

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

**PLANNING MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 04, 2008
7:00 p.m. Town Hall**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Karl Walton called the regular meeting to order at 7:07 pm. Members Greg Genlot, Brad Pellissier, Karl Walton and Alternate Scott Sutter (seated for Joe Iadarola) were present and constituted a quorum. Town Planner, Patrice Carson was also present.

II. OLD BUSINESS

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

III. NEW BUSINESS

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

Ms. Carson explained that this is the first maintenance bond release that Town Engineer, Bob Cafarelli has done. Therefore, he will be consulting with Mr. Strauss about it and this issue will be deferred until after consultation.

b. **RECONFIGURATION OF LOTS, 87 & 79 BILLINGS ROAD, (MAP 04, BLOCKS 86 & 85), KASACEK & PETKIS**

The Commission reviewed the plans showing the properties. The applicants have requested to reconfigure their lots because the septic system for the Petkis house is on the Kasacek property.

Mr. Walton pointed out that one of the new lot lines is actually preferable as it is more radial. Both reconfigured properties are much larger than the minimum lot size and are contiguous with no wetlands.

A motion was made by Mr. Sutter; seconded by Mr. Pellissier and unanimously voted to approve the reconfiguration of property of Stanley & Helen Kasacek and Ralph Petkis at 87 & 79 Billings Road (Map 04, Blocks 86 & 85), as shown on map entitled, "Lot Line Reconfiguration Plan, Prepared For Ralph Petkis, Stanley & Helen Kasacek, 79 & 87 Billings Road, Somers, Connecticut", dated: 10-25-08, 1 sheet. This reconfiguration does not constitute a subdivision because no new lot is created.

c. **OTHER – FUTURE 8-24 REQUEST**

Mr. Cafarelli joined the meeting and reviewed with the Commission a proposal for a project on Field Road. He explained that the area near the road is a flat plain that goes back about 75 feet and then rises about 25 feet higher in a steep 3 to 1 incline. Under this rise is gravel, which can be excavated flat to create another sports field.

The proposal is to allow contractor bidding to cut down the trees and stump the property, remove the gravel and then finish the field, replacing topsoil, seeding, and including the necessary irrigation. The contractor would need to hire a surveyor to monument the corners and document the property line.

The Town would not pay for any of the work because the contractor would remove and sell the gravel (about 70,000 cubic yards by Mr. Cafarelli's calculations). The area would be cut level with the existing sports fields on the site. Mr. Cafarelli said that the Board of Education, the Recreation Committee and the sports associations have stated they need another field.

A discussion ensued regarding the decline in school population, an all-purpose sports field behind the Firehouse that is not used to full potential and the lack of a professional study assessing the need, or not, for additional fields. Ms. Carson said that there are grants available to do a needs study for the field. The Commission also pointed out that once a field is created it would require continued maintenance and cost. Another concern is that the Town would lose the ability for future use of the free sand and gravel, and therefore have to purchase it.

Mr. Cafarelli explained that most of the gravel the Town uses is for road sand and must be processed. This gravel would not be suitable for that use. This gravel could be used for washouts but there have only been two major washouts in the last 20 years. The last washout only required 200 yards of gravel, so the supply is far greater than the potential need. He pointed out that the Town has another supply of about 100,000 yards of gravel near the DPW building and landfill.

Mr. Cafarelli said that a quote has already come in to do the job from a construction company. The Town could expect to receive \$2 a ton for the gravel (about \$200,000) which would go into the General fund, plus the completed field. This contractor said that he could have the work done in 2 years. The two existing fields would need to be moved closer to the road, but this would only require line painting, which would be done by the Town.

The Commission has concerns regarding access to the site during the excavation since the road is very narrow. This would be true especially in the summer when the truck traffic passing by the Recreation Department camp would be a serious hazard to the young campers. Mr. Cafarelli explained that Avery Construction has expressed their desire to share in the project. The Avery property is adjacent to the site, so this could allow offsite access thus avoiding a threat to the children. The Commission pointed out that there is a lot of assumption to that potential plan. They stressed that an access plan would need to be provided.

Mr. Cafarelli reiterated that the Town could receive an additional \$100,000 a year for two very monetarily tight years. This was countered as being shortsighted.

The Commission discussed their desire to have the project bonded in case the contractor defaults. A discussion ensued about why a bond would be needed, but was decided that requiring a bond was a good idea, as is done in any other construction project.

The Commission reiterated that before recommending approval of a project like this they would want a professional needs assessment, an access plan and a bond. Another issued they felt should be considered is what happens if the gravel is not all excavated within the 2-year timeframe.

IV. DISCUSSION: PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

a. REVIEW OF OPEN SPACE SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

Ms. Carson met with Mr. Strauss to discuss the open-space subdivision regulation proposal. During this discussion they contacted Ledyard's Planner, Brian Palaia for additional clarification on some items. She intends to draft a sample regulation within 1-½ weeks and will e-mail the draft to the Commission. The Commissioners will decided, after review of the draft, whether they want to hold a special meeting or post the regulation directly to the Town website so the public can review.

V. STAFF/COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Selectman Pinney joined the meeting and was asked to update the Commission on the illegal logging matter on the Forest View North Trail. Ms. Carson said that the Trails committee has had to work double duty to keep the trails open because the area is filling in much more quickly with brambles as a result of the clear-cutting.

VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION – There was none.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE AND BILLS

The following bill was presented for payment:

Journal Inquirer November 13, 2008 Meeting \$62.96

A motion was made by Mr. Pellissier; seconded by Mr. Sutter and unanimously voted to pay the bill.

Ms. Carson distributed an announcement of an Agricultural Workshop to be held at Somers Town Hall on Wednesday, December 12th from 10:00am to 12 noon and asked that anyone interested in attending let her know.

She also distributed a letter she wrote to the Town's Chief Financial Officer about the application fees that are charged by the Land Use office. In the letter she pointed out that Somers' subdivision application fees are some of the highest in the State. The Inland Wetland fees should stay the same but the Zoning Board of Appeals fee and one of the Zoning application fees should be reviewed and possibly changed.

VIII. MINUTES APPROVAL: OCTOBER 30, 2008 & NOVEMBER 13, 2008

Approval of the October 30, 2008 minutes was deferred.

Correction for the minutes of November 13, 2008; page 3, section IV.a. before paragraph 3, insert, "Mr. Sutter brought up the idea of using the open space in the subdivisions for alternative energy such as windmills."

A motion was made by Mr. Sutter; seconded by Mr. Genlot and unanimously voted to approve the minutes of November 13, 2008 as amended.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Pellissier; seconded by Mr. Genlot and unanimously voted to adjourn the December 4, 2008 meeting of the Planning Commission at 8:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Reed
Recording Secretary

Bradley Pellissier
Commission Secretary

MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVAL AT A SUBSEQUENT MEETING.