



TOWN OF LEDYARD

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Ledyard, Connecticut 06339-1551
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Town Council Meeting Minutes

Chairman S. Naomi
Rodriguez

Special Meeting

Wednesday, June 25, 2025

7:00 PM

Town Hall Council Chambers -
Hybrid Format

In-Person: Council Chambers Town Hall Annex

Remote: Information noted below:

Join Zoom Meeting from your Computer, Smart Phone or Tablet:

**<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83930087371?pwd=yK7lctbTzWUbaRjQZQJR1qjNumF0un.1>
Audio Only: Telephone: +1 646 558 8656; Meeting ID: 839 3008 7371; Passcode: 344293**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Council Chambers, Town Hall Annex Building.

Chairman Rodriguez welcomed all to the Hybrid Meeting. She stated for the members of the Town Council and the Public who were participating via video conference that the remote meeting information was available on the Agenda that was posted on the Town's Website - Granicus-Legistar Meeting Portal.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

Present: Councilor William Barnes
Councilor April Brunelle
Councilor Jessica Buhle
Councilor Kevin Dombrowski
Councilor Carmen Garcia-Irizarry
Chairperson S. Naomi Rodriguez
Councilor Tim Ryan
Councilor Tony Saccone
Councilor Gary St. Vil

IV. BUSINESS OF THE MEETING

CONSENT CALENDER

- *1. MOTION to reappoint Mr. Ethan Foltz (D) 894 Colonel Ledyard Highway, Ledyard, as a regular member of the Ledyard Farmers' Market Committee, for three (3) year term ending May 9, 2028.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

- *2. MOTION to reappoint the following Members to the Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Commission for a three (3) year term ending June 28, 2028.

- Ms. Lauren Hawes, (U) 8 Warbler Way, Gales Ferry, as an Regular Member
- Ms. Paula Crocker (U) 1500 Route 12, Gales Ferry, as a Regular Member
- Ms. Stephanie Bacon (D) 6 Patricia Court, Gales Ferry, as an Alternate Member.

Moved by Councilor Dombrowski, seconded by Councilor Buhle

VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Kevin Dombrowski

SECONDER: Jessica Buhle

AYE: 9 Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, and St. Vil

Administration Committee

3. MOTION to adopt the proposed "Resolution Supporting the Town's Continued Participation in the Sustainable CT Municipal Certification Program And Establishing A Sustainable CT Ad Hoc Committee" as contained in the draft dated June 11, 2025.

DRAFT 6/11/2025

TOWN OF LEDYARD
RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THEIR CONTINUED PARTICIPATION
IN THE SUSTAINABLE CT MUNICIPAL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM
AND ESTABLISHING A SUSTAINABLE CT AD HOC COMMITTEE

WHEREAS, On March 11, 2020 the Ledyard Town Council adopted a "*Town of Ledyard Resolution Supporting the Participation in the Sustainable CT Municipal Certification Program*"; recognizing that Sustainable CT is a comprehensive, statewide, action-oriented voluntary certification program, built by and for municipalities, with the vision that: "*Sustainable CT communities strive to be thriving, resilient, collaborative, and forward-looking*".

WHEREAS, Sustainable CT is designed to boost local economies, help municipal operations become more efficient, reduce operating costs, and provide grants and additional support to municipalities.

WHEREAS, the Town of Ledyard continues to embrace an ongoing process of working toward greater sustainability, selecting which actions it chooses to pursue from the voluntary menu of

actions provided by Sustainable CT; and

WHEREAS; The Town of Ledyard has implemented a number of programs which included a streetlight assessment that resulted in the purchase of the streetlights from Eversource and converting them to Light-Emitting Diode (LED) light bulbs saving both energy and taxpayer dollars; constructed the Multi-Use Pathway from Ledyard High School to Ledyard Center to expand safe, connected, active transportation for pedestrians and bicyclists; extending the sewer line providing infrastructure for both affordable housing and business development; improvements to the Linda C. Davis Food Pantry providing an equitable community food action plan to ensure that all community members can access sustainable, nutritious food; improvements to the Town Green providing handicap access to one of the best Farmers' Markets in the State for residents to purchase fresh produce from local farmers and featuring many community organizations providing information to residents regarding fuel assistance, mental health services, public safety services, and many other commodities and programs; regionalization of shared services with the Town of Preston by providing Emergency Dispatch Communication Services, Tax Assessor Services, Public Works Mechanic Services, and the shared purchase of a streetsweeper to maintain the required MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) Permit Certifications.

