

**SOMERSWORTH PLANNING BOARD  
MINUTES OF WORKSHOP MEETING  
JULY 18, 2018**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ron LeHoullier, Chair, Harold Guptill, Vice Chair, Bob Belmore, City Manager, David Witham, City Council Representative, Chris Horton, Jameson Small, Jeremy Rhodes, Mark Fearis, Alternate and Jason Barry, Alternate.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Paul Robidas.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Shanna B. Saunders, Director of Planning and Community Development and Tracy Gora, Planning Secretary.

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

1) PUBLIC MEETING

A) Review of Section 7 of the Zoning Ordinance titled Conservation Subdivision Ordinance.

Saunders stated that this section begins on page 19.13 of the Zoning Ordinance and that she wants to review it section by section. Reviewed the purpose of the Conservation Subdivision Ordinance and where it came from. Stated that this is generally a new planning concept and has only been adopted by Board in the last ten years or so. Stated that the concept is anti-sprawl by bundling together the homes in a cluster and leaving the rest as open space. Stated that connecting open space from different developments is better for wildlife, natural resources and uses less impervious surface. Reviewed the second section of objectives and stated that this is what Somersworth finds important and why it was adopted. Stated that section three has a good set of definition, which helps when interpreting the regulations. Reviewed section four and stated that it states that all subdivisions have to be conservation subdivisions but lists exemptions to this.

LeHoullier suggested changing that to take out the "must". Stated that it should be an option, not a requirement.

Saunders stated that changes will have to go before the Council with a recommendation from the Board.

LeHoullier stated that it originally was supposed to be an option and not mandatory.

Belmore stated that if the Board recommends that a conservation subdivision not be mandatory, then a lot of the language in this changes, for example, they won't need an "exemption" section. Asked if they can get an idea if the whole Board wants to recommend this change as they won't have to review all of this.

Rhodes stated that the conservation subdivision allows for smaller lot sizes but asked about further subdividing. Asked if the way it is written now allows for loopholes that can allow for higher density.

Saunders replied yes under specific conditions.

Belmore asked about the Sunningdale subdivision and if the Board mandated that it be a conservation subdivision. Stated that he thought the developer wanted to do a conservation subdivision.

Saunders stated that with Sunningdale the amount of land in conservation is more than what the City would have required.

Rhodes stated that as they are written now, you can exploit the conservation subdivision regulations and get higher density. Stated that he would like to address that before allowing the developer to have the option of using conventional versus conservation subdivision.

Witham stated that he hopes the situation that Rhodes described never happens. Stated that rules are designed to be adjusted as they get used. Stated that there is intent behind the rules and he is okay as long as that is met. Stated that there are pros and cons to both conventional and conservation subdivisions. Stated that the times and economy changes so the intent needs to be adjusted.

Rhodes stated that if there are changes made, he wants to make sure the intent is served. Stated that he is not in a position to vote on this tonight.

Witham suggested having diagrams or visuals to help explain.

Fearis stated that he hopes this gets brought up again. Stated that he has issues with density and setbacks in the conservation subdivision. Stated that houses are too close and barely have setbacks. Stated that they needs to see how the calculations are being done. Stated that he likes green space but not having the houses on top of one another.

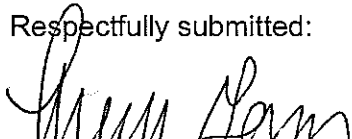
Saunders stated that they will discuss more at the next workshop meeting and that she will bring a sketch pad.

**Motion:** Guptill moved to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by Horton. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 6:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



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Tracy Gore, Planning Secretary  
Somersworth Planning Board