

**PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT**  
**QUARTERLY REPORT: JANUARY 1, 2005 – MARCH 31, 2005**

The Planning and Zoning Commission met ten times this quarter. This included a special meeting on February 15, 2005 to discuss and issue their Mandatory Referral report regarding the new Tokeneke Elementary School. The special meeting was scheduled in order to move the project along as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Projects approved this quarter include: the dredging of Turtle Pond in Woodland Park; interior alterations of the YMCA and the construction of fifty new parking spaces on the YMCA property; a vestibule and display window addition to the Darien Sport Shop; a new consignment shop in the space formerly occupied by Norwalk Savings Society on Boston Post Road; the establishment of Fairfield County Bank in the former Sanford Electric location; and two subdivisions/resubdivisions, creating two new lots on Hollow Tree Ridge Road and Pear Tree Point Road.

Significant progress continues to be made on the 2005 Town Plan of Conservation & Development. Draft chapters are continuously placed on the Town web site as they are prepared and revised by the Commission. The Timeline for Completion is also on the Town web site. This quarter, the Commission reviewed and discussed all comments received up to this point from the general public. In March, the Environmental Resources and Traffic and Transportation Chapters were reviewed and discussed. In April, revised drafts of the Regional Issues Chapter and Appendix as well as the Housing Chapter and Appendix will be discussed.

There was an article in the January 27<sup>th</sup> Darien Times regarding the Town Plan. It is expected that at least one public hearing will be held sometime in the next two quarters, as the Commission hopes to have a final draft of the entire document ready within the next 6-10 weeks.

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) met four times this quarter. A total of twenty-three applications were processed—four in January, ten in February, and nine in March. Of those applications, ten were approved; nine denied; one granted in part and denied in part; and three withdrawn. ZBA member Wayne Becker resigned effective March 30<sup>th</sup>, and a replacement will need to be found.

The Environmental Protection Commission (EPC) met four times this period. They processed a total of twenty-one applications. Of those, nineteen were approved and two denied. Amendments to the existing Inland Wetland and Watercourse Regulations were informally discussed at a special EPC meeting held on March 30<sup>th</sup>. Another special meeting will be held on Monday, April 25<sup>th</sup> to continue work on the proposed Regulations. It is expected that at least one public hearing will be held on the proposed Regulation amendments sometime late next quarter or the quarter after (probably in June or July).

The Architectural Review Board (ARB) reviewed a number of applications for facades, awnings and signs. This quarter, they approved final signage for three businesses in anticipation of their formal opening in April -- the Cookhouse, the Melting Pot, and Splash.

A total of 138 Zoning Permits were issued this period. This includes 43 permits issued in January, 36 in February, and 58 in March. Eleven permits were issued for new house construction, four of those for construction on vacant lots.

GIS work completed over the past few months included mapping for the Connecticut Main Street application, and preparing maps for a change of zone application being proposed by the Planning & Zoning Commission. The Department contracted with SWRPA for this work.

*This quarter, significant staff time and effort went towards the following projects:*

- Placing the Town of Darien Zoning Regulations on the Town web site.
- Assisting in preparing CT Main Street Program application, including GIS mapping of the proposed study area, and analysis and presentation of demographic information.
- In January, further research and investigation was done regarding the proposed purchase of the Procaccini property.
- An informal analysis regarding Diller property was completed in February.
- On March 1<sup>st</sup>, a regional meeting sponsored by Darien P&Z Department as well as the New Canaan P&Z Department was held in Room 206 of Town Hall regarding drainage. This allowed local communities to come together to discuss how they regulate and address drainage issues.
- The Director continues to serve as project manager for the proposed analysis and possible purchase of Land Use Software. This included a trip to Waterford on March 9<sup>th</sup> to see the system in use first-hand, and to discuss its use with various Waterford employees.
- On April 21<sup>st</sup>, the Director will be teaching a Continuing Education class entitled, “Finding your way through Darien Zoning and Building: Avoiding Common Pitfalls in the Zoning Process”. Thus far, 13 people have registered for the session.
- The Director has been working on a proposal on behalf of the four local land use boards to increase application fees. The goal is to have a proposal ready for a special RTM meeting in June.