

**TOWN OF SOMERS
PLANNING COMMISSION
P.O. BOX 308
SOMERS, CONNECTICUT 06071**

**PLANNING MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, February 28, 2008
7:00 p.m. Town Hall**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chairman, Mr. Bordeaux called the regular meeting to order at 7:02 P.M. Members Cliff Bordeaux, Greg Genlot, Brad Pellissier, and alternate Scott Sutter (seated for Karl Walton) were present and constituted a quorum. Town Planner Patrice Carson was also present.

*A motion was made by Mr. Pellissier; seconded by Mr. Genlot and unanimously voted to take the agenda out of order and begin with **NEW BUSINESS**.*

IV. NEW BUSINESS

a. DISCUSSION: PLANNING COMMISSION'S APPLICATION TO AMEND SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS TO IMPOSE A TEMPORARY MORATORIUM ON ALL APPLICATIONS FOR SUBDIVISIONS AND RESUBDIVISIONS IN THE A AND A-1 RESIDENTIAL ZONES IN THE TOWN OF SOMERS – SET HEARING DATE

At the last Planning Commission meeting (January 28, 2008) the Commission reviewed the Plan of Conservation & Development. At that time, it was the consensus of the Commission that a 9 to 11-month moratorium on subdivisions and resubdivisions be put in place in order to address many items under the "Preserve More Meaningful Open Space" line item. Once again the Commission discussed this option and were in agreement that a moratorium would be the best way to address various Open Space regulations simultaneously. The first available hearing date would be April 10, 2008. It was also the feeling of the Commission that the full 11-month moratorium may not be needed, but it is best to establish a longer duration and end it sooner, than to request an extension.

A motion was made by Mr. Genlot; seconded by Mr. Pellissier and unanimously voted to set a public hearing date for Thursday, April 10, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall to hear the Planning Commission's application to amend subdivision regulations to impose a temporary moratorium on all applications for subdivisions and resubdivisions in the A and A-1 residential zones in the town of Somers.

b. RECONFIGURATION OF LOTS, 171 STAFFORD ROAD & 183 HAMPDEN ROAD, (MAP 11, BLOCK 95, LOT 02, & MAP 11, BLOCK 96), DANIELE

Ms. Carson reported that the correct addresses for these properties is 171 Hampden Road and 132 Stafford

Road. The map, block and lot numbers are correct. Town Sanitarian Steve Jacobs has reviewed the proposed plan lot changes and has signed off in regards to meeting sanitation regulations.

A motion was made by Mr. Pellissier; seconded by Mr. Genlot and unanimously voted to approve the reconfiguration of property of Richard D. Daniele and Gregory W. & Linda L. Bailey at 171 Hampden Road and 132 Stafford Road, as shown on map entitled, "Reconfiguration Plan Hampden/Stafford Road, Somers, Connecticut, Prepared For: Richard D. Daniele, 171 Hampden Road, Somers, CT 06071", 2 sheets, dated December 12, 2007, revised through 2/20/08, subject to placing the correct approval/signature box on the plans for the Planning Commission Chairman. This reconfiguration does not constitute a subdivision because no new lot is created.

c. **RECONFIGURATION OF LOTS, 183 & 189 KING ROAD, (MAP 11, BLOCK 25, & MAP 11, BLOCK 25 LOT 02.), TOPOLSKI**

The Commission reviewed the plans. The Topolski's wish to combine two lots, creating one large agricultural lot.

A motion was made by Mr. Pellissier; seconded by Mr. Genlot and unanimously voted to approve the reconfiguration to combine property of Louise A. Topolski at 183 and 189 King Road, as shown on map entitled, "Property Survey Prepared for Louise A. Topolski Showing Property at 183 King Road, Somers, Connecticut", 1 sheet, dated Feb 11, 2008 with no revisions, subject to showing the small lot which is being combined with the larger piece of property on the plans. This reconfiguration does not constitute a subdivision because no new lot is created.

d. **OTHER – There was no other New Business.**

II. DISCUSSION: PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

The Planning Commission continued the review of the POCD Implementation Schedule starting on page 7-10.

Encourage Appropriate Economic Development

Attract and Retain Appropriate Businesses (Page 4-2)

Line Items 1. – 6. Both the Planning and Zoning Commissions are not involved in these line items.

Consider Non-Traditional Economic Development (Page 4-4)

7. *Promote revenue-positive, alternative housing such as age-restricted housing.* Checkbox complete.

