

Conservation Subdivision working group notes – 2/27/08 planning session

The group gathered at 4:00, and completed discussion at 5:00. Notes compiled by Victoria Barlow.

Next meeting proposed for March 13, 2008, pending Crowder's availability
Set regular meetings for second and fourth Thursdays at 4:00?

Assignment for next meeting

Read existing subdivision regulations, and review SWPRC subdivision regulation template.

Attendance Scott Self, chair; Tiffany Mannion, Victoria Barlow; Town Planner Sara Carbonneau.

The group discussed timing for presenting draft Conservation Residential Subdivision regulations to the Planning Board, and considered its next step – updating the subdivision regulations.

Presenting draft CRS regulations to Planning Board

The group set March 6 as the date for the presentation to PB, with April 3 proposed for the public hearing (to allow time to incorporate PB comments). Carbonneau will supply PB members with a copy of the draft.

At the PB meeting, Barlow will outline the impetus behind the update, as well as the primary differences between cluster subdivisions and CRS. Self will walk the PB through the proposed regulations, and mention Dave Bergeron's participation. He will make special note of the inclusion of duplexes, and flexibility of lot sizes.

Preparing to update subdivision regulations

Carbonneau will ask the PB to review the subdivision regulations (last amended, 1991) to identify areas that have been problematic. Carbonneau will solicit the opinion of the ZBA as well.

Southwest Region Planning Commission has prepared a model subdivision regulation (available on-line) that could serve as Swanzey's template; we can insert our data into the model, and delete inapplicable sections.

Likely top priorities for revision

Road standards. After preparing a draft, the group will request Lee Dunham's review and revision. Achieving consensus on dead-end streets may be challenging: Should they be permitted? At what maximum length? To serve what maximum number of houses? It will be important to remember that, with sufficient reason, certain aspects of the regulations may be waived upon the applicant's formal request.

Driveway regulations. These are part of the subdivision regulations. SWRPC's Access Management Plan, currently under review by the

Commission's transportation planner, recommends improvements. Swanzey's regulations, which were developed with a focus on driveways for single-family residences, need language to make them applicable to commercial development.

Independent engineering review and construction monitoring. The regulations need to spell out these requirements and their process, giving applicants early notice that developers are responsible for the associated costs.

Bonding. We will need to define how applicants calculate the cost estimate for constructing roads, drainage, fire protection infrastructure. It will likely be required that this figure comes from the consulting engineer's engineering review. The PB, rather than the Board of Selectmen, should establish the bond.

Definitions. Because these are included in the zoning ordinance, likely they could be deleted from the subdivision regulations.

Septic tanks, water supplies. This area is covered by State regulation.

Fire protection. The group will need to ask Fire Chief Bob Symonds to come discuss this section, as well as the process of reviewing proposals for development. (This applies to all department heads. Options are to attend the meeting, submit comments in writing, or explicitly say "no comments.")

Time frame of review process. The regulations will need to show the correct time frame for acceptance of an application, and its hearing.