

POPE LAND DESIGN COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING

SEPTEMBER 4, 2025 – 10:00AM (VIA ZOOM)

1. Call to Order. Present: Ray McGuire, Lisa McAuliffe, Tim Sinclair and Abeth Slotnick. Attending: Vivian Garfein, Curtis Rand, Michael Klemens (Consultant) and Abby Conroy (Land Use Director).
2. **Approval of Agenda.** Michael Klemens asked that the Agenda be modified to include an Update on the Revised Map and Wood Turtle Management Plan. A **Motion to Approve the Agenda, as Amended**, was made by A. Slotnick, seconded by L. McAuliffe, **With All in Favor.**
3. **Approval of Minutes of August 7, 2025. So Moved** by A. Slotnick, seconded by L. McAuliffe, **With All in Favor.**
4. Update: New Map (Revision) and Draft for Wood Turtle Management Plan – Michael Klemens
The revised map was shown, along with explanation of the minor changes – the wood turtle icons have been removed and 2 small pieces of land have been added to the housing parcel. The wood turtle conservation area was recalculated to 50.4 acres. The map can be found at: <https://www.salisburyct.us/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/MAP-FOR-POPE-TROTTA-FINAL.pdf>
The study of bats was included in the recommendations; all has been sent to the NDDB for review.
There was a lengthy presentation and discussion of the draft for the wood turtle management plan; the complete Zoom recording can be found at: <https://www.salisburyct.us/pope-land-design-committee/> under Minutes. M. Klemens pointed out that both the wood turtle reserve areas and the restoration areas need to be managed; data security is important also. A. Slotnick asked about monitoring the sites; M. Klemens responded that there could be some volunteers and some scientific oversight by a technical specialist.
5. Discussion – Jocelyn Ayer, Director, Litchfield County Center for Housing Opportunity – Next Steps
6. Discussion – Michael Klemens, Consultant, Process for 8-24 Referral to PZC
Ms. Ayer suggested that she could be ready to go to P&Z for the 8-24 referral review of new and specific uses, possibly in time for the October 6, 2025, P&Z meeting, if the PLDC agrees on the 3 proposed uses. Ms. Ayer asked if it would be the PLDC proposing those uses to the P&Z or if it would be Recreation and Housing groups doing the proposal. If the P&Z review agrees that the proposal is consistent with the POCD, then there would be more community engagement and public information meetings. The Board of Selectmen would then be able to take the next step of scheduling a Town meeting on the matter. A. Slotnick commented that they are ready for the 8-24 review, but added that housing and recreation may need to work out the right-of-way

access across the properties; Ms. Ayer commented that there has been conversation with L. McAuliffe and others about possibly extending the existing road for potential emergency access. M. Klemens pointed out that for the 8-24 review, the 3 distinct parcels need to be separate, with all details to be determined later; another discussion would be about the 4 acre conservation/wood turtle restoration area. V. Garfein asked when the distinction of the parcels needs to be done; Ms. Ayer answered that lot line revisions would need to be determined before a Town meeting vote. M. Klemens noted that from the State perspective, the wood turtle area needs to be on a dedicated deed-restricted parcel. A. Conroy agreed that lot line revisions would need to be done before a formal Town vote, but suggested that nothing be merged now because later subdivision would be a complicated process. L. McAuliffe, T. Sinclair and V. Garfein agreed with Ms. Ayer to move to the 8-24 review. R. McGuire asked who should present the proposal for the 8-24 review; A. Slotnick indicated that it should be the PLDC, as they have representation from both Recreation and Housing groups; no one disagreed. Ms. Ayer will draft the cover letter to go with the map, summarizing what has been discussed about the proposed uses; it will be sent to the PLDC members for review prior to the October 6, 2025, P&Z meeting. A. Conroy described the 8-24 review process as a planning action, which is not an application, as a request conveyance of right of property to a private entity to further explore the uses; the PZC could act on the request when it is received, as there is no public hearing process, if they determine it is an appropriate use of the land, in line with the POCD. C. Rand commented that both the Recreation Commission and the Affordable Housing Commission (SAHC) should sign off in support on this document, along with the PLDC and the Conservation Commission, as part of the procedure. C. Rand also noted that townspeople will have to weigh in on granting a conservation easement to the State and other big decisions, probably to be brought forward by a Board of Selectmen. L. McAuliffe and T. Sinclair suggested that the Recreation Commission could discuss this plan at their meeting next week; the SAHC could discuss it also at their September meeting. M. Klemens commented on the letters of support from those Commissions; A. Conroy pointed out that letters of support are not required or a factor for the 8-24 review and also suggested that the IWWC not be included at this time. M. Klemens commented the question is if the concept is in line with the POCD. C. Rand pointed out that the BOS did not buy the Pope property with those specific uses in mind; the first Pope Committee came up with those recommendations; he added that he wants the support from the Affordable Housing, Recreation, and Conservation Commissions. R. McGuire asked who would be moving forward on housing; J. Ayer commented that after the 8-24 review, she would like to work with the SAHC and Recreation to talk about concepts, access and other issues that will come up at future public meetings. J. Ayer commented that the PLDC could be done with its' work after the 8-24 review; L. McAuliffe agreed that the individual Commissions will make decisions about how to use their portions of the land. A. Slotnick expressed her concern about completely separating housing and recreation decisions because of the layouts and access issues that need to be worked out; Ms. Ayer commented that they will need to keep coordinating. R. McGuire asked what the formal connection would be between the separate Commissions and who would coordinate the efforts; L. McAuliffe suggested that she and Ms. Ayer could work

together. R. McGuire commented that A. Slotnick would need to continue to be involved in that work. There was no decision about disbanding the PLDC at this time.

7. Public Comment – None

L. McAuliffe commented that her recommendation is that the PLDC present the 8-24 review to the PZC and then disband this Committee and turn the development, planning and everything else over to the Recreation, Housing and Conservation Commissions; she added that the PLDC has served its role, presented information to the public, come up with a good plan on how to use the land and now it's time to allow each entity to proceed as they need to, taking into consideration the other Commissions needs and wants, to continue to work together, but that can happen outside of this Committee.

A. Slotnick wanted to be sure coordination could take place outside of the PLDC. Her concern is access and whether there are options, other than coming from Salisbury into the housing site by using the rail trail; she wants to explore that.

V. Garfein expressed her concern about access, ingress and egress over the whole site and coordination over that.

R. McGuire commented that there would be no recommendation to disband the PLDC today, but it will be discussed at the next meeting.

A. Slotnick commented that there has to be some vehicle to coordinate between housing and recreation.

8. **Adjournment. So Moved** by A. Slotnick, seconded by T. Sinclair, **With All in Favor**.