

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

**PLANNING MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 2009**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chairman Cliff Bordeaux called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Members Cliff Bordeaux, Greg Genlot, Brad Pellissier and Alternate Scott Sutter (seated for Joe Iadarola) were present and constituted a quorum. Selectman David Pinney and Town Engineer Bob Cafarelli were also present.

II. OLD BUSINESS

a. SUBDIVISION APPLICATION #407, 3-LOTS, 380 FOUR BRIDGES ROAD (HALL HILL ESTATES), LIPTON

Mr. Lipton spoke to the Commission and presented the map of the 380 Four Bridges Road subdivision. He reminded the Commission that last September they approved his subdivision on the west side of the road. He explained that the only outstanding issue with this subdivision is the required widening of the road. His problem is that there is a 30 foot dropoff on the east side, so after reviewing with Mr. Cafarelli he has decided to expand the road on the west side. This will require Lipton's conveyance of road frontage property to the Town and the Town will need to quit claim some property to Lipton.

There was discussion regarding changes in lot lines and lot sizes that would result from widening the road on the other side and if this could constitute a re-subdivision. Another concern with reconfiguration was that some lots might become undersized or non-conforming. Mr. Pellissier suggested that both parcels could be shown on a single map that details the changes to the road and the lot sizes. Mr. Lipton suggested that both subdivision maps be filed with the condition that nothing can be done or lots sold until the road widening is settled because the maps must be filed by July 8th.

Mr. Pellissier pointed out that if the lot count in the subdivisions is changed this may need another Public Hearing for a re-subdivision. There was also a question regarding whether the subdivision on the west side needed a Public Hearing. Mr. Lipton said that Ms. Carson had told him that it did not need one because it was less than 5 lots. However, Mr. Pellissier pointed out that if this was a second cut to the property it is a re-subdivision and would require a Public Hearing. Mr. Cafarelli said he would look into what would be needed and would also review the 3-lot subdivision plan.

Mr. Lipton said he would file the Mylar's before July 8, 2009 with the understanding that he will come back with the amended reconfiguration of the lots and nothing will be moved or sold until that is settled.

b. OTHER – There was no other Old Business.

III. NEW BUSINESS

a. OTHER – There was no other New Business.

IV. DISCUSSION: PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT (POCD)

There was no discussion regarding the POCD.

V. STAFF/COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Mr. Pinney thanked the Commissioners for coming and added that he voted for elimination of the Planner position because he saw this as a viable approach. He said he was committed to making this work and would work with Mr. Cafarelli to make it work. He added that although this evening's meeting was prolonged because of questions regarding whether this was a subdivision or a re-subdivision he feels confident that the Commission will be able to perform their duties responsibly. He stated that he does foresee times when a professional planning consultant will be needed.

Mr. Bordeaux said he did not have a level of comfort yet, nor did he have a level of comfort with how things have come to this point or where they are going. The other Commissioners agreed that these were their sentiments as well.

Mr. Pinney reiterated his appreciation for the Commission's attendance and said he interpreted this to mean that they are open to what will transpire in the near future to establish their level of comfort.

Mr. Bordeaux said the Commissioners were there because they have been appointed to do a job and there are citizens who are dependant upon the Commission performing their duties. However, this does not preclude the Commission's discomfort at being brought in at the tail end of the elimination of the Town Planner position as a proposal with no consultation during the budget process or ever having been consulted about this as a general staffing consideration. The Commission stated that there has been a compounded loss of experience with terminating of the use of Consulting Engineer Merv Strauss and now the elimination of Ms. Carson's 22 years of experience. Mr. Cafarelli and Selectman Pinney stated that Mr. Strauss can still be contacted when needed. Mr. Pinney added that he wants to prove to the Commission that they will have all the support they need to do their work

Mr. Bordeaux thanked Mr. Pinney for this and said that he feels the Commission needs to get Planning Consultant services contracted now, within the scope and power of the Commission, particularly during this transition phase.

A motion was made by Mr. Pellissier and seconded by Mr. Genlot for the Planning Commission to seek, interview and hire an outside consultant to perform the Town Planning Consulting Services subject to entering into an employment contract with the Commission under reasonable terms and conditions for such consulting work. This contract would be reviewed by the Town attorney before being executed. The Commission also authorized the Chairman and/or (in his absence) the Vice-Chairman to enter into such contract with an acceptable candidate for Town Planning Consultant services on behalf of the Planning Commission. This process is to begin immediately and is to be conducted as quickly as practical.

The following discussion ensued: Mr. Bordeaux explained that he would like to have something to bring before the Commission by their next meeting. He said he would make calls to the Planning Agencies that the Commission is aware of for advice on how to proceed. Hopefully, they will have résumés to submit at the next meeting. Selectman Pinney said he would e-mail the current Planner's job description and added that he would like to work with the Commission on this but added that there are no funds appropriated for the position.

It was pointed out by the Commission that a line item for a Town Planner had been approved during the Town budget process. Mr. Pinney stated that the salary line is not for a consultant. Mr. Pellissier said

that the State statute permits the Planning Commissioner to hire a Planner adding that whether it is as part-time staff or as a consultant is a matter of semantics.

Mr. Pinney said that the funds for the planning position are still available and a portion of the funds may be appropriated for the consultant position. He added that the Commission cannot hire employees. Mr. Pellissier reiterated his understanding of the State statute that allows the Planning Commission to hire a Planner. It was agreed that the opinion of an attorney was needed on this issue.

The Commission voted unanimously in favor of the motion. The motion carried.

VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION – There was none.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE AND BILLS – There were none.

VIII. MINUTES APPROVAL: March 26, 2009 & May 28, 2009 & June 4, 2009

The minutes were unavailable, so approval was deferred to the next meeting.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Sutter; seconded by Mr. Pellissier and unanimously voted to adjourn the June 25, 2009 meeting of the Planning Commission at 7:47pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Reed
Recording Secretary

Bradley Pellissier
Commission Secretary

MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVAL AT A SUBSEQUENT MEETING