WHEREAS, the Director of Land Use & Planning is authorized to serve as the Town of Ledyard's Sustainable CT contact person for the Sustainable CT Municipal Certification process and authorizes him/her to complete Municipal Registration on behalf of the Town of Ledyard;

WHEREAS: it is recognized that the town is minimally staffed; and supplemental support is needed to continue efforts to reach the Sustainable CT Goals of the community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that to focus attention and effort within the Town of Ledyard on matters of sustainability, and in order to promote local initiatives and actions toward Sustainable CT Municipal Certification, the Ledyard Town Council establishes a Ledyard Sustainable CT Ad Hoc Committee to be comprised of five members appointed by the Ledyard Town Council.

Those members shall, as much as possible, be representative as follows:

- One member from the Planning & Zoning Commission or Inland Wetlands & Water Courses Commission
- One member from the Economic Development Commission or Conservation Commission
- One member from the Town Council Land Use Committee
- Two members from the Community-at-Large

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, each member shall serve for a term of two (2) years. Members shall commence to serve their terms immediately upon appointment and shall serve until their successor has qualified or they have been reappointed or removed by the Town Council.

Any vacancies on said committee shall be filled by the appointment of the Ledyard Town Council, with priority given to maintaining as much as possible the structure above; and

Any member of the Committee who is absent from three (3) consecutive regular meetings

and any intervening duly called special meetings shall be considered to have resigned from the Commission and the vacancy shall be filled as hereinbefore provided, except that the Commission may vote to waive the requirements of the section in each case where illness or other extenuating circumstances make it impossible for a member to meet the attendance requirements of this action. It shall be the responsibility of the Chairman of the Committee to notify the Town Council when a member has not properly performed his/her duties.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that said Ledyard Sustainable CT Ad Hoc Committee is authorized to:

- (1). Work with the Land Use Director and the Mayor to engage staff; and or, contract with consultants, or a Sustainable CT Fellow through Southeastern Connecticut Council of Government (SCCOG) Program.
- (2). Review the Sustainable CT Tool Kit and Guidelines; and to oversee the preparation and submission of Application at the appropriate time.
- (3). Develop initiatives, goals, and recommendations to achieve Points required to complete the process to obtain the Sustainable CT Certification to include:
 - Building our community and our local economy;
 - Equitably promote the health and well-being of current and future residents;
 - Encourage and participate in regional collaboration and other forms of partnership.
 - Improve the services and quality of life for our residents, while focusing on sustainability, efficiencies, and reducing the impact of inflationary costs for residents.
- (4). Work with the Public Works Director on Food Waste Composting and other waste management initiatives.
- (5). Work with the Planning & Zoning Commission to ensure the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development supports the proposed Sustainable CT Initiatives.
- (6). Work with the Board of Education to ensure that Ledyard's educational facility needs are considered and met in developing a plan and implementing Sustainable CT initiatives.
- (7). Prepare and present to the Town Council for approval a Capital Improvement Plan to support and move the Sustainable CT Plan forward.
- (8) Identify funding sources, including grant funding, and other grassroots funding options such as *In Our Backyard* (IOB) Grants, to support the goals and initiatives; complying with the town's Grant Policy.
- (9) Work with the Finance Director on the application and administration of any grant funding received; and the preparation of bid specifications and advertisement for Requests for Proposals to facilitate approved Sustainable CT Initiatives, in accordance with Ordinance #200-001 "*Purchasing Ordinance for the Town of Ledyard*".

RESOLVED, that the first meeting of the Sustainability CT Ad Hoc Committee must be held within 90 days of passing this resolution and that the Sustainability Ad Hoc Committee shall meet as frequently as needed, but no less than quarterly; and shall select a Chairman, Recording Secretary, and Fiscal Officer from its body.

