

**PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT**  
**QUARTERLY REPORT: APRIL 1, 2008 – JUNE 30, 2008**

The Planning and Zoning Commission met ten times this period—three times in April, three in May, and four in June. The first part of their May 13 meeting was a joint meeting with EPC and the Board of Selectmen to hear a Stormwater Report. The Commission anticipates getting comments on that report back to Tighe and Bond in July, so that the report can be finalized. It is likely that a proposal will be put forth by the Commission to modify the Zoning Regulations relative to drainage as a result of this report.

Actions by type this quarter:

Site Plans: 4 approved; 2 amendments approved

Amendments to the Zoning Regulations: 1 granted in part; denied in part; 1 withdrawn

Coastal Site Plan Review: 6 granted; 1 denied; 1 withdrawn, 4 amendments approved

Flood Damage Prevention: 6 granted, 1 denied; 1 withdrawn; 2 amendments approved

Land Filling/Excavation: 4 approved; 1 withdrawn; 1 amendment approved

Special Permit: 3 granted, 1 withdrawn; 1 amendment approved

Amendment to the Town Plan: 1 denied

Subdivisions: 1 approved; 1 denied

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Total Number of Projects\*: 18 applications, 2 amendments and 3 referral reports issued.

\*Total number of projects does not equal number of actions, because some applications include multiple permits.

In April, the Commission approved six light poles at Tilley Pond Park, and various improvements at Weed Beach. They also denied a four-lot subdivision adjacent to Giovanni's restaurant. In May, the Commission approved in part with modifications a zoning regulation amendment put forward by Darien Revitalization Initiative (DRI). This took effect on June 29<sup>th</sup>, and allows banks as a Special Permit use within the CBD Zone. In late July, the Commission will review plans for the Darien Police Station additions and alterations. Those plans were reviewed and approved by the ZBA on June 18.

Two nights of public hearings were held on a proposed Zoning Regulation amendment (333 West Avenue). A decision will be made on that matter sometime before September 5 (unless an extension of time is granted by the applicant). Two pending affordable housing applications per Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes have been submitted. The first public hearing on one of them will be July 8<sup>th</sup>. It is expected that at least two public hearing nights will be spent on each of these applications. Extra meeting nights have already been scheduled for next quarter to accommodate the anticipated workload.

The Environmental Protection Commission (EPC) met eight times this quarter—once in April; four times in May; and three times in June. As noted above, one of those meetings was a joint meeting with the Planning and Zoning Commission on May 13 to hear and discuss the draft Stormwater Report. During their meetings, the EPC reviewed nineteen (19) applications—all of which were granted. At least seven hours of public hearings over three nights were held regarding the 5 Holly Lane matter, and a decision on that matter is expected in July. *The eight meetings held this quarter are the largest number of meetings in any quarter since 1991 (Mar-May 1991 and July-Sep 2006 also had eight meetings in a quarter).*

The Zoning Board of Appeals met eleven times this quarter—three times in April (the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, and 30<sup>th</sup>) three times in May (the 19<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>), and five times in June (the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 25<sup>th</sup>). The June 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting was an Executive Session with Town Counsel. These ten meetings are the most meetings they have ever had in one quarter. Four of those nights were mostly dedicated to one matter. Of the twenty-two applications processed this period, seventeen were granted, one granted in part/denied in part; three denied and one withdrawn.

The Architectural Review Board (ARB) met three times this period. They acted upon twelve applications—10 were granted, and two were granted in part/denied in part. The approved projects include a new Starbucks building at 71 Boston Post Road, and signage for new businesses on Tokeneke Road and the Darien Toy Box, which recently opened downtown.

In this quarter, 168 Zoning Permits were reviewed and acted upon. This includes 60 permits in April; 62 in May; and 46 in June. Of the permits acted upon, 9 were for new residences, and 4 were for swimming pools and/or spas. Of the nine permits for new residences, 8 were “teardowns” and one was on vacant land. The 168 permits reviewed and acted upon is the *second highest total over the past 12 quarters (3 years)*. Overall, 567 zoning permits were issued in the 2007-2008 fiscal year.

Andrea Sangrey, Manager—Community Development Services, continued to work with various subcommittees of DRI, and assisted a subcommittee of DRI on the Design Guidelines document which is now being finalized. Over the next quarter, that draft document will be provided to the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Board of Selectmen for their review and comment.

An OPM Technical Assistance Grant application was submitted in June. It appears that two of the four projects will be funded, and we expect to hear officially sometime in the next two weeks. We expect to hear shortly about the FEMA grants which were applied for in February.

The Department’s summer intern Abbie Higgs started on June 23. Her duties will include copying, typing, filing and general office assistance.

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

### 1. Reduce Zoning Permit review times.

The recently implemented CityView software will better allow us to track our review times for Zoning Permits by type of permit. Our goals for the next quarter are to reduce the times for all types of Zoning Permit reviews. Our existing average review times and our proposed review time standards are shown below. We have set a goal of reducing all review times by one-third (33%). In order to meet this goal, substantial efforts will need to be made to be as efficient as possible with our reviews, and to work very closely with applicants, so that submitted applications have all of the necessary complete application information for a proper review.

### PROPOSED PERFORMANCE MEASURES ZONING PERMIT APPLICATIONS BY TYPE

		Jan-June 2008 # permits	Jan-June 2008 Average Time	PROPOSED STANDARD AVERAGE TIME
AA	Additions/Alterations--Residential	6	15	10
AA	Additions/Alterations--Commercial	2	23.5	16
AS	Accessory Structure	11	12.5	8
CA	Commercial Tenant Fit-Up Accessory Structure/Detached	23	15	10
DG	Garage	2	25.5	17
F	Foundation Only	0	N/A	N/A
FAB	Finish Attic/Basement	20	9	6
FR	Flood Repair	0	N/A	N/A
M	Miscellaneous	36	9	6
N/D	New Residence or Commercial Bldg.	15	27	18
P	Pool and/or Spa	12	22	15
R	Remodel and/or Renovate	31	7	5
RA	Residential Alterations	109	16	11
RR	Re-Roof	4	13	9
S	Sign	9	13	9
TC	Tennis Court	0	N/A	N/A
TT	Temporary Tent	0	N/A	N/A

**TOTAL:**            280

\*All day calculations include non-work days, such as holidays and weekends.

Source: Planning & Zoning Department/CityView.

**2. Consultants continue to be used at developer’s expense where appropriate.**

The Department continues to hire consultants to assist the land use boards at the developer’s expense where appropriate and only when needed. This has resulted in more thorough reviews with greater expertise. This has generally been the hiring of professional engineer, traffic engineer, or wetlands scientist. The following are an example of some of the projects within the past year:

<b><u>Project</u></b>	<b><u>Land Use Board</u></b>	<b><u>Type of Review</u></b>
5 Holly Lane	EPC	Professional Engineer
Starbucks	P&Z	Traffic Consultant
Chase Bank	P&Z	Traffic Consultant
Purdy Lane Subdivision	EPC	Professional Engineer
Darien YMCA	EPC, P&Z	Professional Engineer
Whole Foods Market	P&Z	Professional Engineer
68 Stony Brook Road	EPC	Professional Engineer
18 Overbrook Lane	EPC	Professional Engineer
Country Club of Darien	EPC	Professional Engineer

**3. Overall Revenue increases.**

Revenue is increasing both because of the number of applications before EPC and ZBA are up, and because the land use board application fees were increased by the RTM in June 2008. Thus, it is fully expected that revenues next fiscal year will exceed revenues this year.