

**TOWN OF SOMERS
PLANNING COMMISSION
P.O. BOX 308
SOMERS, CONNECTICUT 06071**

**PLANNING MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2008
7:00 p.m. TOWN HALL**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Karl Walton called the regular meeting to order at 7:02 pm. Members Cliff Bordeaux, Greg Genlot, Joe Iadarola, Brad Pellissier, Karl Walton and Alternate Scott Sutter were present and constituted a quorum. First Selectman David Pinney, Selectman Kathy Devlin and Selectman Joe Tolisano and Town Planner, Patrice Carson (7:40) were also present.

II. OLD BUSINESS

a. **OTHER** – There was no other Old Business.

III. NEW BUSINESS

a. **DISCUSSION WITH BOARD OF SELECTMEN: ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS**

Mr. Tolisano explained how last year the Selectmen had reorganized the Town structure by designating Directors to head up the various departments and attend weekly staff meetings. This was done to improve communications and efficiency.

The Selectmen have asked the Town's Directors to prepare a 5% and 10% reduction in their budgets for January. The goal is to save as much as possible and put it into a reserve account to cover the anticipated shortfall for fiscal year 2010. For this financial reason Mr. Tolisano said that Mr. Strauss' services must be limited. He went on to explain that the Selectmen recognize Mr. Strauss' extensive corporate knowledge of the Town and will pay for Town Engineer Cafarelli to tap into this. In time the goal is for Mr. Cafarelli to provide the services for which the Town had employed Mr. Strauss.

The Commission expressed their approval of the Town's reorganization but reiterated their concern regarding how the budget reduction for Mr. Strauss had been handled. Mr. Walton said that when Planning proposed their budget nothing was said about the intention to reduce the item for Mr. Strauss' services by \$15,000.00. In prior years similar changes would have been discussed, but in lieu of this communication the Planning Commission has been embarrassed. Furthermore, the Commission is saddened that there has been no consideration for recognizing Mr. Strauss for his almost 40 years of service to the Town. The Commission wants to know that if it is agreed with Mr. Cafarelli that Mr. Strauss is needed, that his services can be used. However, at this time the Commission's budget for those services has been exhausted. The Selectmen said that if Mr. Cafarelli determines that Mr. Strauss is needed they will accept this. The Commission agreed to depend on Mr. Cafarelli as their point person but stated that they would like Mr. Strauss involved in the review for the new subdivision regulations.

The Selectmen pointed out that the reduction had been communicated at the Town Hearing and at a budget hearing, but added that this type of communication lapse should be corrected by the new Town structure. Ms. Devlin read the Selectmen's statement of purpose that they will be asking Board and Commission members to adopt. The Commission and BOS continued to discuss this statement and the need for continued cooperation between the Town's departments, boards and commissions. The Planning Commission thanked the Selectmen for their attendance at this meeting.

b. REQUEST FOR BOND REDUCTION, WORK IN GILLETTE'S CROSSING SUBDIVISION, BAILEY & MASON LANES, KRL BUILDERS

Mr. Walton explained that a correspondence was received from Mr. Strauss regarding the bond for this subdivision. He had recalculated the figures based on his new estimating formula and determined that the bond could be reduced to \$429,900.00.

A motion was made by Mr. Pellissier; seconded by Mr. Genlot and unanimously voted to approve the reduction of KRL Builders, Inc.'s performance bond of \$650,000.00 by \$220,100.00 as permitted by the subdivision regulations to the amount of \$429,900.00, for the Subdivision known as "Gillette's Crossing Subdivision" on Battle Street. The Town Engineer has reviewed the construction and agrees with the reduction requested. The reduction of the bond is subject to the presentation of a performance bond to the Planning Office for the reduced amount in the form of Surety, Irrevocable Letter of Credit, or Passbook acceptable to the Town Attorney. The subdivision regulations allow reduction of a performance bond to no less than 30% and therefore this bond cannot be reduced any further.

c. RELEASE OF MAINTENANCE BOND, ISABELLA DRIVE PHASE I, SUMMER SHADE SUBDIVISION, KRL BUILDERS INC.