RESOLVED, that the Sustainability Ad Hoc Committee shall report annually to the Ledyard Town

Council on the progress of its activities toward the Sustainable CT Certification, with reports and presentations being publicly available.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the adoption of this Resolution reaffirms the Town of Ledyard’s March 11, 2020 initial desire and commitment to continue their work in achieving the Sustainable Development CT Certification.

Adopted by the Ledyard Town Council on: June 25, 2025

S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman

*

The above is a certified a true copy of a Resolution adopted by the Town of Ledyard at a meeting of its Town Council on _____, 2025 and which has not been rescinded or modified in any way whatsoever.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF: The undersigned has affixed his signature and corporate seal on this _____ day of _____ 2025.

Patricia A. Riley, Town Clerk

(SEAL)

Revision: “Town of Ledyard Resolution Supporting the Participation in the Sustainable CT Municipal Certification Program” Adopted: March 11, 2020

History:

Due to other competing demands on staff the Town of Ledyard was unable to continue their Application process to obtain the Sustainable CT Certifications. However, the Town has continued to take on and has completed a number of initiatives that have contributed to building its community and our local economy; to equitably promote the health and well-being of current and future residents; and has developed, fostered and participated in regional collaboration and other forms of partnership with other communities in the area.

The 2025 adoption of this Resolution reaffirms the Town of Ledyard’s desire and interest to achieve the Sustainable CT Certification to continue to improve the services and quality of life for its residents, while focusing on sustainability, efficiencies, and reducing inflationary costs for its residents.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Dombrowski

VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Jessica Buhle

SECONDER: Kevin Dombrowski

AYE: 9 Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, and St. Vil

4. MOTION to approve Mechanic II job description as presented in the draft dated May 16, 2024.

Moved by Councilor Dombrowski, seconded by Councilor Buhle

Discussion: Discussion: Human Resources Director Christine Dias explained that the Mechanic II was a new job description that was added to provide the shared services support to Preston.

Chairman Rodriguez asked whether a person has been hired for this position. Human Resources Director Dias noted that the individual was hired under a draft job description.

VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared

5. MOTION to approve proposed updates to Fiscal Assistant II Finance Department position as presented in the draft dated February 19, 2025.

Moved by Councilor Brunelle,, seconded by Councilor Saccone

Discussion: Human Resources Director Christine Dias explained Fiscal Assistant II for the Finance Department and Human Resources Department job description has been updated to reflect the current duties of the position.

VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: April Brunelle

SECONDER: Tony Saccone

AYE: 9 Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, and St. Vil

6. MOTION to approve proposed updates to the Fiscal Assistant II Finance and Human Resources job description as presented in the draft dated November 15, 2023.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Dombrowski

Discussion: Councilor Dombrowski stated that this Job Description was also updated to reflect the current duties of the position.

Human Resources Director Christine Dias explained when a position becomes vacant that they update the job description, noting that some employees have been in the position for 20+-years; and therefore, the job description may be outdated.

Ms. Dias went on to explain that in accordance with the town's labor contracts that vacancies must be posted internally for 10-days before they seek outside Applications. She stated the Fiscal Assistant II for the Finance Department was filled internally. Therefore, she stated when this occurs that other positions then become vacant

VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Jessica Buhle

SECONDER: Kevin Dombrowski

AYE: 9 Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, and St. Vil

7. MOTION to approve proposed updates to the Assistant to the Tax Collector Job Description as presented in the draft dated May 2025.

Moved by Councilor Dombrowski, seconded by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry

Discussion: Councilor Dombrowski stated that this Job Description was also updated to reflect the current duties of the position; as Human Resources Director Christine Dias explained for the previous items.

VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Kevin Dombrowski

SECONDER: Carmen Garcia-Irizarry

AYE: 9 Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, and St. Vil

Finance Committee

8. MOTION to authorize the submission of a grant application to the Good Neighbor Firefighter Safety Program in the amount of up-to \$10,000 to purchase rescue and general equipment.

Moved by Councilor Saccone, seconded by Councilor Buhle

Discussion: Councilor Saccone stated that State Farm Insurance and the National Volunteer Firefighters Council have formed a partnership and were offering up-to \$10,000 in Grant Funding to assist Fire Departments with the purchase of safety equipment. He stated this was more of a donation type of program, noting that there was no local funding required.

