

**PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT**  
**QUARTERLY REPORT: APRIL 1, 2004 – JUNE 30, 2004**

The Planning and Zoning Commission met 10 times this quarter—three times in January, three times in February and four times in March.

*Permits by type this quarter:*

Flood Damage Prevention: 7 granted

Coastal Site Plan Review: 6 granted

Land Filling/Excavation: 8 approved

Special Permit: 4 granted; 1 withdrawn

Business Site Plan: 2 approved; 1 withdrawn

Other: 1 approved

Mandatory Referral reports issued: 3 reports issued and approved

Total Number of Projects\*: 23.

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

Since January 1st, a number of matters in litigation were resolved by settlement, withdrawn by the appellant, or decided in the Town's favor. The resolved matters include:

Ramsay v. Darien Zoning Board of Appeals: settled January 7, 2004

Martin v. Darien Planning & Zoning Commission: settled January 27, 2004

Pear Partners v. Darien Planning & Zoning Commission settled February 5, 2004

Ox Ridge Hunt Club v. Darien Planning & Zoning Commission decided March 8, 2004

Toogood v. Darien Zoning Board of Appeals settled March 9, 2004

Cohen v. Darien Zoning Board of Appeals withdrawn on March 31, 2004

Wood Builders v. Darien Zoning Board of Appeals withdrawn on March 31, 2004

In the past 90 days, the Commission has approved a number of new commercial projects. These include a settlement of litigation regarding the Darien Playhouse, a new ice cream store in the space formerly occupied by the Phone Store on Boston Post Road, a new Hands on Pottery store (a paint your own pottery store) in the space formerly occupied by Darien Healthmart on Tokeneke Road, an expansion of Donut Inn in Noroton Heights, and a possible expansion of the proposed Ann Taylor Loft within the Darien Playhouse building. In the upcoming quarter, the Planning and Zoning Commission will be reviewing a number of applications, including, but not limited to: two subdivisions; a proposed expansion of Uncle's Deli; and potentially the first commercial tenant(s) for the Grove Street Plaza project.

Town Plan of Conservation & Development

On January 26<sup>th</sup>, the Planning & Zoning Director with assistance from the League of Women Voters, met with the RTM to conduct a roundtable exercise. It proved to be a tremendously successful event, and its results were presented and discussed by the Planning & Zoning Commission on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. A tentative meeting schedule regarding the Town Plan was posted on the Town web site to better enable the general public to get involved. The first draft of the Regional Issues Chapter was discussed on February 10th. The Executive Director of SWRPA, Robert Wilson, attended that meeting, and discussed regional issues with Commission members. On March 9, 2004, a meeting was held with Park and Recreation Commission members as well as Park & Recreation Committee members of the RTM and other interested parties such as representatives from the Darien Land Trust and Friends of Woodland Park. The first draft of the Park, Recreation and Open Space Chapter was posted on the Town web site.

The Planning and Zoning Director spoke to the Senior Men's Association on March 10, 2004 regarding the Town Plan, and the results of the roundtables. The Commission is working on revising the Regional Issues Chapter; the Environmental Resources Chapter and the Parks Recreation and Open Space Chapter in response to comments received thus far. The address for the web site is: <http://www.ci.darien.ct.us/townplan>.

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) met four times this quarter to process 19 applications. Of those, eight were granted, six denied, and five withdrawn. Due to the high workload, extra meetings will likely need to be scheduled sometime next quarter.

The Environmental Protection Commission (EPC) met three times this period. Of the 13 applications processed, ten were granted; two granted in part/withdrawn in part; and one withdrawn. Due to the number of applications submitted in March, an extra meeting has been scheduled for mid-April. The EPC adopted a new GIS-generated Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Map in January 2004. All work on that map was done in-house, saving taxpayers over \$8,500 in outside consulting fees.

The Architectural Review Board (ARB) met two times this quarter—once in January and once in March. This includes new signage for: Quest Diagnostics on Boston Post Road, the Darien Board of Realtors on Center Street, and a new interior design store also on Center Street.

A total of 132 Zoning Permits were acted upon this quarter. Seventeen were for new single-family residences, three of those were on vacant properties and fourteen were “teardowns”. In addition, eight new swimming pools were approved. This is the most new single-family residences approved in one quarter since March – May 1988, when 18 were approved. Overall, the number of Zoning Permits increased 22% over last quarter and the number of new houses approved more than doubled.

This quarter, a significant amount of GIS work was done for the general public. This has resulted in an all-time high of \$1,150 in GIS revenues received from January to March 2004 for the GIS Revenue Account (A0204-44022). Map work for the general public will continue into the next quarter, resulting in increased revenues. Significant GIS work continues to be done for the Town Plan of Conservation & Development as well.

A number of maps were prepared to show the Procaccini property. Working with John Crary and Sue Swiatek, a conceptual plan was prepared using GIS and presented to the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance in February.

Maps from orthophotographs were prepared to assist the Park and Recreation Department and Fire Marshal in finding an appropriate site for a skate park, and an appropriate site for July 4<sup>th</sup> Town fireworks.