Mr. Walton explained that this release must be deferred until the Town performs a final inspection to make sure the catch basins are cleaned out and that the subdivision is ready for the performance bond to be released.

d. RECONFIGURATION OF LOTS, 87 & 113 BILLINGS ROAD, (MAP 04, BLOCKS 86 & 85), KASACEK & PETKIS

This application was deferred because more information was needed.

e. RECONFIGURATION OF LOTS, 54 & 50 HANGDOG LANE, (MAP 12, BLOCK 42A & BLOCK 37 LOT 05), ROULIER

The Commission reviewed the maps showing how the property will be reconfigured. (At this time Ms. Carson joined the meeting.) At issue is an existing pool house that is only 49.5 feet from the front property line and should be 50 feet away per regulation. Previously, both of these pieces of land had been owned by Mr. Roulier. However, one of the lots has been transferred to a family trust.

A motion was made by Mr. Iadarola; seconded by Mr. Pellissier and unanimously voted to approve the reconfiguration of property of Daniel R. & Jane E. Roulier and the Roulier Family Limited Partnership at 54 & 50 Hangdog Lane (Map 12, Block 42A & Block 37, Lot 05), as shown on map entitled, "Lot Line Reconfiguration Plan, Prepared For Daniel R. & Jane E. Roulier, 54 Hangdog Lane, Somers, Connecticut", dated: 11/13/08, 1 sheet. This reconfiguration does not constitute a subdivision because no new lot is created.

f. OTHER – There was no other New Business.

IV. DISCUSSION: PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

a. REVIEW OF OPEN SPACE SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

Ms. Carson explained that at the special meeting with Mr. Palaia there was a question whether or not a density bonus was required by Statute in a conservation subdivision. Ms. Carson researched this and found that the Statute states that a density bonus may be provided but is not required.

A discussion ensued regarding the advantage of the density bonus to encourage a developer to build this type of subdivision since it benefits the Town by providing 40% of the land as open-space. It was added that the benefit of the density bonus “carrot” may be to change the mood of the community when the new regulations go to Public Hearing. Countering this position, it was pointed out that the developer would already be encouraged because of savings in roadway, lighting and drainage costs resulting from decreased frontage requirements.

Ms. Carson suggested that rather than simply offering a density bonus, the Commission could consider requiring the bonus house be an “affordable house” under the regulations. In this way two goals in the POCD could be satisfied and a need of the Town when applying for grant money could also be satisfied. She went on to explain how the regulations for affordable properties required deed restrictions limiting selling price and maximum income requirements. This may be a way that young people who have grown up in Town could be able to afford to live here. This suggestion was discussed by the Commission.

Selectman Pinney pointed out the value of trying to attain the affordable housing requirement. Currently the Town is applying to the Hartford Foundation for grant money for open-space. The Foundation wants to know that the community is making progress on affordable housing and is not a closed exclusive community.

This type of subdivision was encouraged by the POCD. The motivation for encouraging conservation subdivisions is because they disturb less land, put less strain on the environment and reduce sprawl.

The Commission will review the subdivision regulations for Granby. Ms. Carson will begin to draft a trial regulation and will research the difference between the market price and “affordable” price of housing. The Commission hopes the issue can go to Public Hearing no later than the last February meeting.

V. STAFF/COMMISSIONER REPORTS – The Commission reviewed the first part of the meeting.

VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION – There was none.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE AND BILLS – There were none.

VIII. MINUTES APPROVAL: October 23, 2008 & October 30, 2008

A motion was made by Mr. Iadarola; seconded by Mr. Genlot and unanimously voted to approve the minutes of October 23, 2008 as written.

Approval of the minutes of October 30, 2008 was deferred.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Bordeaux; seconded by Mr. Iadarola and unanimously voted to adjourn the October 23, 2008 meeting of the Planning Commission at 8:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Reed
Recording Secretary

Bradley Pellissier
Commission Secretary

MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVAL AT A SUBSEQUENT MEETING.