Councilor Saccone went on to note that Administrator of Emergency Services Steve Holyfield attended the Finance Committee's June 18, 2025 meeting and explained that Gales Ferry Fire Chief Jeff Erhart and Assistant Fire Chief Nick Bozym approached him for assistance to obtain the town's authorization to submit this Grant Application to upgrade some of their rescue equipment

Councilor Saccone continued by explaining by seeking and receiving these types of grants

funding that it saves the taxpayers money to replace needed equipment that would have been paid for by tax dollars.

VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Tony Saccone

SECONDER: Jessica Buhle

AYE: 9 Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, and St. Vil

9. MOTION to authorize the transfer of \$60,000 from Account # 10114301-53300 (Professional Services) to Account # 21014301-53306 (Plan Conserve & Development) to provide engage professional services for the updating of the Ledyard Plan of Conservation & Development and its Affordable Housing Plan.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Dombrowski

Discussion: Mr. Nathaniel Woody, 777 Long Cove Road, Gales Ferry, Planning & Zoning Commission Member, stated because Land Use Director/Town Planner Elizabeth Burdick had a prior commitment this evening that she asked him to attend tonight's meeting to provide information regarding the Planning & Zoning Commission's request to transfer the \$60,000 remaining in their Operating Budget for Professional Consulting Services to their Capital Budget to be used to engage Professional Services to assist with their update to the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) and Affordable Housing Plan (AHP).

Mr. Woody explained that House Bill #5002 (Public Act #2549) was a 91-page Bill that would provide sweeping changes regarding housing throughout the State of Connecticut, and that all municipalities would have to comply with provisions of the Bill by 2027; by having an Affordable Housing Plan (AFP) in place. He also noted that every ten-years municipalities were required to update their Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) which was last updated in 2020.

Mr. Woody continued by addressing the importance of the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) stating that it takes everything into account that was going to happen in the town, such as land infrastructure, utilities, open space, public works and facilities improvements, etc. He stated it was necessary to have an updated Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) in place for the town to be eligible to apply for and receive grant funding. He explained that updating these Plan Documents involved more time and work than one may think. He stated during the time he previously served on the Planning & Zoning Commission that the work to update the Plan of Conservation & Development was completely done in-house by Commission, which was the reason they were not able to update all of the Sections. Therefore, he stated the Planning & Zoning Commission was looking to engage Professional Consulting Services to assist with this process and to help with the requirements of House Bill #5002 (Affordable Housing Plan). He stated that because the process to update the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) could take 18-months or longer; by having these funds in their Capital Account to engage

Professional Services the funds would be used over a period of time, explaining that the Capital Funds roll over from one year to the next.

Chairman Rodriguez stated prior to tonight's meeting that she spoke to Planning & Zoning Commission Chairman Marty Wood and Land Use Director/Town Planner Elizabeth Burdick. She stated the town was required to update the Plan of Conservation & Development every ten-years, noting that because it was updated in 2020 that the next update was not due until 2030. Therefore, she questioned when the Affordable Housing Plan needed to be done. Mr. Woody stated he believed that the Affordable Housing Plan needed to be done by 2027 per House Bill #5002. Chairman Rodriguez went on to note that during her conversation with Ms. Burdick that she stated although the Planning & Zoning Commission was not going to immediately start the work to update these Town Plan Documents that they would need to transfer the money from their Professional Consultant Services Operating Budget to their Capital Budget by June 30, 2025; which was the reason the Town Council had to have tonight's Special Meeting. She stated because the Town Council had previously cancelled this meeting as part of their Summer Meeting Schedule, that she was grateful that all of the Town Councilors were able to make it tonight.

Chairman Rodriguez went on to note that Ms. Burdick explained that it would take some time to prepare and solicit Request for Proposal/Request for Qualifications (RFP/RFQ) for Professional Consulting Services; however, the money needed to be in-place to start the process. Mr. Woody agreed with Chairman Rodriguez's comments, and he stated that once the funding was in-place that the Land Use Office would prepare and solicit the Requests for Proposals for Professional Consulting Services to assist with updating the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) and the Affordable Housing Plan (AFP). He stated in reaching out to neighboring towns who recently updated their Plan Documents that the Town of Stonington's cost for a third-party consultant to update their Plan Documents was \$150,000. However, Mr. Woody stated the Planning & Zoning Commission was hoping by doing some of the work themselves that they could reduce costs.

