

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

**PLANNING MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, September 25, 2008
7:00 p.m. Town Hall**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chairman Brad Pellissier called the regular meeting to order at 7:10 pm. Members Greg Genlot, Brad Pellissier and Alternate Scott Sutter (seated for Joe Iadarola) were present and constituted a quorum. Town Planner, Patrice Carson was also present.

II. OLD BUSINESS – There was no Old Business.

III. NEW BUSINESS

a. ZONING REFERRAL: MODIFICATION OF SPECIAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION FOR GOLF CENTER, 349 MAIN STREET, DRIVING RANGE 349 MAIN STREET, LLC

Tim Coon of J.R.Russo represented the applicant and presented plans to the Commission. He described the site that currently has a driving range on 18.7 acres with a building that houses the office and a 28-space parking lot. The applicant proposes to build an 18-hole miniature golf course on the site. He explained that the middle of the golf course area will be graded to a 6-foot elevation upon which a 12-foot stone waterfall feature will be built. There will be 3 separate brooks connecting 6 ponds built as part of the landscaping. The perimeter of the site will have nine ADA handicapped accessible holes as required by law. The golf course will be protected from errant balls from the driving range by netting 70-foot high by 330-foot long. Photometric plans of the lighting indicate that there will be no spillover.

The existing parking lot will be relocated to within the 10-foot setback from the property line bordering Main Street. The 82 planned parking spaces are based on calculations covering the needs for the driving range, the golf course and a future food service. The food service is not a part of this application. The parking lot will be equipped with a drainage system that will collect and treat runoff. The applicant is asking to defer the construction of the 30 parking spaces that will be required for the food service until needed. The application for a wetland permit has been submitted to the Conservation Commission. Conservation favors deferral for the construction of the parking spaces since that part of the parking will infringe on wetlands.

The business's sanitary needs are currently served by Porta-Potties. When the food service is installed a septic system will be required. For now, the applicant intends to relocate the Porta-Potties and dumpster behind a fence screened with plantings of arborvitae.

This project is within the 100-year flood zone. For this reason it will be necessary to offset the excavation that elevates parts of the course by removing material elsewhere on the property. This is required to prevent a disruption of the flood storage capacity of the area. A letter of map revision has been submitted to FEMA as required.

Ms. Carson suggested that a mechanism be considered by the Planning Commission for deferral of construction of the parking spaces. Concerns she has are: whether a bond would be needed; to avoid the applicant's need for two applications to wetlands; and how overflow parking would be handled if the additional parking is not installed. It was suggested that a condition could be made on the Special Permit allowing the Town to shut down the operation if the parking is not installed when needed.

The Commission will review the application again at their next meeting on October 9, 2008, because the FEMA LOMR is needed before any permits are issued.

b. OTHER – There was no New Business.

IV. DISCUSSION: PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

a. REVIEW OF OPEN SPACE SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

Ms. Carson explained that in a previous Planning meeting it was decided by the Commission after review of other Town's regulations, that Ledyard's regulation was preferred. Ms. Carson contacted their planner, Mr. Brian Palaia and scheduled two tentative dates for him to meet with the Commission. Those days would be either the regular meeting date of October 23 or a special meeting date of October 30, 2008. Mr. Palaia offered that he could also discuss how the regulation could be improved.

The Commission agreed to have a mandatory meeting on October 9, 2008 to discuss the subject in anticipation of the meeting with Mr. Palaia.

After Discussion with others about open space subdivision regulations, Ms. Carson said that key considerations seem to be: to keep up-front considerations simple, i.e., no requirement of full subdivision plans that may not be used; to try to keep the yield plan simple (Ms. Carson prefers not to count wetlands and watercourses as open space); and to require random test holes.

V. STAFF/COMMISSIONER REPORTS – There were none.

VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION – There was none.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE AND BILLS

The State is looking for feedback from Towns on the CRCOG regional development plan and maps. Ms. Carson showed the Commission a copy of the CRCOG map for Somers. She explained that the State wants to make sure that the CRCOG plans represent accurately what exists and what the Town wants for itself.

A memo from Selectman Pinney states the he has organized a meeting for 7:30 pm, Monday, October 6, 2008, in the town hall auditorium. This meeting will include Planning, Zoning, Conservation, Economic Development, WPCA, Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance to discuss development activity, patterns, prospects and regulation as it occurs in Somers. The objective will be to develop a shared awareness of Town development activity and to discuss how to increase desirable and decrease undesirable development.

VIII. MINUTES APPROVAL: September 11, 2008

A motion was made by Mr. Sutter; seconded by Mr. Genlot and voted to approve the minutes of September 11, 2008 as written. Mr. Pellissier abstained, as he had not attended this meeting.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Sutter; seconded by Mr. Genlot and unanimously voted to adjourn the September 25, 2008 meeting of the Planning Commission at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Reed
Recording Secretary

Bradley Pellissier
Commission Secretary

MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVAL AT A SUBSEQUENT MEETING.