

Draft Minutes of the PH&S Committee of the RTM

October 24th, 2016

Members in attendance: Gary Swenson, Bill Peters, Laura Mosher, Kate Haueisen, Mac Patrick, Nina Miller. Absent: Brian Rayhill, John Dweck, Cassandra Hegerty and Colin Kelly.

Guests: Rachel Martin, Chairman Human Services Commission; Christine Castles, Commission on Aging; Frank Kemp and Harry McGlathlin, members of the RTM and co-authors of the proposed Blight Ordinance; Jeremy Ginsberg, Director Planning and Zoning; Seth Morton, acting RTM Moderator.

At 7:01, PH&S Chair Mac Patrick called the meeting to order.

1. Unanimous approval of the minutes of the September 19th taken by Laura Mosher.
2. Discussion of RTM Agenda item 16-19, DARIENS BLIGHT ORDINANCE.

In 2007, a Blight Ordinance was proposed for the town of Darien. It was originally concerned with the plowing of sidewalks and loud noise from leaf blowers. The newly proposed ordinance, with input from Human Services Department and the Commission on Aging takes into account all blighted properties in the town whether owner occupied, bank owned or absentee landlord owned.

In Darien, about 1/3 of blighted properties are occupied, 1/3 are foreclosed upon by mortgage companies and about 1/3 are owned by absentee landlords waiting on financing, permits, engineers to commence repairs. About 1,000 properties on the Human Services list have received help with the needs of the owner so as to be taken off the Blight list. Frank Kemp, Harry McGlathlin and Jeremy Ginsberg researched other towns ordinances, for example those of Westport and New Canaan, so that ours is a compilation of the best of those. Harry insisted that the purpose of a Blight Ordinance is to resolve the problem before a Blight Resource Officer has to be called in the first place. An example of a situation needing attention from the homeowner is neglected property maintenance whether it be broken windows, neglected lawn, boarded up doors, holes in the roof, etc. that is visible from an adjoining property or from the public right of way. A blight officer, upon notification, would first check to see if the homeowner is a client of Human Services. One of the concerns of having a blighted property in a neighborhood is that it could become a hang-out for kids. Laura Mosher suggested that two infractions occur before the Blight Officer is called.

After the discussion, a vote was taken and all voted in favor of recommending a Blight Ordinance to the RTM.

3. Discussion of Resolution 16-20 RTM Self Nominating and 50% attendance record

Those in attendance agreed and voted in favor of recommending that those RTM members who have a poor attendance record of less than 50% of meetings need to go through the

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self-nominating process and go out and get the recommended amount of signatures necessary to get on the ballot.

4. New Police Boat

Friendly, casual discussion of the new Police boat and how we have been invited by the police to come take a close look and possibly schedule a ride.

Mac Patrick adjourned the meeting at 7:54.

Respectfully submitted by Nina Miller