Chairman Rodriguez stated in speaking to Planning & Zoning Commission Chairman Marty Wood that he indicated that at the Commission's May 8, 2025 meeting that they voted to approve to request the Town Council transfer the \$60,000 from their Professional Consultants Operating Budget to their Plan of Conservation & Development Capital Budget; and she questioned the current balance of the Capital Budget. Mr. Woody stated he believed the Plan of Conservation & Development Capital Account's current balance was about \$17,000. He also noted in addition to approving the funds be transferred; that the Planning & Zoning Commission also authorized Land Use Director/Town Planner Elizabeth Burdick to begin the process to prepare and solicit Requests for Proposals/Qualifications (RFP/RFQ) to engage a Professional Consultant to assist with updating these Plan Documents. He stated by having the work in-progress to update the Plan of Conservation Development (POCD) and the Affordable Housing Plan (AHP) that it would allow Ledyard to incorporate and comply with the requirements and any changes contained in House Bill #5002 (Affordable Housing Plan).

Councilor Barnes questioned what would happen if they did approve to transfer the funds before June 30, 2025. Chairman Rodriguez stated if the Town Council does not act tonight to transfer

the \$60,000 from the Professional Consulting Services to the Capital Account for POCD Professional Consulting Services to assist with updating the Plan of Conservation & Development that the funding would be swept along with any other remaining funding into the Undesignated Fund at year end. Councilor Barnes stated he supported updating the Plan of Conservation & Development and the Affordable Housing Plan; however, he stated that he thought allowing the funding to be swept into the Undesignated Fund would provide the town with more flexibility.

Chairman Rodriguez questioned whether Mayor Allyn, III, had any comments regarding Councilor Barnes' suggestion to allow the \$60,000 to be swept into the Undesignated Fund. Mayor Allyn explained that if they do not transfer the \$60,000 from the Land Use Department's Professional Consultant Services Operating Budget to their Capital Account at this point in the fiscal year, that the funds would be swept into the Undesignated Fund as Chairman Rodriguez stated. He went on to explain that the process to move the funds from the Undesignated Fund to the Land Use Capital Account would be the same process the Town Council was considering this evening. He stated next fiscal year (fy 25/26) which would commence on July 1, 2025; that several transfers would be needed to move the funds from the Undesignated Fund into the Land Use Capital Account to facilitate the work to update the Plan of Conservation & Development and the Affordable Housing Plan.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry questioned what if they do not spend all of the money for Professional Consultant Services to update the Town's Plan Documents. Mayor Allyn stated that the funds would either remain in the Capital Account or in the Undesignated Fund, noting that they do not have to spend all of the money. However, he explained the funding in the Undesignated Fund are not earmarked for any specific purpose.

Councilor Buhle stated that she had the same thought as Councilor Barnes, which was to do nothing and allow the remaining \$60,000 in the Land Use Professional Consulting Services Operating Budget to get swept into the Undesignated Fund.

Councilor Buhle went on to state that she had concerns regarding this request because the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 was a contentious budget, noting that they looked at every single penny. She stated the Planning & Zoning Commission did not request funding in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget to update the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) and the Affordable Housing Plan (AHP). Therefore, she stated that it appears this work was an afterthought, because the Commission had money left-over and so they now decided to take on this project.

Councilor Buhle continued by stating that she understands that House Bill #5002 was going to be approved by the State Legislature and the Governor; and that she would like to see the Town's Plan Documents updated. However, she stated that this request felt like it was unplanned, especially because the Planning & Zoning Commission did not take action to start the process to address the Plan of Conservation and the Affordable Housing Plan until May 8, 2025.

Chairman Rodriguez stated when she heard about the need to schedule a Special Meeting to

address the transfer of these funds before June 30, 2025; that she questioned why this was not brought up sooner, noting that the Town Council held multiple meetings since the Planning & Zoning Commission's May 8, 2025 Meeting. She stated that her first thought was the same as Councilor Barnes's question, which was "*Why do we have to do this now?*"; noting that in the back of her head was Councilor Dombrowski's words which were "*Something always happens when things are done at the last minute, and we have to jump over hoops to get it done*"; and she commented that the Town Council has had to do that many times lately.

