

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

**PLANNING MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 22, 2010
TOWN HALL – 7:00 pm**

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman B. Pellissier called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 7:00 pm. Members G. Genlot, C. Bordeaux, alternate members, S. Sutter seated for T. Clark and T. Caravella seated for W. Salka, were present and constituted a quorum. Also present: B. Cafarelli, Town Engineer.

II. OLD BUSINESS:

None

III. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Request for extension of Special Use Permit for Age Restricted Housing for Soap Stone Estates, Eleanor Road

Mr. Cafarelli distributed a copy of a letter he received from the Applicant, Tom Careno, requesting a 1 year extension of the Special Use Permit for Age Restricted Housing. Mr. Cafarelli pointed out this has been an annual request for extension from the Applicant. The original Special Use Permit was granted in 2007. Mr. Cafarelli also distributed copies to Members of the applicable Planning Regulations Code that would allow the extension; which also specifies a time frame of 5 years for completion of work.

Mr. Genlot then asked the Applicant when construction would begin. Mr. Careno explained that he is in the midst of building Somers Village and wants to be further along in that project (46 of 80 units sold) before moving forward with Soap Stone Estates. He was unable to give a specific timeline.

Mr. Pellissier stated that the Regulations allow for the extension "...for good cause shown..." He added that the current economy may be considered good cause. He then asked for other concerns, questions from Commission members. There were none.

A motion was made by Mr. Bordeaux to approve the extension of 1 year of the Special Use Permit for Age Restricted Housing for Soap Stone Estates, pursuant to Somers Code section 214-139; seconded by Mr. Genlot, and then unanimously voted by members as approved.

b. Request for extension to file Mylars for North Farm Estate, Ninth District Road

Mr. Cafarelli distributed a copy of a letter he received from the Applicants (the Berniers), requesting a 90-day extension for the filing of Mylars. He added this project has been complicated by litigation with the abutting landowner, and submitted copies of the most recent court decision and the appropriate Planning Regulations Code

A motion was made by Mr. Genlot to approve the applicant's request to extend the time to file a Mylar with the Somers Town Clerk for Berniers' 6-lot resubdivision #402 at 455 Ninth District Road. This extension is to be granted for an additional ninety (90) days to August 16, 2010. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sutter, and then unanimously voted by members as approved.

c. Gravel Bank Special Use Permit Renewal

Mr. Cafarelli submitted one of the letters he had written on April 9, 2010 to the Gravel Bank Applicants regarding the July 1, 2010 expiration of their Special Use Permits. He also instructed the Applicants to apply to the Zoning Commission for a Gravel Bank Permit by May 5, 2010, in order to avoid expiration of the Permit.

Mr. Pellissier pointed out that Planning Commission would wait on taking any action/vote. Next steps are with the Zoning Commission.

IV. OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMISSIONERS TO ADD AGENDA ITEMS:

Mr. Pellissier added the following Agenda items after asking Commission members if they had any to add.

a. Northern CT Land Trust, Open Space Grant request, Mountain Road

Mr. Pellissier explained the Town had received a letter requesting support for an Open Space Grant on Mountain Road, a 30.5 acre parcel. He distributed a copy of his letter to The Department of Environmental Protection in support of this Grant request. He explained to members that if the Town purchased this parcel, it would essentially create a greenway from the Ellington/Somers border to the MA border. Mr. Pellissier asked members if the Planning Commission wanted to formally support this purchase.

A motion was made by Mr. Sutter for the Planning Commission to fully support this purchase; seconded by Mr. Genlot, and then unanimously voted by members as approved.

b. Discussion of combined Planning and Zoning Commissions

Mr. Pellissier opened by reminding members of the Public Hearing to take place next week on the combining of the Planning and Zoning Commissions. He had previously submitted his concerns to the Town in writing and asked Members whether the Planning Commission wanted to take a stand for the record. He then opened the topic for discussion.

Mr. Caravella, who hadn't been able to attend the 3/26/10 meeting when this was first proposed, questioned the configuration of the combined Commission. Mr. Pellissier informed him that he expects the Commission to have 5 members and 2 alternates. Mr. Caravella stated his opposition and questioned the ability of the proposed Commission to manage both Planning and Zoning issues with a smaller group of volunteers (Commissioners) and staff. He also viewed it as a removal of the check and balance system currently in place with the 2 separate Commissions.

Mr. Bordeaux mentioned the Town of Enfield as an example of a combined Commission. Unlike the Town of Somers, Enfield has a Town Planner on staff.

Mr. Sutter asked about the earlier mention of a sub-committee. Mr. Pellissier explained that any sub-committee would be made up of members of the combined Commission.

Mr. Pellissier then asked members for a motion, would the Planning Commission support the proposed combined Commission, oppose, or remain neutral?

A motion was made by Mr. Sutter that the Planning Commission be recorded as opposed to combining the Planning and Zoning Commissions; seconded by Mr. Caravella, and then unanimously voted by members.

V. STAFF/COMMISSIONER REPORTS:

No reports were presented. Mr. Cafarelli briefly discussed the following items/projects in process.

a. B. Leaska

b. Shady Lake

Mr. Cafarelli explained this project has a bond in place (\$24,900) for the entryway and abutting property access. The entryway has been completed. The gravel access way to the abutting property has also been completed. Once Mr. Cafarelli confirms that the property corners have been set, he will recommend release of this bond.

VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:

None.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE AND BILLS:

None

VIII. MINTUES APPROVAL: (3/25/10):

Mr. Pellissier asked the members for comments on the 3/25/10 Minutes. In Section III, b., Mr. Sutter pointed out that the Minutes should have stated his opposition to the combining of the Planning and Zoning Commissions and should have included his statement that "...whereas Zoning takes a more tactical approach; Planning has more of a strategic approach."

A motion was made by Mr. Genlot to approve the 3/25/10 Minutes as amended; seconded by Mr. Sutter, and then unanimously voted by members as approved.

IX. ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Pellissier addressed the Commission regarding the question of this possibly being the final meeting of the Planning Commission. He expressed his respect and appreciation for the work and support of the individual members of the Commission. He also thanked the newest members, Mr. Salka, Mr. Clark, and Mr. Caravella for their interest and enthusiasm they brought to the Commission. He recognized Mr. Cafarelli's added role with the Commission, that his contribution enabled the group to be a more

effective Commission. Mr. Pellissier closed by stating he would support any member's interest in the new Planning and Zoning Commission.

A motion was made by Mr. Bordeaux to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Caravella, and unanimously voted to adjourn the April 22, 2010 Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission at 7:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

William Salka, Secretary

Kimberly E. Dombek, Recording Secretary