

PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT
QUARTERLY REPORT: JANUARY 1, 2003 – MARCH 31, 2003

The Planning and Zoning Commission met nine times this quarter—four times in January, three times in February and twice in March. One of those nine meetings was a special joint meeting on January 14th with the Board of Selectmen and the Planning, Zoning, and Housing Committee of the RTM to discuss the update to the 1995 Town Plan of Development.

Permits by type this quarter:

Flood Damage Prevention: 4 approved

Coastal Site Plan Review: 5 approved

Land Filling/Excavation: 3 approved; 1 granted in part/denied in part; 2 withdrawn; one amendment approved.

Special Permit: 2 granted

Business Site Plan: 2 approved

Subdivisions: 1 amendment approved.

Mandatory Referral reports issued: 4 reports issued and approved

Total* (total does not add up, due to applications which include multiple permits): 16

An amendment to the 1995 Town Plan of Development relating to the possible rezoning of a portion of Noroton Bay was adopted on March 11th.

In March, the Commission approved a project which entails the demolition of four residences on Grove Street, the construction of two new mixed-use buildings, and the enlargement of the existing Grove Street parking lot. This is the most significant development in downtown Darien in many years.

2005 Town Plan of Conservation & Development

This quarter, work began on the 2005 Town Plan of Conservation & Development. The Commission discussed first drafts of the Population Chapter, Goals and Objectives, and prepared a time line for the project. In the upcoming months, the Commission expects to review and discuss a first draft of the Historic Resources Chapter, begin work on a draft Regional Context Chapter, and contract with two consultants to prepare the Environmental Resources and Traffic/Transportation Chapters. The Commission expects to work with those consultants over the summer and into the fall.

On March 17th, the Planning and Zoning Director explained the multi-year process for writing the Plan to the entire RTM, and asked that letters and comments for Commission members' consideration be sent to the Planning and Zoning Office. Thus far, no letters, emails, or comments have been received as a result of that presentation.

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) met four times this period—once each in January and February, and twice in March. A total of 19 applications were acted upon—10 were granted; five denied; two withdrawn; and two other determinations were made. In addition, one amendment request was granted, and one denied. The next few months will be very active for the ZBA, as the significant number of applications received will require the scheduling of two extra meetings.

In February, the Board of Selectmen appointed Al Tibbetts to replace long-time ZBA member Fred Kolbe, who resigned after having served on the Board since 1986.

The Environmental Protection Commission (EPC) met three times this period. Twenty applications were acted upon—17 were granted; two withdrawn and one granted in part/withdrawn in part. This includes one wetlands map amendment. Two EPC members attended an all-day training session in March.

The Architectural Review Board (ARB) met two times this period to discuss seven applications. Nearly all of these were applications for signs, including those for the Darien Bootery's relocation from Goodwives Shopping Center to Heights Road, and the opening of a new music store on Boston Post Road.

A total of 135 Zoning Permits were acted upon this quarter—with 65 of those being issued in January. Twenty-four of those were permits for AvalonBay, whose Avalon Darien project now has all of the necessary Zoning Permits for the entire project. Thirteen of those 24 permits were for residential structures, with the remainder for garages and a maintenance building. Overall, Zoning Permits for eight new residences and four pools and/or spas were issued.

A week-long GIS training session in Geomedia software was held in early March. This was attended by a number of employees in Town Hall (including one employee from the Board of Education), as well as four representatives from SWRPA and three from Connecticut DOT.

The Darien Land Trust has asked us to prepare a series of GIS maps showing their property holdings. That project will be completed in the next quarter, and result in over \$700 in revenue. New Tax Assessor Maps continue to be prepared, and are currently under review by the Tax Assessor.

A total of 75 maps was prepared for the revaluation firm Cole-Layer-Trumble and given to them on March 19th. In addition, larger thematic maps were prepared, allowing them to better understand and rationalize their revaluation decisions. Area maps were also prepared this quarter for the Police Department. It is anticipated that copies of those maps will be placed in all police vehicles for easy access and reference.