Mr. Woody stated when Land Use Director/Town Planner Elizabeth Burdick looked at the previous calendar; there was a Town Council meeting scheduled for June 25, 2025 and so they thought that they would go through the process to present their request at the Finance Committee's June 18, 2025 and then move onto the Town Council's agenda on June 25, 2025.

Councilor Barnes noted that there were a few Town Council meetings where they had to make some tough decisions regarding the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget. Therefore, he questioned had they known that this \$60,000 was available, whether they would they have cut some of the things they cut, or whether they would have taken as much funding from the Mil Rate

Stabilization Fund (Rainy Day Fund); noting that this would have been consistent with Councilor Ryan's comments. He stated to be transparent that his preference would be to not approve the \$60,000 and let the funds go into the Undesignated Fund at year end and then allow the Mayor to make a decision on how best to use those funds in the coming year.

Mayor Allyn responded to Councilor Barnes' comments stating that he did not have any plans to use funding from the Undesignated Fund. He explained once the funding goes into the Undesignated Fund that as unanticipated expenses arise the funding could be appropriated from the Undesignated Fund using this very same process through another special meeting, or perhaps a regular meeting, noting the appropriation of funding from the Undesignated Fund would require Town Council action.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry questioned how the update to the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) and the Affordable Housing Plan (AHP) would be affected if the Town Council does not approve to transfer the \$60,000 from the Land Use Professional Consulting Services Operating Budget to the Land Use Capital Account. Mayor Allyn stated that they would not be able to solicit Requests for Proposals for Professional Consultants to engage services to begin the process to update these Town Plan Documents, noting that the work would be delayed until the funding was in-place.

Mr. Woody explained that because updating the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) was a long process, that the objective was to have the funding available for when it was needed, noting the time involved to prepare, solicit and review the Request for Proposals/ Qualifications (RFP/RFQ).

Councilor Saccone stated if the Town Council does not approve to transfer the \$60,000 from the Land Use Department's Operating Budget to their Capital Account this evening that the Planning & Zoning Commission would have to wait until next fiscal year's budget. Therefore,

he stated that the Planning & Zoning Commission would not be able to even start the process (prepare and solicit Request for Proposals/Qualifications) until July of 2026; noting that with the approval of House Bill #5002 that the town would need to have their Affordable Housing Plan in place by 2027. He stated every year the town continues to kick the can down the road, and he noted that delaying the process to update these required Town Plan Documents would not only cost the town more, but that it would also impact the amount of time they would have to conduct their work.

Chairman Rodriguez stated it was her understanding that although the Legislature has approved House Bill #5002 that they were going to make some adjustments to the Bill and reconsider it in September, 2025. Mayor Allyn stated they may have a Special Session; therefore, he stated that House Bill #5002 could move along quickly because the Legislature would be primarily focused on that Bill. He noted during his Press Conference that Governor Lamont stated that he has spoken to House and Senate Leaders, so they know exactly what they needed to do. Therefore, Mayor Allyn stated in September, 2025 that they would make a couple of changes and that he thought the House Bill would pass.

Councilor Dombrowski noted as Chairman Rodriguez alluded to earlier this evening, that he does not like it when they rush to get things done at the last minute, without following the process. He stated that he 100% supported updating the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) and the thought process to address Affordable Housing Plan (AHP) concurrently so they could comply with House Bill #5002. However, he stated because this request to transfer the \$60,000 from the Land Use Department's Operating Budget to their Capital Budget did not seem to follow the process that he thought a better route would be for these funds to go into the Undesignated Fund, and then the Planning & Zoning Commission could submit a request to the Finance Committee to transfer the funds from the Undesignated Fund to the Land Use Capital Budget to support this work.

Councilor Ryan, attending remotely via Zoom, stated at the Finance Committee's June 18, 2025 meeting they voted 2-0 to recommend the Town Council approve the request to transfer this \$60,000 from the Land Use Department's Professional Consulting Operating Budget to their Capital Account to be used to engage Professional Consultants to assist with updating the Town's Plan Documents. He stated the reason he supported the request was because there was a need for professional services to assist the Land Use Director with everyday expectations, as well as long term strategic items such as updating the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) which he has been a part of in other communities. He stated that it was a very long and arduous process, noting that was the reason it was only updated every 10-years; and the reason it was important to begin the process early.

