

PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT
QUARTERLY REPORT: JULY 1, 2003 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2003

The Planning and Zoning Commission met seven times this quarter to process 17 applications and five application amendments.

Permits by type this quarter:

Flood Damage Prevention: 6 approved; 1 amendment approved

Coastal Site Plan Review: 5 approved;

Land Filling/Excavation: 9 approved; 1 denied; 2 amendments approved

Special Permit: 1 granted; 1 withdrawn; 1 amendment approved

Business Site Plan: 1 withdrawn; 1 amendment approved

Subdivision: 1 amendment approved

Change of Zone Application: 1 approved

Total* (total does not add up, due to applications which include multiple permits): 22

The establishment of a new zoning district for a portion of Noroton Bay, approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission in June, takes effect on October 5th. The public hearing on the renovation of the existing Darien Playhouse building was continued to October 14th. If the hearing is closed on that night, it is likely that a final decision will be made on the matter sometime in November.

2005 Town Plan of Conservation & Development

The Commission met on September 2 to discuss the first part of the Environmental Resources Chapter. A week later, a similar meeting was held with the Traffic and Transportation consultant regarding that Chapter. It is expected that in early October, the draft Vision prepared by the Board of Selectmen will be discussed. In November, the Commission will meet again with the Environmental and Traffic consultants to discuss the second portion of their respective draft chapters. The Commission is still considering the distribution of a questionnaire to obtain additional feedback on planning issues from Darien residents.

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) met three times this period. On one application, a joint public hearing was held with EPC, and that hearing has been continued to October 1st. A total of 22 applications were processed: nine were granted; eight denied; two granted in part/denied in part; two withdrawn; and one case where the public hearing was declared null and void.

The Environmental Protection Commission (EPC) met a total of four times this quarter—once each in July and August, and twice in September. It is likely that they will meet twice in October to accommodate the number of applications submitted. Overall, twenty-seven applications were acted upon—twenty-two were approved, three withdrawn, and two amendments approved. Two significant projects were approved this quarter. The first was for the expansion of Casey Field within Cherry Lawn Park. The second was to allow the dredging of various portions of the Goodwives River. In the next quarter, the EPC will be working on its annual update of the GIS-generated Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Map, with a public hearing on the matter to be held in December or January.

The Architectural Review Board (ARB) met three times this quarter. One approval was for a new sign for Town Hall at the corner of Boston Post Road and Renshaw Road. Other approvals were for façade changes to Shaw's supermarket within Goodwives Shopping Center and the Darien Playhouse building.

A total of 156 Zoning Permits were acted upon this quarter—66 in July; 26 in August; and 64 in September. This is an increase of 20% over the same period last year. Eight permits were issued for new single-family residences (four “teardowns” and four on vacant lots), and four for swimming pools. Zoning Permits were also issued for the two new mixed-use buildings at 14 and 20 Grove Street, which are now under construction.

GIS was used to assist the Planning and Zoning Commission in presenting a proposed zone boundary line change in the Five Mile River Road area. It will also be used to provide a number of maps for an upcoming emergency training exercise to be held in late October.

Work continues to be done to assist the Planning and Zoning Commission with the Town Plan of Conservation & Development. New Zoning Maps were prepared to reflect two recent changes made by the Planning and Zoning Commission—the Noroton Bay change mentioned above, and a correction of a boundary in the Five Mile River Road/Old Farm Road area. Two maps were prepared for the revaluation company Cole-Layer-Trumble to assist them in their work.