

**Planning, Zoning and Housing Committee (PZ&H)
of the
Darien Representative Town Meeting (RTM)**

Draft Minutes

Date: February 11, 2014

Place: Darien Town Hall, Room 213

Present: Carolyn Bayne, Courtney Haidinger, Ted Hawkins, Joanne Hennessy, Spencer McIlmurray, Seth Morton, John van der Kieft, Rob Young

Absent: Liz Bacon, Jose Cepeda, Lucy Fiore, Shedd Glassmeyer, James Howe, John McLean

Guests: Susan Cameron, Jeremy Ginsberg

This was a regular meeting of the Planning, Zoning and Housing Committee.

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm. Joanne Hennessy, PZ&H Chair, reviewed the agenda. A motion was made to approve the minutes from the January 14, 2014 meeting; they were unanimously approved.

Susan Cameron, Chair of the Planning & Zoning Commission, gave an update on issues either before, or expected to come before, that commission, including:

- a new location for residents of ABC (A Better Chance);
- subdivision of a 1-1/2 acre property on the corner of Middlesex and Hollow Tree Ridge Roads;
- construction of an additional 14 units at Kensett Darien;
- construction of age-restricted housing at the former “Knobel Brothers” property on Settler’s Trail;
- addition of 3-4 new turfs fields at DHS;
- a moratorium on dispensaries of medical marijuana to assess the impact of the new law;
- dredging of Goodwives River;
- construction of a parking garage on the Leroy/West commuter lot

Ms. Cameron also noted that a “public comment” component has been added to the first P&Z meeting of the month and that preliminary work will soon begin on the 2016 Town Plan of Conservation & Development.

Mr. Ginsberg, Director of Planning & Zoning, presented the Proposed P&Z Budget for 2014-15, which increased by 2.97%. Major changes noted were decreases in training services and increases in both advertising (for public hearings) and consulting services. Capital items in the proposed budget include consulting services related to revising the Town Plan of C&D, an upgrade or replacement of the interdepartmental software CityView, and a portion of the total for upgrading the

Noroton/West intersections. He noted that a state grant is expected to cover 90% of the cost of the upgrade.

The next item on the agenda was discussion of the Town accepting a small (4,200 square feet) parcel of land on Andrews Drive – the site of a sewer pumping station – as part of a settlement between a developer and the Town of Darien. The pumping station was constructed and sewer lines extended to neighboring streets as part of a 20-acre development, which was never completed following the 2008 economic crisis. With the goal of making sure the pumping station is maintained properly, a settlement was reached in which the Sewer Commission agreed to pay the developer \$178,000. As part of the settlement the current owner will convey title to the land to the Town for a sum of \$1 via a Quit Claim Deed. Seth Morton made a motion (seconded by Spencer McIlmurray) that the Committee accept the provisions of the “Quit Claim” on parcel 5X on Andrews Drive, as outlined in Wayne Fox’s February 16, 2014 memo. The motion passed unanimously.

Next was discussion of the Town granting a right-of-way easement to the new owner of 50 Hoyt Street. Placement of the driveway and garage on this property require egress onto a contiguous private road, Hoyt Court. Although private, the Town owns the land under which Hoyt Court sits, and no previous owner had obtained a legal easement. Seth Morton made a motion (seconded by Courtney Haidinger) to approve the conveyance of a right-of-way easement over town-owned land for access to an existing home located at 50 Hoyt Street. Among the questions raised were why the RTM must vote on this and whether it sets a bad precedence. The motion passed with 6 members voting yes, 1 no, and 1 abstention.

The next item discussed was whether the Town should enter into a contract with CEFIA (Clean Energy Finance Investment Authority) for the purposes of allowing owners of local commercial, industrial and multi-family properties to avail themselves of financial incentives that will allow energy-saving upgrades under a program known as “C-PACE”(Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy). It was noted that several other communities have signed contracts with this “green bank,” the town gets a \$500 sign-on fee, there is little-to-no financial exposure for the town, and the tax collector already has the appropriate software to manage the program. A motion was made by Carolyn Bayne (seconded by Ted Hawkins) to approve a resolution that allows for the Town to enter into this contract. The motion was approved unanimously.

The last item on the agenda was an update on The Heights by Ms. Hennessy in which she noted that construction is ahead of schedule and all tenants are expected in by mid-summer.

Under “Other Business,” Ms. Hennessy noted that there is no update on the Mather Community Center, other than that the opening has been pushed back to April.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Carolyn Bayne, PZ&H Clerk