Councilor Ryan continued by noting during the Finance Committee's June 18, 2025 meeting they also talked about House Bill #5002 "Affordable House Plan". He stated because the intended use of the \$60,000 was to engage the needed professional services to assist the Land Use Department to execute its mission that he supported the transfer of these funds from the Land Use Department's Operating Budget to the Land Use Capital Budget.

Councilor Ryan went on to address the point regarding the current budget year and the next

budget year in terms of the finances. He noted Councilor Saccone's comments this evening about things not getting cheaper. Therefore, he stated it was important to have the funding available right now to update the Plan of Conservation & Development because they may not have the funding available in future budget cycles to comply with the State's requirements to update these Town Plan Documents. He stated as far as the clarity and the cleanliness of how they transfer money, that he was open to considerations on how to do that. He concluded his comments by stating that this was a valid use of the funds.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry questioned whether they thought they may need more than \$60,000 to update the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) and the Affordable Housing Plan (AHP). Mr. Woody stated that he could not answer Councilor Garcia-Irizarry's question, noting that the advantage of having the money set aside in the Capital Account was that they would have funding in place to engage an outside Consultant to assist the Planning & Zoning Commission with their work. He explained that the Request for Proposals/Qualification (RFP/RFQ) would be to engage Professional Consultant Services.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry questioned whether they thought they may need to engage more than one outside Consultant or need other Experts, and whether the Planning & Zoning Commission would come back to the Town Council for more money in the future. Mr. Woody explained the work to update the Plan of Conservation & Development would be a more controlled spend than it might be for professional services to assist with an Application, because they would know going-in what they could ask for. Therefore, he stated that they would be able to scale that request for the outside consultants by telling them what they wanted to get done, and the amount of money they had to spend. He went on to explain that updating the Plan of Conservation & Development was the type of work where the Planning & Zoning Commission could do as much work as they could; and then outside Consultant could step-in and do the work that the Commission cannot do, therefore, he thought that it was a low risk.

Councilor Brunelle, attending remotely via Zoom, stated that she thought the planning and conservation for affordable housing was very important. She stated that she has listened to all pros and cons; and she stated that it was important, and was good planning to put money aside. However she stated that she did not feel comfortable with moving the money now because "*It is a nice to have*"; noting that "*It was not a must have*" right now. She stated as of right now this was not a "*Must have emergency*". She stated she was tempted to say "*No, for now*", because it could always go into Undesignated, and when it was needed and necessary, they could get the money from the Undesignated Fund.

Councilor Saccone stated the Land Use Department has \$60,000 left in their Operating Budget that they want to transfer to their Capital Budget for a specific use, which was to update the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) and the Affordable Housing Plan (AHP), which was a state requirement; and he noted that there were only a few days left before June 30, 2025 for this fiscal year. He stated that he understands this process noting that as the former Fire Chief of the Gales Ferry Fire Company he has done this same thing several times. He stated that next year's budget was already set and because there was no funding to update the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) that they were going to have to find the money from somewhere. Therefore, he stated made sense to transfer these funds to the Capital Account to be used to

update the Plan of Conservation (POCD) and that he was in-favor of the request, noting that the money was not going to be used foolishly.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry questioned: (1) Who the Land Use Department was going to hire?; (2) When was that going to happen?; (3) Do we broadcast to the world so firms will respond to the bid inquiry?; and (4) They would most likely interview the companies and then select one. She stated the reason she was asking these questions was because if they were going to hire somebody next week; then she could see the point of moving the money; and not to postponing it, because it would cost more in the long run. However, she stated that since they do not have a plan yet of who they were going to hire, and when it was going to be done, then they really do not know if it was going to cost more. She stated once the Planning & Zoning Commission decided that they need these people to help them out that they could come here and ask for the money; which would probably take a period of maybe a month or two. However, she stated if the Planning & Zoning Commission was not going to need the money for two or three years that the money would be sitting there for a while not doing anything. She stated that she thought the Land Use Department's intent was to move forward with the Request for Proposals/Qualifications (RFP/RFQ) relatively soon. Therefore, she stated the question was what the timeline was from when they put that RFP/RFQ out to getting and evaluating the Bids.