8. *Pursue restoration of statutory PILOT (Payment in lieu of taxes) payment funding levels. – Board of Selectmen line item.*

Improve the Appearance of Business Development

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Adopt Village Districts (Page 4-6)

1. *Educate residents about the distinctions between village districts and historic districts.*
2. *Investigate adopting separate “village districts” in the villages of Somers and Somersville to ensure that future development is compatible with the character of each village.* – Zoning Commission to review.

Implement Design Review (Page 4-6)

3. *Create a Design Review Committee to adopt and administer development guidelines.* The town is currently seeking a fifth member to complete this committee. Once one is selected, the Committee should be up and running.

Provide Tax Incentives for Improving Business Properties (Page 4-7)

4. *Create a tax abatement/incentive program to encourage exterior improvements to commercial / industrial buildings.* – Board of Selectmen Issue.

Improve Commercial/Industrial Development Standards (Page 4-7)

5. *Comprehensively review/modify the Zoning Regulations to ensure that development is compatible with the Community.* – Land use office is addressing this ongoing issue.

Adaptively Reuse the Somersville Mill

Adaptively Reuse the Somersville Mill (Page 4-8)

1. *Explore the possibility of allowing hospitality uses such as lodging or a conference center and amend the Zoning Regulations if uses are appropriate.*
2. *Consider a design development district for the Somersville Manufacturing Company Site.*
3. *Expand the WPCA treatment plant to accommodate at least the redevelopment of the Somersville Manufacturing Company Site.*

The Mill RFP process was in full swing but has since come across a snag in regards to some back taxes, foreclosure filing procedures, and the previous ownership of the property. As for the third line item, the expansion is complete.

Reinforce the Villages

Limit Commercial Sprawl (Page 4-9)

1. **Prohibit retail, restaurant, and personal service uses in the I-Zone to focus commercial activity on the villages** – Ms. Carson will investigate as this indirectly affects the Planning Commission.

Encourage Housing in and Near the Villages (Page 4-9)

2. **Encourage age-restricted and other alternative housing in and near the villages.**
3. **Encourage appropriate mixed-use development in the Business District.** – Line item #2 is done – Line item #3 done in the Somersville Overlay District.

Create Walkable Villages (Page 4-9)

4. **Create walkable villages through sidewalk, safety, and streetscape improvements.** Monies

have been earmarked to do just this and is part of the Somersville project overlay.

Manage Residential Growth

Adopt a Residential Density Regulation (Page 4-11)

- 1. Adopt a residential soil-based zoning regulation.** – To review and be referred back to Open Space.

Encourage Open Space Development Patterns (Page 4-11)

- 2. Require Special Use Permits for conventional subdivisions that maximize lot size (based on applicable density) while allowing conservation subdivisions by right.** This line item would be addressed with line item 1 under this subsection.

A motion was made by Mr. Pellissier, seconded by Mr. Genlot and unanimously voted for the Commission to take a 5-minute recess before further discussion of the POCD. The meeting stood adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

The Commission came out of recess at 7:53 p.m.

ADDRESS COMMUNITY NEEDS

Address Changing Housing Needs

Increase Housing Options for Older Residents (Page 5-3)

- 1. Continue tax relief programs for older residents.** Ms. Carson to check with Mr. Pinney in regards to this line item.
- 2. Continue to actively encourage active-adult and elderly housing where appropriate.** This item is done. Example is the age-restricted housing.
- 3. Expand options for accessory apartments as elderly units.** This needs further investigation as into home health aids.
- 4. Seek state and federal grants and local funding to purchase land for income-assisted elderly housing.** – Board of Selectmen Issue.

Accommodate Affordable Housing (Page 5-3)

- 5. Investigate allowing density bonuses or design flexibility in exchange for providing affordable units.**
- 6. Investigate requiring a percentage of affordable units or a fee-in-lieu of affordable units for new residential developments.** – Neither line items have been reviewed. Priority 2 for the Zoning Commission.

Address Community Facility Needs

Address Town Hall Needs (Page 5-8)

- 1. Enlarge Town Hall and update physical plant to meet anticipated needs.** – Priority 3 not

reviewed as of yet.

Address Kibbe-Fuller Community Center Needs (Page 5-8)

2. Convert the State Trooper's Office to multi-purpose room for recreation programming and other needs. This has been done.

Address Library Needs (Page 5-8)

3. Plan to enlarge the Library during the planning period. This is done.

Monitor Senior Center Needs (Page 5-9)

4. Monitor the growing senior population to anticipate staff and space needs at the Senior Center. This line item is ongoing with the Board of Selectmen.

