



TOWN OF LEDYARD

Ad Hoc Committee to Evaluate Separation of the Planning Commission & Zoning Commission

Meeting Minutes Regular Meeting

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, CT 06339-1511

Tuesday, August 11, 2026

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex

WORKING DRAFT

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Carmen Garcia Irizarry called the Ad Hoc to Evaluate Separation of the Planning Commission and Zoning Commission to order at 7:01 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present Board Member Tony Capon
Board Member M. Dave Schroeder Jr.
Board Member Carmen Garcia-Irizarry
Excused Board Member Kevin Dombrowski
Board Member Beth E. Ribe

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. MOTION to approve Ad Hoc Committee to Evaluate the Separation of the Planning Commission & Zoning Commission special meeting minutes of July 14, 2026.

The meeting minutes of June 23, 2026 were approved with the following changes as requested by Mr. Schroeder Jr.

IV.3 paragraph 2: change 8-3 to 8-23

IV.3 paragraph 4: In the last sentence add word "certified" before Zoning Enforcement officer.

IV.3 paragraph 6: In the last sentence add "as outlined in Connecticut General State Statute 8-19" after revisions.

RESULT: APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

MOVER: Carmen Garcia-Irizarry

SECONDER: M. Dave Schroeder, Jr.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS

1. Communications List-August 11, 2026

The committee discussed how correspondence received from residents and other parties would be handled. It was stated that letters would be added to the public record through the agenda.

V. BUSINESS OF THE MEETING

1. Review and Discuss Town Resolution 002-2026/Mar 25.

2. Review and discuss Town Charter IV Section 3.

The committee reviewed the process that would be required if the committee ultimately recommends separating Planning and Zoning Commissions. Committee members noted that the Town Charter would need to be revised.

The committee discussed the potential formation of an Ad Hoc committee by the Town Council to review the Charter and recommend the sections requiring revision. Those recommendations would then be presented to the Town council for consideration. The process would take approximately six months.

Mr. Schroeder noted that according to a resident's email the current job descriptions for the Zoning Enforcement Official and Town Planner may no longer be as described in Town Charter.

3. Discussion of relevant factors, such as the ones outlined below, to evaluate whether to separate the Planning & Zoning Commission into two individual commissions or retain the existing combined commission structure.
- a. Historical reasons for combining the two commissions into one.
 - b. Changes to the Town Charter, local ordinances, etc.
 - c. Financial
 - d. Administrative burden of running two separate meetings and legal notices.
 - e. Application Process-timeline, efficiency, etc.
 - f. Number of volunteers needed-recruiting and retention
 - g. Commission members specialization
 - h. Long term planning and implementation of POCD under the current structure of two separate commissions.
 - i. Consistency between the POCD and zoning decisions.
 - j. Review timeline for zone changes/regulations and amendments.
 - k. Any documented problems due to the combined structure (i.e. diminished planning, conflicts of interest, delayed applications, zoning regulations improperly applied, litigation, etc.
 - l. Feedback from other towns that have separate commissions and towns that have a combined commission.
 - m. Any other factors not mentioned above.

The committee again discussed how to organize and distribute the research and information being gathered and how the information would be presented to the committee.

The committee considered the reasons the Planning and Zoning Commissions were combined in 2012 and whether the combined structure resulted in increased efficiency. Members discussed whether information from more than a decade ago and the experiences of separate commissions prior to 2012 could be used to determine whether separate commissions would be more efficient today given the changes in the Town's development, processes and statutes.

The committee also discussed whether decisions made since the commissions were combined have been consistent with the POCD. The committee also talked about whether having the same

individuals involved in preparing the POCD and developing regulations creates sufficient checks and balances. and if separate commissions could result in more focused or constructive conversations regarding policy and regulatory revisions.

It was stated that all members of the Planning and Zoning Commissions are required to take a state training, it was unclear if this training was required in 2012. Members noted that the current training addresses both planning and zoning.

During this lengthy discussion the Town Council Regular Meeting minutes were frequently referenced by Mr. Schroeder Jr.

Later the committee discussed why Connecticut municipalities that currently have separate Planning and Zoning commissions have maintained that structure and why municipalities that previously had separate commissions ultimately chose to combine them. Mrs. Garcia Irizarry reference email correspondence she had with the land use official regarding the subject.

The committee considered the potential administrative, financial, and operational impacts of separating the Planning and Zoning commissions. Topics included staff workload, the number of meetings required, meeting space, the cost of legal notice requirements and associated costs, and whether additional staffing or outside consultants would be needed. The committee also considered whether responsibilities could be delegated to volunteers and whether additional volunteer participation could reduce the need for staff. The committee discussed obtaining administrative staff input regarding anticipated workload with two commissions versus a combined commission. The committee discussed obtaining administrative staff input regarding anticipated workload with two commissions versus a combined commission.

The committee reviewed the reasons the Town uses outside consultants and whether separating the commissions would affect that need. Members noted that the Zoning Enforcement Official does not currently have all of the certifications required for certain functions and that the town has experienced difficulty maintain certified staff.

The committee considered the potential legal implications of a combined commission compared with separate Planning and Zoning Commissions. This conversation included discussion of prior litigation within the town and also surrounding municipalities with separate commissions. Members examined whether separate commissions could reduce the potential for conflicts or litigation or conversely create additional opportunities for disagreements or litigation.

The committee again considered the possibility of adding additional commissioners to the combined committee and also the prospect of maintaining a combined commission and establishing a subcommittee to further examine planning related matters.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

1. Any Old Business proper to come before the Committee
None.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Any New Business proper to come before the Committee
The committee discussed the possibility of holding a special meeting to provide an opportunity for open discussion between the Ad Hoc members and the chairpersons of current and previous Planning and Zoning Commissions. The committee also discussed allowing public comment at a future special meeting. Mrs. Michaud will review possible dates to hold a special meeting and provide the options to the committee members via email.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Carmen Garcia Irizarry adjourned the meeting at 9:11 p.m.

DISCLAIMER: Although we try to be timely and accurate these are not official records of the Town.