Mr. Woody stated that he did not know what that timeline would look like, and therefore, he could not answer Councilor Garcia-Irizarry's questions. However, he stated from his past experience in serving on the Planning & Zoning Commission and working on the Plan of Conservation & Development Committee (POCD) that he could tell her that it was a long process with many meetings and workshops. He stated what he was concerned about was the Affordable Housing Plan (AHP) because the town was going to be required to have Plan in-place by 2027 in accordance with House Bill #5002; which was sooner than the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD). He went on to explain that with House Bill #5002 that he did not know what future holds for them, which was the reason Planning & Zoning Commission made a motion to bring this request forward to the Town Council. He stated it would have been nice to know more about the details of House Bill #5002 a head of time; however, he commented that was neither here nor there.

Chairman Rodriguez stated because of her background and experience in previously serving on the Planning & Zoning Commission that she would vote "Yes" on this request to transfer the \$60,000 from the Land Use Operating Budget to their Capital Budget to allow them to move forward with the process to address these required Town Documents (Plan of Conservation (POCD) and the Affordable Housing Plan (AHP)).

Councilor Buhle stated that this would be her last comment, noting as she previously said, that she would feel a lot better about transferring the \$60,000 if the Land Use Department had requested funding in their 2025/2026 Capital Budget to update these Town Plan Documents; and if the Town Council had cut the money during the budget process, and now there was money remaining from the Land Use Department's 2024/2025 Budget, that could be used for this work.

Councilor Buhle stated that she definitely agreed with Councilor Saccone that when they do not do these things they cost more money later. But she said that it also feels weird to say, that they were telling police officers to drive cruisers for one more year, and they were putting off fire

trucks for another year, and they were putting off a bunch of other things to save money, and then they were looking for funding to update the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) five years early, noting that she understands that it takes time. However, she stated that it feels like it does not line up with the others cuts and changes that were made around town. She stated that she was having a hard time balancing “*How much of a need this was; versus how much of a want this was to get this started now; and could it wait until next year?*”.

Councilor Buhle stated that she understands the idea that they have to fund updating the Plan of Conservation (POCD) and the Affordable Housing Plan (AHP). However, she stated that this was not free money, noting that the funding would go into the Undesignated Fund which could serve different purposes that may come up for the town. She stated that she was having a hard time balancing the idea that updating the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) and the Affordable Housing Plan (AHP) was suddenly an absolute Capital Need; versus why it was not requested in March, 2025 when they were preparing the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget. Therefore, she stated that transferring these funds does not line up with the budget they worked on.

Mr. Woody apologized that the Land Use Department did not start this process earlier, and therefore, he stated that he respected the Town Council’s concerns. However, he stated that updating the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) and the Affordable Housing Plan (AHP) was not a “*Nice to Have*”; stating that this was something the Town was “*Required to do per State Statute*”. He stated whether or not there was a benefit to put this work off for a year was the Town Council’s decision. However, he stated that updating these Town Plan Documents was something that they will have to do; and he explained that there was no downside to starting this process earlier; except for the questions the Town Council raised about where the money would come from; and when they choose to decide to allocate the money to facilitate updating these Town Plan Documents to comply with state requirements.

VOTE: 3 - 6 Motion Failed (Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Garcia-Irizarry, Dombrowski, St. Vil not in favor)

RESULT: MOTION FAILED

MOVER: Jessica Buhle

SECONDER: Tony Saccone

AYE: 3 Rodriguez, Ryan, and Saccone

NAY: 6 Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, and St. Vil

V. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Buhle moved to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry.

VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared. The meeting adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

Transcribed by Roxanne M. Maher
Administrative Assistant to the Town Council

I, S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman of the Ledyard Town Council,
hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and
correct copy of the minutes of the Special Town Council
Meeting held on June 25, 2025.

S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman

DISCLAIMER:

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

The Town Council's Official Agenda and final Minutes will be on file in the Town Clerk's Office.