

PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT
QUARTERLY REPORT: JULY 1, 2008 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2008

The Planning and Zoning Commission met eleven times this period—five times in July (the 1st, 8th, 15th, 17th and 29th), once in August (the 5th), and five times in September (the 4th, 9th, 16th, 23rd, and 30th). On September 4th, the Commission approved various applications which will allow for additions and alterations of the Darien Police Department on Hecker Avenue. On September 23, the Commission granted in part and denied in part an application for a new pool, reconstruction of the nursery school, and parking lot modifications to the YMCA. On July 17, the Commission authorized the Town Attorney to continue the settlement discussions with the other attorneys involved and to enter into an agreement to resolve the Whole Foods Market litigation.

This quarter, the Commission met on four separate nights totaling over nine hours on the affordable housing application for 77 Leroy Avenue. The public hearing on this matter was closed on September 4th, and the Commission started formal deliberations in late September, which will continue into early October, and they will make a decision sometime in late October or early November. The Commission met on September 9 and 30 for public hearings on the Oak Crest affordable housing application. That public hearing was continued to Thursday, November 6.

Actions by type this quarter:

- Site Plans: 7 approved; 1 granted in part/denied in part; 1 amendment approved
- Amendments to the Zoning Regulations: 1 denied
- Amendments to the Zoning Map: 1 granted
- Coastal Site Plan Review: 4 granted; 1 granted in part/denied in part; 1 withdrawn, 2 amendments approved
- Flood Damage Prevention: 5 granted, 1 withdrawn; 1 amendment approved
- Land Filling & Regrading: 3 approved
- Special Permit: 2 granted, 1 granted in part/denied in part; 1 withdrawn; 2 amendments approved
- Subdivisions: 1 amendment approved

Total Number of Projects*: 17 applications, 6 amendments.

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

This quarter, the Commission established a subcommittee of two P&Z members and two EPC members to review and comment upon the draft Stormwater Management Report and Draft Regulations prepared by Tighe and Bond. On July 30, Jeremy Ginsberg and Bob Steeger met with Joe Canas of Tighe and Bond to discuss the subcommittee's comments. That draft was also referred to Milone and MacBroom, the consultant recently hired by the Town for the Town-wide drainage study. The draft Stormwater Management Report is in the process of being finalized, and the final report is expected to be received by October 8.

The Environmental Protection Commission (EPC) met six times this quarter--twice each month. At those six meetings, they acted upon 27 applications. Of those, twenty-five were granted, one denied and one withdrawn. Nine applications were acted upon each month. Three applications were approved for map amendments and one for pond dredging. A Special Meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, October 22 to accommodate the Oak Crest application. This will be the fourth public hearing night dedicated in part or entirely to this matter.

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) met four times this period—twice in July, and once each in August and September. They acted upon seventeen applications, granting four, denying six, four were granted in part/denied in part, two were withdrawn, and there was one “other”. Nine applications were acted upon in July; two in August; six in September. The seventeen applications acted upon are tied for the least number processed in one quarter since late 1998. At this time, only one October meeting is scheduled. At their August 6th meeting, the ZBA authorized Town Counsel to settle a pending litigation matter. Also in August, Polly Davis was appointed by the Board of Selectmen for a three-year term as an alternate member, replacing Peter Thoren.

The Architectural Review Board (ARB) met once in July and once in September--two times overall. At those two meetings, they acted upon nine applications—two in July and six in September, and one application amendment. Of those, seven applications were approved, two granted in part/denied in part, and the amendment approved.

Andrea Sangrey, Manager—Community Development Services, submitted three FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program acquisition and elevation projects to Connecticut Department of Homeland Security and received approval from the Board of Finance for the allocation of the 25% match. All three projects were awarded the highest score by Connecticut Homeland Security and are pending approvals at FEMA. She also received notice of the HomeCT grant award for affordable housing, worked with Whole Foods representatives to obtain permission to allow the farmer’s market on Ledge Road until end of this season, and attended the following meetings: SWRPA Bus Rapid Transit technical advisory committee; One Coast One Future (CEDS); 1000 Friends Annual Meeting in Stamford regarding transportation/TOD projects; Main Street “Upstairs/Downtown”; and Connecticut Economic Resource Center’s EDDI training.

Abbie Higgs was the Department’s summer intern this year. She was a valuable asset to the office, and provided much-needed assistance for filing, typing, copying, mailings, packet preparation and other various short-range projects. She also worked on preparing some returns of records for court cases which were active at the time.

This quarter, the overall number of Zoning Permit applications both submitted and acted upon was down about 13% (18 permits) over the same period last year. Fifty-eight permits were acted upon in July, 35 in August, and 35 in September—a total of 128 permits. The chart on the next page shows the various types of permits sorted by type, and their average review times. There were 14 permits approved for new residences this period. Of those, four were on vacant lots (the “Cottage”, 129 Five Mile River Road, and two new houses on Wakeman Road), and ten were “teardowns”. There were six permits approved for new pools/spas this quarter. Last year there were a total of 146 Zoning Permits acted upon from July to September.

**ZONING PERMIT ACTIVITY
 THIS QUARTER**

		<u>Jul-08</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Aug-08</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Sep-08</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>AVERAGE</u>	<u>PROPOSED</u>
		<u>permits</u>	<u>Review</u>	<u>permits</u>	<u>Review</u>	<u>permits</u>	<u>Review</u>	<u>permits</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>STANDARD</u>
			<u>Time</u>		<u>Time</u>		<u>Time</u>			<u>AVERAGE</u>
AA	Additions/Alterations--Residential	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	10
AA	Additions/Alterations--Commercial	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	16
AS	Accessory Structure	2	8.5	1	12	1	4	4	8.25	8
CA	Commercial Tenant Fit-Up	5	6	4	3	2	3	11	4.36	10
DG	Access. Structure/Detached Garage	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	17
F	Foundation Only	1	14	0	N/A	0	N/A	1	14	N/A
FAB	Finish Attic/Basement	2	12.5	2	3.5	1	5	5	7.4	6
FR	Flood Repair	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	N/A
M	Miscellaneous	5	4.8	6	2.67	2	2.5	13	3.46	6
	New Residence or Commercial									
N/DW	Bldg.	8	28.62	2	9.5	4	15	14	22.0	18
P	Pool and/or Spa	2	8.5	4	16.25	0	N/A	6	13.6	15
R	Remodel and/or Renovate	9	3	4	2	5	4.6	18	3.2	5
RA	Residential Alterations	23	19	9	6.55	18	10.88	50	13.8	11
RR	Re-Roof	0	N/A	1	6	0	N/A	1	6	9
S	Sign	1	3	2	8	2	3.5	5	5.2	9
TC	Tennis Court	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	N/A
TT	Temporary Tent	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	N/A
TOTAL:		58		35		35		128		

Source: CityView