

PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT
QUARTERLY REPORT: OCTOBER 1, 2009 – DECEMBER 31, 2009

The Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) met three times in October, three times in November, and once in December—seven times in all this quarter. On December 14th, five of the six Commission members went on a site walk of the Whole Foods Market project with a representative of Whole Foods to see first-hand the ongoing construction.

Actions by type this quarter:

Site Plans/Business Site Plans: 3 approved, 1 withdrawn, 1 amendment approved

Coastal Site Plan Review: 2 granted, 2 amendments approved

Flood Damage Prevention: 3 granted, 1 amendment approved

Land Filling/Excavation: 2 approved, 4 amendments approved

Special Permit: 6 granted, 2 amendments approved

Subdivision: 1 amendment approved

Total Number of Projects*: 13 applications, 7 amendments approved.

*Total number of projects does not equal number of actions, because some applications include multiple permits.

On Election Day, Eric Voigt was elected to serve on the Planning and Zoning Commission, as Peter Bigelow did not run for re-election. Vickie Riccardo was also re-elected to the Commission. On November 10th, the Commission voted in its new officers—Fred Conze was elected as Chairman; Joe Spain as Vice-Chairman; and Gwynne Grimes as Secretary.

In October, the Commission approved three temporary portable lights for fall 2009 at Holahan Field for use by DJFL, and six temporary portable lights at Darien High School. The Commission expects to receive written reports of these implementations by both the Board of Education and DJFL sometime in January or February. The Director spent time this quarter responding to various FOIA requests relative to these lights.

Also in October, the Commission approved the new “swap shop” at the Town transfer station. In November, they approved the establishment of Planet Pizza in the space formerly occupied by Curves, at 878-882 Boston Post Road. They also approved a new wine bar in a portion of the first floor space formerly occupied by Ann Taylor Loft, and a new confectioner/retail shop at the corner of Noroton Avenue and Maple Street, replacing a dry cleaner. In January, the Commission expects to act upon the pending 8-30g application for Garden Homes Management at 397 Boston Post Road.

On October 27th, the Planning & Zoning Director and other Department Heads participated in a panel discussion group with the Darien Realtors at Town Hall, where general zoning and wetlands issues were discussed. The purpose was not only to educate Realtors and encourage dialogue, but also to use the Realtors as a conduit to get information to Darien homeowners. In December, the Director spent time preparing the 2010-11 budget, and also worked on 2010 Census information, including the Boundary and Annexation Survey, and the New Construction Program (notifying the Census of recent new house construction in Darien).

The Manager--Community Development Services continues to work on the Darien Route 1 Corridor Study with SWRPA staff. Consultants have been selected, the scope of services has been finalized, and the study is on schedule for an early January stakeholder kickoff meeting. She also continues project management on the FEMA acquisition and elevation projects on Cherry Street, meeting with

RTM board and committees, and manages the funding reimbursement and FEMA site visits for 25 Cherry Street elevation. Acquisition of 33 Cherry Street is anticipated to be completed the last week of December with demolition to be completed by March 2010.

Intern Colleen Clark returned for ten days work in December and into early January. Her work included typing, filing, copying, preparing mailings, and work on one return of record for court.

The Environmental Protection Commission (EPC) met three times this quarter—once each month (October 7, November 4 and December 2) and they also had an Executive Session with the Planning and Zoning Commission on November 17. The purpose of this Executive Session was to discuss one matter which is in pending litigation with both of those land use boards.

In all, the EPC acted upon fifteen applications and one amendment. Four applications were approved and one withdrawn in October, six approved in November, and four applications approved in December. All of the required State of Connecticut DEP reporting forms were submitted to the State through the end of 2009, thereby allowing Darien to be one of the few communities in the State to be fully “caught up”. Because there is only one pending application, the EPC will be cancelling its regularly scheduled January meeting.

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) met four times this period—twice in October, and once each in November and December. In October, they granted two applications, denied two applications, and one was withdrawn. In November, they granted one application, and one application was granted one in part and denied in part. In December, four applications were granted. Overall, eleven applications were acted upon—seven granted; one granted in part/denied in part; two denied; and one withdrawn. This is the lowest October-December quarterly ZBA application total since 1983. As of December 28, there are five pending ZBA applications.

The Architectural Review Board (ARB) met three times this quarter—once each month. In all, they approved nine applications and one modification. In October they approved six applications; in November they approved two applications; and in December they approved one application and one modification. Approvals include a new hanging sign for Roxy Video on Heights Road; a façade change and new doors for the soon-to-open Planet Pizza; a façade change for 36 Old King’s Highway South; a new awning for Nicholas Roberts; and a new wall sign for Nissan Darien. In January, they will be reviewing the signs proposed for the soon-to-open Whole Foods Market.

While the number of Zoning Permits acted upon is up over the October – December 2008 quarter, it is down over the same period typically. Overall, 106 permits were acted upon-- 46 in October, 26 in November, and 34 in December. Staff continues to make efforts in improve review times, allowing property owners to have a more timely decision on their permits. Of the permits acted upon, nine were for new houses (seven “teardowns” and two on vacant lots—175 Middlesex Road and 185 Hoyt Street), and five for signs. As of December 28th, there is only one zoning permit pending, meaning that the office is effectively “caught up”.

**ZONING PERMIT ACTIVITY
OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2009**

		OCT-09	Average	NOV-09	Average	DEC-09	Average	TOTAL	AVERAGE	PROPOSED STANDARD
		<u>permits</u>	<u>Review Time</u>	<u>permits</u>	<u>Review Time</u>	<u>permits</u>	<u>Review Time</u>	<u>permits</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>TIME</u>
AS	Accessory Structure	1	13.0	0	N/A	2	15.5	3	14.6	8
BB	Business Building	1	3.0	0	N/A	0	N/A	1	3.0	N/A
CA	Commercial Tenant Fit-Up	3	3.0	3	2.66	3	1.0	9	2.22	10
D	Demolition	0	N/A	1	0.0	0	N/A	1	0.0	
DG	Access. Structure/Detached Garage	0	N/A	2	4.5	0	N/A	2	4.5	17
F	Foundation Only	1	14.0	0	N/A	1	22.0	2	18.0	N/A
FAB	Finish Attic/Basement	4	2.5	2	3.5	0	N/A	6	3.46	6
FR	Flood Repair	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	N/A
M	Miscellaneous	8	2.0	1	0.0	4	3.0	13	2.15	6
N/DW	New Residence or Commercial Bldg.	2	9.5	2	25.0	5	18.2	9	17.7	18
P	Pool and/or Spa	0	N/A	1	30.0	1	14	2	22.0	15
R	Remodel and/or Renovate	5	3.2	5	3.8	7	4.4	17	3.88	5
RA	Residential Alterations	19	7.6	8	7.5	8	8.1	35	7.68	11
RR	Re-Roof	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	9
S	Sign	2	0.5	1	8	2	4.5	5	3.8	9
TC	Tennis Court	0	N/A	0	N/A	1	0.0	1	0.0	N/A
TT	Temporary Tent	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	N/A

TOTAL: 46 26 34 106

Source: CityView

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