

# Land use groups coordinate efforts

Ledyard must plan to accommodate future development, officials say

By **JENNA CHO**  
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**Ledyard** — The town's various land-use groups are beginning to examine ways to align its land-use practices in order to better prepare Ledyard for future development in the region, such as the proposed Utopia Studios in Preston and the expansion of Foxwoods Resort Casino.

Councilor Linda Davis, chairman of the Town Council's Land Use, Planning and Public Works Committee, said at Wednesday's council meeting that various members of land-use commissions met Monday in preparation for a subsequent land-use summit.

The commission members are discussing reviewing existing plans such as the town's Plan of Conservation and Development, updating the town's zoning regulations and even updating the town's Web site to include useful information for developers or business owners interested in building in town.

Having a better Web site would help market the town, Davis said.

"The first thing (developers) do is look at the Web site," she said.

The Monday meeting was facilitated by Thomas Marano, business development manager for Northeast Utilities System. Davis

said the utilities company benefits from providing such consulting for free; the more it helps promote development in the region, the more customers it will have.

Davis said that Marano told the group new development is coming to the area, whether the town is ready for it or not. Davis said the town should take a proactive, not reactive, approach to development.

Davis said some town commission members were skeptical that the meeting would yield any concrete results, saying it is not unusual for town officials to come up with "grandiose ideas," only to vacate their seats before bringing their ideas to fruition. Nevertheless, she said the meeting was helpful, as it got commission members talking in the same room.

Davis said some Zoning Commission members feel that the zoning regulations are not fully compatible with the Plan of Conservation and Development, which was drafted in 2003.

While Marano's participation is at no cost to the town, the town may eventually need to hire professionals for such things as creating a better town Web site and helping the Zoning Commission update its regulations.

Mayor Susan Mendenhall said she has been pushing for updating the zoning regulations for some time and applauded the council's land-use committee's effort to get the process started.

"You do not want to be playing catch-up ball," Mendenhall said. "There's a lot of development that will happen."

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