



# The Planning Commission

Town of New Fairfield  
New Fairfield, Connecticut 06812

**Regular Meeting**  
**Monday, February 26, 2007**  
**Police Dept. Conference Room**

## MINUTES

**Commissioners Present:** Phil Nelson, Chairman, Tom Corbett, Susan Chapman and Roger Wise

**Town Officials Present:** John Hodge, 1<sup>st</sup> Selectman, Sarah Marsh, Chairman Library Board of Directors, Sharon Holm, Vice Chairman Library Board of Directors

**Call to Order:** 7:30pm

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Susan Chapman made a motion to accept the Minutes to the January 22, 2007 meeting, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Roger Wise, all in favor.

### CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Last month the Commission gave a positive 8-24 Referral for ball fields on 302 Ball Pond Road. Due to a large amount of opposition, the proposal was withdrawn.
- Correction to last month's statement regarding Fee in Lieu of Open Space. Per Town Counsel, Gail McTaggart, the use of any revenue from "Fees in Lieu of Open Space" is at the discretion of the BOS; however, the money can only be used to acquire land for open space or recreation.
- HVECO Regional Transportation Plan

**PUBLIC COMMENT**—None Heard

### OLD BUSINESS

#### **Fordham Estates and Wild Turkey Subdivisions:**

Phil Nelson read correspondence requesting the 2<sup>nd</sup> and final 90-day extensions from Mike Mazzucco regarding Fordham Estates and Attorney Ray Lubus regarding Wild Turkey Subdivisions. Phil Nelson stated that Attorney Ray Lubus has been in contact with Town Counsel, Jim Strub and they are making progress. The Fordham Estates

representatives have done absolutely nothing to complete the approval process for a subdivision. The Army Corp of Engineers has completed their inspections of Fordham Estates and did not request any changes, as previously thought. Phil Nelson explained that this is the final 90-day extension period and if he does not get the word to sign the Mylars from Town Counsel, then the Approval Resolution for the subdivisions will become void and they will have to start the process all over again. If approved the final 90-day extension period will expire in the early part of May 2007.

Roger Wise made a motion to approve the 2<sup>nd</sup> and final 90-day extension period for Fordham Estates and Wild Turkey Subdivisions, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tom Corbett, all in favor.

### **NEW BUSINESS.**

#### **8-24 Referral Library Expansion and Renovation Project**

Phil Nelson read a letter into the meeting dated 2/16/2007 from Sarah Marsh outlining the proposed renovation and expansion of the Library. Phil Nelson stated State Statutes do not preclude any order of which Town Agencies must be contacted however, it is a good idea to check with other Town Agencies and perhaps there should be an order of which agencies to go to 1<sup>st</sup>. Sarah Marsh stated she was in contact with Maria Haussherr-Hughes, ZEO and was advised to go to the Zoning Board of Appeals. When the Planning Commission receives an 8-24 Referral they are required to do 3 things

1. To make a decision within in 35 days of the request
2. Look to see if the request complies with Land Use Regulations
3. Look to see if the request complies with the current Plan of Conservation and Development (C&D Plan)

In chapter 11 of the 2003 Plan of Conservation & Development there is a chart with an inner circle showing the optimum place for the Library is in the center or Town. The outer circle shows the 2<sup>nd</sup> optimum place for the Library is right outside of Town. Phil Nelson stated this application needs to go the Zoning Board of Appeals and that if the 8-24 is approved, should not be used as a basis for other Town Boards and Commissions to make their determinations.

Sarah Marsh and Sharon Holm explained in April of 2006 the BOS and BOF approved \$10,000 for preliminary plans and drawings and the Library has contracted with Peter Gisolfi Associates for the preliminary work. The plans for the Library are as follows:

- Open up the wall between the existing library and the foyer where the circulation desk will be
- Have a larger Young Adult section
- Move the Historic Society and Friends to their own space
- Convert the existing Community Room to a reading room and wireless room
- Bump out where the existing oil tank is and relocate the oil tank
- Expand out the Community Room side of the Library
- Make the entire Library ADA Compliant including an elevator and restrooms
- Update mechanics such as heating/air conditioning, lighting and electrical wiring
- Both additions will add approximately 3,500sqft to the Library and the Community Room will still be the highest point.

