

PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT
QUARTERLY REPORT: APRIL 1, 2004 – JUNE 30, 2004

The Planning and Zoning Commission met seven times this quarter—two times in April, two times in May, and three times in June.

Permits by type this quarter:

Flood Damage Prevention: 7 granted; 1 amendment approved

Coastal Site Plan Review: 4 granted; 1 withdrawn

Land Filling/Excavation: 5 approved

Special Permit: 5 granted

Business Site Plan: 1 approved; 2 withdrawn

Subdivision: 1 approved

Administrative Permit: 1 approved

Mandatory Referral reports issued: 1 report issued and approved

Total Number of Projects*: 20

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

Of significance is the Commission's approval of a 166-seat restaurant on the first floor of the larger building in the Grove Street Plaza project. They also approved expansion of the existing Coromandel restaurant within Goodwives Shopping Center. In May, the Commission approved a 4-lot subdivision on West Avenue. On June 8, 2004, the Commission issued a report regarding the expansion of Casey Field, and approved a deck expansion at the Darien Boat Club. In the upcoming quarter the Commission will decide applications for the new synthetic turf field at the High School, additions to the United Methodist Church, and a proposed three-lot subdivision on Phillips Lane.

The Commission's work on the Town Plan of Conservation & Development continues. They expect to hold more meetings in the next few months to discuss issues such as Housing, Community Facilities, and overall Land Use. It is expected that a final draft of the entire document will be ready in less than a year.

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) met five times this quarter (once in April, and twice each in May and June) to process 29 applications. Fifteen applications were processed in June, tied for the busiest June in the past 15 years. Of the 29 applications acted upon, fifteen were granted, seven denied, two granted in part/denied in part, one "other", and four withdrawn. Due to the high workload, an extra meeting has already been scheduled for late July. One of the upcoming applications is for signage at the Darien Playhouse building.

In June, the Board of Selectmen increased the ZBA application fee. That will take effect on July 11, 2004. It is expected that the application fees of the other local land use boards will be proposed to increase over the next two quarters.

The Environmental Protection Commission (EPC) met seven times this period, including three times in June. Of the 35 applications processed, twenty-seven were granted; one granted in part/withdrawn in part; one denied; and six withdrawn. In June, they approved the synthetic turf field at the high school, and the dredging of Hope Pond. The Board of Selectmen appointed a new EPC member in June.

Over the past few months, the EPC has worked with a local consultant to prepare an educational brochure regarding wetland regulation. Copies will be made available to the general public after the new fiscal year begins in early July. Over the next few months, the EPC will commence a comprehensive review of the local Inland Wetland and Watercourses Regulations. This will likely result in proposed regulation amendments being put forth by the EPC sometime in late 2004 or early 2005.

The Architectural Review Board (ARB) met three times this quarter. Twelve applications for signs, awnings and facades were approved. These include applications for very substantial renovations to Shaw's Supermarket within Goodwives Shopping Center; roof changes at the Center for Hope; signage and awnings for Patriot National Bank at 800 Boston Post Road; and new signage for Miller Automobile.

A total of 153 Zoning Permits were acted upon this quarter. This is an increase of 14% over last quarter. Six permits were for new single-family residences—of those five were “teardowns”, and one was torn down after a fire. Eleven swimming pools were approved.

This quarter, a significant amount of GIS work was completed. This includes our continued work in assisting applicants with preparing lists of neighbors for their land use applications. Work with the new Tax Assessor on finalizing the new tax maps is also ongoing. Maps were created to assist the Sewer Commission in presenting a sewer extension project at a public hearing. A number of maps were prepared for various architects and consultants interested in bidding on the Tokeneke School project. The Town's GIS work with the Police and Fire Department's consultant, Visionair, is in its final stages.