6. Public Comment – None

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