

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

Draft Minutes

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**Date:** March 14, 2016

**Place:** Darien Town Hall, Room 213

**Members Present:** Liz Bacon, Carolyn Bayne, Joe Cherico, Ted Hawkins, Joanne Hennessy, Jennifer Montanaro, John van der Kieft

**Members Absent:** Kathryn Bates, Fred Conze, Joan Davis, Courtney Haidinger, Matthew David Jordan, Patrick Keane, Monica McNally, Nancy Natale

**Guests:** Jeremy Ginsberg (Director, Planning and Zoning Department), Susan Cameron (Chair, P&Z Commission), Bruce Hill (attorney for FR Darien LLC, applicant)

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This was a Regular Meeting of the Planning, Zoning and Housing Committee.

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 pm. Joanne Hennessy, PZ&H Chair, reviewed the agenda.

The first item on the agenda was to discuss and approve minutes from the meetings of January 19th and February 11th. Lacking a quorum, discussion and approval was postponed to the next regularly scheduled meeting on April 5<sup>th</sup>.

The next item on the agenda was a review of the proposed 2016-17 Planning & Zoning Department budget. Mr. Ginsberg noted that the main change from the current budget is the addition of one permanent full-time staff member (senior planner). He noted that with three anticipated commercial redevelopment applications (two in Noroton Heights and one on Corbin Drive), it is expected that there will be increased activity within the department. Mr. Ginsberg noted that this planning position replaces another that was eliminated from the department a few years ago, though the responsibilities are somewhat different. Other questions on specific budget items (overtime salary, software maintenance and support, scanning/digitizing of files) were raised by committee members, which Mr. Ginsberg answered.

The next item on the agenda was an update on the Town Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). Mr. Ginsberg provided a timeline for adoption for the POCD, which includes a "final draft" that will be distributed to various parties as required by state statute (March 17), posted to the town website and in the Library (March 21), and the subject of a series of public hearings by both the BOS (to be determined) and P&Z (May 10 and May 24, if needed). Adoption of the POCD is expected at the conclusion of the public hearings.

Mr. Ginsberg noted that several comments received by the public have been incorporated into the document; any further comments should be emailed to him at [POCD@darienct.gov](mailto:POCD@darienct.gov) prior to the P&Z Commission's public hearing on May 10.

Next was a review of the petition to amend the Noroton Heights Redevelopment Zone Regulations, specifically portions of Section 680 (redevelopment) and Sections 905 and 907 (joint parking and parking structures). Mr. Hill noted that state statutes allow anyone to request changes in regulations. P&Z approval of changes to the regulations is not approval of a specific plan; the zone change would only provide the applicant the desired "envelope" in which to draw up plans. Included in their requests is a height increase from a maximum allowed of three stories to four, an increase in maximum coverage from 80% to 90%, and an increase in maximum allowed unit size from 1200 square feet to 1800 square feet. Numerous other changes are requested as well. Redevelopment was described as a two-part process: first, the zone must be changed to accommodate the desired plan; second, the applicant submits a specific plan to P&Z. Public hearings must be held during each part of the process, with the first public hearing on the petition to amend the regulations scheduled for Tuesday, April 5 at 8 p.m., Town Hall auditorium.

Mr. Hill noted that while he represents only one of the applicants, the P&Z Commission made clear to both applicants (FR Darien LLC and Noroton Heights Shopping Center, Inc.) that they work together to redevelop both sites under one set of zoning regulations, rather than each redevelopment be done in a "vacuum". Committee members asked several questions relating to this request, as well as about the redevelopment plans in general.

The final item on the agenda was an update on the Town's acquisition of 41 Hecker Avenue. The Chairman stated that town counsel continues to work on the conservation easement and it is unclear at this time when it will appear on the RTM's agenda.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.

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Respectfully submitted by Carolyn Bayne, PZ&H Clerk (temporary)