- Do away with the sliding glass doors in the Children's Library
- Even without the additions the Library still needs major interior renovations such as wiring, heating/air conditioning, and ADA Compliant
- There are no plans to reduce the amount of parking spaces currently available
- The Library Board has worked hard to come up with a plan that would not require any additional staff

The Library was built directly on the property line and part of the chimney is actually off of the Library property, as a result they will need to go to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a variance for the expansions. Sarah Marsh spoke to Bob Rawlings, Chairman of the PBC and he has no problems with the plans. Sarah Marsh explained she looked at this as a tax payer's point of view and there were plans for a 2<sup>nd</sup> story addition that would require pillars but that was too expensive. The State Library has informed them that for a Town the size of New Fairfield they should have 20,000 plus square feet. The Library is currently only 9,700sqft. The Library wanted to build a new 20,000sqft Library and for many years looked to purchase land in the center of Town, however, there is no suitable land to be found. Even land right outside of Town was either unavailable or unsuitable. There was discussion regarding if the Library ever did find land, the renovated Library would be optimum office space for Town Hall as it would be ADA compliant.

Phil Nelson read from chapter 11 of the C&D Plan and it appears the Library renovations are in line with this plan. Phil Nelson asked the Commission if there was anything that would preclude these plans from complying with the C&D Plan or Land Use Regulations outside of the Zoning Board of Appeals. Discussion followed and Susan Chapman asked what does this mean for us if we approve it? Is this part of what the Town is going to approve? Susan Chapman stated reading the C&D Plan it appears this plan may not be the best option for the Town and other options might be better than what they are proposing. Phil Nelson stated that could very well be, but what he heard tonight is that there is a scarcity of land in the downtown area, as well as right outside of the downtown area which are the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> optimal places for the Library and we would have to make a strong case for it. The other issue is simply an economic one given what has to be done with the schools and everything else that is going on in town that you don't want a major deal for a new Library. John Hodge stated that there are plans to move the BOF and the Board of Ed out of the Annex Building and to have the Land Use Dept move over to the Annex, which will free up 10-15 parking spaces for Library use.

Roger Wise made a positive referral for improving the Library as suggested, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tom Corbett, approved 3-1. Susan Chapman was opposed to this plan.

(Susan Chapman left the meeting prior to the discussion of the Senior Center 8-24 Referral.)

**8-24 Referral for the revised plans of the Senior Center and acquisition of property:**

John Hodge recapped on the history of the property and project. They were in front of the Planning Commission this time last year to construct a 2-story Senior Center at 33 Route 37, since then, things have changed which includes the acquisition of land that abuts 33 Route 37 including 39 Route 37 and soon 31 Route 37. The plans are to

purchase 31 Route 37 and merge 31 & 33 Route 37 to one lot. They are closing on 31 Route 37 tomorrow. The total amount of land will be about 10 ½ acres. Phil Nelson stated that because the Town owns both pieces of property, they did not have to come before us for a lot line change as the property is not being split off, but merged to create one larger lot. They will change the plans from constructing a 2-story senior center to a 1-story senior center and the senior center will be mostly on 33 Route 37 and expand slightly to 31 Route 37. The existing building on 31 Route 37 will be partially destroyed and rebuilt for the BOF and the Board of Ed. John Hodge stated it is important that this go to a referendum within the next 4-6 weeks. They are currently on the March Agendas for Zoning Board of Appeals and Inland/Wetlands. John Hodge stated he used the money from the Open Space fund to purchase 39 Route 37 which is mainly wetlands and would like to have a walking trail from the existing Hubbell house going around Memorial Field and in front of Town Hall over to the Senior Center.

John Hodge stated he purchased the Land at 39 Route 37 last July and should have come to the Planning Commission for this, but did not, and can the motion include the acquisition of 39 Route 37.

Tom Corbett made a motion to approve the acquisition of land at 31 and 39 Route 37 and for the revised single story plans of the new senior center, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Roger Wise, all in favor. Vote 3-0