Address Police Protection Needs (Page 5-9)

5. Complete relocation of the Resident State Trooper's Office to the old firehouse. – Done

Address Fire Protection and EMS Needs (Page 5-9)

6. Assess the need to build or purchase a firehouse to better serve northern Somers. Not reviewed yet – priority three.

7. Extend water and fire hydrants to serve Field Road and Egypt Road Industrial areas. – Ms. Carson to check into this line item.

8. Revise the driveway ordinance to ensure emergency access. In the process of being reviewed.

9. Adopt regulations to ensure access to emergency water supplies for new development. This has been addressed and a new cistern ordinance has been adopted.

10. Consider adopting a residential sprinkler ordinance based on distance to water supply. The new Fire Marshal will address this line item.

Address Emergency Communication Needs (Page 5-10)

11. Update radio equipment to facilitate better two-way communications, close gaps in coverage, and allow radio interoperability between police, fire, and Town Personnel. – Board of Selectmen item.

Address Highway Maintenance Needs (Page 5-10)

Address Parks and Grounds Maintenance Needs (Page 5-11)

Address Solid Waste Needs (Page 5-11)

Address Recreation Needs (Page 5-12)

All above sections (12. – 20.) Board of Selectmen Items to be reviewed.

Address School Facility Needs (Page 5-13)

21. Closely monitor enrollment projections to anticipate additional space needs at the Somers High School. – Board of Education line item.

22. If maintaining a single education campus is desirable and further expansion within the campus is impractical, adjacent land should be acquired. – Non-priority issue at present.

Address Vehicular Transportation Needs

Address Traffic Issues (Page 5-18)

- 1. Pursue improvements to the intersection of Route 190 at Ninth District Road and Route 190 at Route 83 with the Connecticut Department of Transportation.** – These grants received to be fulfilled by the year 2010.
- 2. Keep road improvement projects and maintenance funded and on schedule to avoid more costly repairs in the future.** – this line item is in connection to line item 1. Above.
- 3. Complete scheduled safety improvements in Town roads.** – Department of Public Works.

Modify Parking Standards (Page 5-18) Items 4. - 8.; Zoning Commission Line Items.

Address Alternative Forms Of Transportation

Address Pedestrian Needs (Page 5-21)

- 1. Provide sidewalks throughout the commercial and more densely populated areas of the two villages with attention given to crosswalks and other safety enhancements.** - This line item has received some review and is being addressed.
- 2. Provide sidewalks or multi-use trails between village centers and major activity nodes.** – A brief review was done on this line item, but has been labeled a priority 2.
- 3. Enhance and protect the existing hiking trail system throughout town.** – On-going.

Address Bicycle Circulation (Page 5-21)

- 4. Accommodate bicycles whenever practical on road improvement and site development projects.** – A priority.

Monitor Demand for Dial –a- Ride Service (5-21)

Provide for Adequate Utility Services

Ensure Adequate Public Water Service (Page 5-22) Items 1-3

Ensure Adequate Public Sewer Service (Page 5-24) Items 4-5

All previous noted sections to be addressed by various Committees none of which include the Planning Commission.

Ensure Adequacy of Other Utility Services (Page 5-24)

- 6. Plan for additional growth in wireless communication by identifying desirable tower and antenna locations.** The Commission discussed the possibility and need for a plan to be created to illustrate the 3 cell tower locations that the town currently has and comprise a list of comments so if they are asked for comments they would have something in writing for the Connecticut Siting Council and the Land Use Office if approached.

III. OLD BUSINESS

- a. OTHER – There was no other Old Business.

V. STAFF/COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Reflective large print signs have begun replacing the older street signs in the Town of Somers per a new state law. Ms. Carson presented a diagram of these new signs to the Commission. The signs are being installed in groups – a third of the town at a time. The questions presented to the Commission were: 1. Should the signs include the cross street on them, and 2. Should the yellow “No Outlet” sign be placed on those streets which meet this criteria as well? It was the consensus of the Commission that both questions be answered with a “Yes”.

VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION – There was none.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE AND BILLS – There were no bills.

Ms. Carson noted the next Land Use Commission Training Sessions at various locations and dates (all keeping to Saturdays from 8:30 – 3:00 schedule). This training includes statutes, definitions, regulations etc. Mr. Sutter expressed interest in attending.

VIII. MINUTES APPROVAL: January 24, 2008

A motion was made by Mr. Genlot; seconded by Mr. Bordeaux and voted 2 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention (Mr. Pellissier) to approve the meeting minutes of January 24, 2008 as written.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Genlot; seconded by Mr. Pellissier and unanimously voted to adjourn the February 28, 2008 Planning Commission meeting at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Boudreau
Recording Secretary

Bradley Pellissier
Secretary

MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVAL AT A SUBSEQUENT MEETING.