



The Planning Commission

Town of New Fairfield
New Fairfield, Connecticut 06812

**Joint Special Meeting/Workshop of the
Planning and Zoning Commissions
Saturday, January 26, 2008
New Fairfield Public Library, Community Room**

MINUTES

Planning Commissioners Present: Susan Chapman, Tom Corbett, Roger Wise, Paul Bruno, Gregory Porpora and Bob Murtha

Zoning Commissioners Present: Faline Fox, Chair, John Moran, Vice Chair, Patrick Hearty, Joe Letizia, Kevin Van Vlack

Call to Order: Faline Fox called the meeting to order at 9:07am stating the purpose of this meeting was to discuss with the Planning Commission the proposed new zoning regulations that will impact them directly. This is not a public hearing and there will be no public comments. Introductions were made. Minutes were taken by secretaries Laurie Busse and Lyn Sheaffer.

Proposed New Zoning Regulations

Faline Fox stated the new zoning regulations are meant to give the Planning Commission more power and not interfere with the current planning regulations. The new zoning regulations will allow the Planning Commission to waive certain zoning regulations such as setbacks in a Conservation Subdivision. A Conservation Subdivision aka cluster housing is different from a Traditional Subdivision as it has 30% to 50% open space vs. the Traditional Subdivision which has up to 20% open space. This larger amount of open space can be achieved by making the lot sizes smaller and a fee in lieu of open space is not allowed. A setback can be waived equal to the amount of open space; for example if a conservation subdivision has 30% open space then the zoning regulations regarding setbacks can be reduced by up to 30%. If the conservation subdivision has 50% open space then the setbacks can be reduced by up to 50%. Although the homes may cluster together and be on smaller lots, the value of the homes will not decrease because the land around them is preserved as open space. Since the homes will be closer together, the road to the subdivision would be smaller and less costly for the developer, who in turn will pass this onto the homeowner. Faline Fox would like the Planning Commission to request applicants submitting future subdivision applications to show the subdivision

both ways. The applicant must still comply with any stipulations from the Inland Wetlands Commission.

The Commissions discussed Density Based Zoning Calculations. These calculations include a mandatory 20% open space. The Planning Commission explained that open space is not mandatory and that they can request up to 20% open space, and how they take that open space is at their discretion. For example, the Planning Commission can request 20% open space, a fee in lieu of open space, or any combination there of. The quality of the open space given must match the quality of the entire subdivision lot. For example if the entire subdivision lot has 15% wetlands, then the amount of open space given cannot have more than 15% wetlands. The Zoning Commission stated they thought the 20% open space was mandatory and did not allow room for anything other than that when they calculated their Density Based Zoning Calculations. The Zoning Commission would like to check with a professional planner to make sure their calculations are still correct if the amount of open space changes and will reword the proposed regulations to show the open space is not mandatory. Discussion followed if the Zoning Commission overstepped their bounds regarding open space. The consensus of the Zoning Commission is they were trying to give the Planning Commission more power to over rule the zoning regulations and it is their goal not to have anything in conflict.

Ground Water Protection Permits were discussed in the overlay districts. The Planning Commission will have to add this to their application check list if the proposed zoning regulations are approved. The Ground Water Protection Permit will be issued by the Zoning Commission.

Faline Fox stated they are a long way off from adopting the proposed zoning regulations, they will review the Density Based Zoning Calculations and the Planning Commission does not have rewrite any of their regulations.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55am.