

**SOMERSWORTH PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES OF WORKSHOP MEETING
SEPTEMBER 19, 2018**

~~MEMBERS PRESENT: Ron LeHoullier, Chair, Harold Guptill, Vice-Chair, Chris Horton, Jameson Small, Mark Fearis, Alternate and Jason Barry, Alternate.~~

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bob Belmore, City Manager, David Witham, City Council Representative, Jeremy Rhodes, and 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 6:00 p.m.

1) PUBLIC MEETING

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

Saunders stated that this workshop is to continue reviewing the conservation subdivision section of the Zoning Ordinance. Stated that they left off last time at the Authority and Applicability section and now they are moving on from that.

Horton asked how this compares with other conservation regulations and asked if it is in line with the Master Plan.

Saunders stated that she is not sure.

LeHoullier stated that they wanted to make sure that not just unusable, unbuildable land was put into the conservation easement. Stated that he thought that doing a conversation subdivision versus a conventional one was supposed to be an option. Stated that he wants to amend the regulations so that a developer has more of a choice.

Small asked about the language used for when they have to use the yield plan approach.

Saunders stated that the yield plan is used as a reference document. Stated that five or fewer lots is exempt.

Small stated that it gives flexibility.

Saunders stated that they are going to move on to the next section having to do with calculating maximum density. Stated that there are two ways to determine how many lots there can be; one is the formula approach and one is a yield plan. Explained that when using the yield plan approach, a conventional subdivision is sketched out to determine how many lots can fit on the property.

Fearis asked if the conventional sketch would include setbacks, wetlands, etc.

Saunders replied that everything is in play. Read from the regulations how to determine density using the formula approach.

Fearis stated that he can see you steep slopes are defined but doesn't see where wetlands are defined.

Saunders stated that the Federal Government has guidelines for delineation that the State adopted. Stated that wetland scientist determine wetlands using three factors: soil type, hydrology and vegetation type.

~~Fearis confirmed that a wetland scientist is hired to delineate wetlands for a new development.~~

Saunders replied yes and stated that the Planning Board has the right to ask for third party review of the wetland report. Continued explaining the formula approach to determining density.

Fearis stated that when the result is not a whole number, you should round down, not up.

Saunders stated that she will keep a list of issues to go over at the end.

Horton referred to the Sunningdale conservation subdivision and stated that they have a huge plot of land and the houses are squished together. Stated that he doesn't think it is attractive.

Fearis stated that he wasn't on the Board when Sunningdale came through but that he is an abutter and was against it. Stated that he disagrees with the conservation subdivision and that there should still be setbacks and have a common area. Stated that the houses are selling at Sunningdale but that doesn't mean they are doing the City justice.

Saunders stated that the purpose of a conservation subdivision is to allow the same amount of land but have more open space by putting the houses closer together.

Guptill stated that when they do that there is large green space and can make connections corridors.

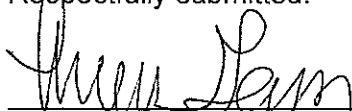
Small stated that he sees a weakness with our regulations where we only require 35% of the buildable area to be in the conservation easement where the State recommends 50%.

Saunders stated that there is often times no relationship between the size of the house and the size of the lot. Stated that lots get smaller but the house stays the same size and she doesn't think that is the intent. Stated that the regulations require that the yield plan approach be used when there are more than 20 lots and that is what Sunningdale did.

Small asked how the special use permit ties in. Read from the regulations and stated that it seems that it allows the Board to work with the developer to do a subdivision using the conventional and conservation approach.

Saunders stated that, as LeHoullier brought up, the regulations require that a conservation subdivision be used. Stated that if the Planning Board feels that a property is not well-suited for a conservation subdivision then they can have them do a conventional one or a hybrid of the two. Stated that this review can continue at the next meeting.

Motion: Guptill moved to adjourn the meeting.
Seconded by Fearis. Motion carried unanimously.
Meeting adjourned at 6:26 p.m.
Respectfully submitted:



Tracy Gora, Planning Secretary
Somersworth Planning Board