

***Town of Fairfield***

**Office of Community & Economic Development  
Minutes of Economic Development Commission Meeting**

**November 8, 2012**

The Economic Development Commission of the Town of Fairfield held a meeting on November 8, 2012 at 8:00 a.m. in the Old Town Hall Conference Room.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Peter Penczer, Chairman; Don Peterson; Brian Silvestro; Chris LaSala; Abbas Nadim

**ALSO PRESENT:** Mark Barnhart, Director of Community and Economic Development; Ernie Pierson (185 Thorpe Street); Attorney John Fallon

The meeting was called to order at 8:16 a.m.

Chairman Peter Penczer welcomed everyone. Chairman Penczer advised the Commission that he had not completed two full terms as previously thought; consequently, he is able to remain on the Commission and he has informed the First Selectman that he wishes to do so.

***185 Thorpe Street:***

Attorney John Fallon introduced himself and Ernie Pierson representing 185 Thorpe Street Corporation, which is seeking to redevelop the 6.67 acre former Fairfield Lumber Yard site into a 65 unit residential development called Osprey Landing. Attorney Fallon noted that the existing site sits adjacent to a tidal marsh and is nearly 95% impervious. Attorney Fallon stated that the project would reduce site coverage by two-thirds and includes a marsh restoration plan and enhanced public access. The applicants have been working with the CTDEEP, and the project recently received approval from the Town's Inland Wetlands Commission. Attorney Fallon indicated that the applicants will be seeking TPZ approval in January, and would welcome the support of this Commission. Attorney Fallon acknowledged that the Commission does not typically review proposed residential developments, but argued that the project is deserving of support since it would provide a net taxable benefit to the Town as well as enhance the economic vitality of the downtown. He noted that there is strong market demand for this type of housing that would appeal to empty nesters looking to downsize but remain in the area, as well as young professionals who commute.

Discussion ensued. In response to a question, Mr. Pierson indicated that there would be three types of 2-BR units which would range in price from \$650K to \$850K. He noted that the project would not be age-restricted. Mr. Pierson also noted the lack of interest in industrial uses for the property, both from the market and the adjoining neighborhoods.

Attorney Fallon observed that the application would involve a zone change application from DID to DRD, as well as specific site plan approvals. He stated that the buildings would be built on piles. He noted that the project would provide 4+ acres of green space, reducing the amount of impervious coverage.

Hearing no further questions, Chairman Penczer asked whether the Commission would like to take a position on this application. Brian Silvestro indicated that he had a potential conflict and recused himself. On a motion by Mr. LaSala, seconded by Mr. Nadim, the Commission voted 4-0, with 1 abstention (Silvestro) to support the proposed development.

***Minutes:***

The minutes of October 11, 2012 were unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 13, 2012.

Respectfully submitted:

Mark S. Barnhart