

POPE LAND DESIGN COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING

AUGUST 7, 2025 – 10:00AM (VIA ZOOM)

1. Call to Order. Present: Lisa McAuliffe, Ray McGuire and Abeth Slotnick. Absent: Tim Sinclair. Attending: Curtis Rand, Kitty Kiefer and Jocelyn Ayer (Director, Litchfield County Center for Housing Opportunity).
2. **Approval of Agenda. So Moved** by A. Slotnick, seconded by L. McAuliffe, **With All in Favor.**
3. **Approval of Minutes of May 1, 2025. So Moved** by A. Slotnick, seconded by L. McAuliffe, **With All in Favor.**
4. Introduction to Presentation: Ray McGuire, Chair
Michael W. Klemens was introduced as the Chair of the Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC) and as a well-known Herpetologist with endangered species expertise in NW CT.
5. Presentation: Wood Turtle Map / Study by Michael W. Klemens, PhD
Mr. Klemens introduced himself as the Consultant for this project and stated that he will recuse himself, if this comes before PZC. Abby Conroy (Land Use Director) ran the screen share of the presentation. Mr. Klemens described the map as including both the Pope and Trotta properties, noting that the ecosystem included other areas, as well. The map was submitted to the State DEEP and approved; it can be viewed at: <https://www.salisburyct.us/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Proposed-Wood-Turtle-and-Development-Map.pdf> M. Klemens described the conservation of wood turtles as focused on 3 zones and the recommended level of activity in each of those zones. More details can be found at: <https://www.salisburyct.us/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/WOOD-TURTLE-CONSERVATION-IN-SALISBURY-CT.pdf> Mr. Klemens pointed out where wood turtles were found on the properties and in other nearby areas south and north of the properties. Mr. Klemens reviewed a detailed wood turtle and development fact sheet, which can be viewed at: <https://www.salisburyct.us/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/WOOD-TURTLE-AND-DEVELOPMENT-FACT-SHEET.pdf> The fact sheet included next recommended steps for the project, including a lengthy wood turtle conservation and management plan. Details are included about restoration, addition of pollinator mix, removal of invasives, and the installation of a permanent exclusion fence to help the turtles stay in their conserved habitat areas.
6. Discussion: Next Steps
R. McGuire invited comments from the Commissioners and Jocelyn Ayer. L. McAuliffe commented that the recreation plan wouldn't change too much; the loss of acreage will need to

be re-gained, but access needs to be discussed further. Curtis Rand commented that the planned Pickleball courts will be switched to Community Field. A. Slotnick commented that the housing location could be flipped to the other side of the planned area. Jocelyn Ayer agreed with L. McAuliffe that they must talk about access to the recreation areas on the site; this will be studied and brought back to another meeting. Ms. Ayer commented that they will look at the hedgerow area, also, and suggested having more community engagement this fall. A. Slotnick asked Mr. Klemens how the size of the wood turtle management area is determined and if the recreation area can be extended; Mr. Klemens response was no and that the housing units plan and configuration need to be downsized – the 64 units of housing is unrealistic and not a simple flip of location; the details are important. Mr. Klemens commented there could be a better village concept for housing and the access roads layout; he mentioned being aware of the Historic District area, as well. A. Slotnick asked about the determination of the management area; Mr. Klemens talked about the details, including protected zones for wood turtle nesting areas in fields and woodlands, within the confines of Town property.

Public Comment

- Lorraine Faison – Asked what other Commissions will consider this property for the final determination of uses. Ms. Ayer responded that all Commissions will be involved, once there is a plan. Ms. Ayer commented that this is a long-term project; that the 3 parcels need to be separated; there will be an 8-24 review; there will be a Town meeting and vote, regarding housing development; they access needs to be studied; the number of housing units needs to be studied; and she hopes community sessions might get started in late fall. Ms. Faison asked for a description of the fence; Mr. Klemens responded that it is a DEEP issue and the design must be determined.
- George Massey – Asked Mr. Klemens about guidelines for the housing area; Mr. Klemens responded that he needs to work with Ms. Ayer and any Historic District concerns and commented that the housing needs to be re-designed.
- Alec Linden, Lakeville Journal – Asked Mr. Klemens if there would be any public access to the conserved parcel; Mr. Klemens answered that will need to be addressed in the recreation plan, but there would probably not be trail access for passive use.
- David Bright – Thanked Mr. Klemens for re-setting expectations.

Adjournment. So Moved by A. Slotnick, seconded by L. McAuliffe, **With All in Favor.**