

MAILING ADDRESS:

P.O. Box 1179
Southold, NY 11971

OFFICE LOCATION:

Town Hall Annex
54375 State Route 25
(cor. Main Rd. & Youngs Ave.)
Southold, NY

Telephone: 631 765-1938

Fax: 631 765-3136



PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS

JERILYN B. WOODHOUSE
Chair

KENNETH L. EDWARDS
MARTIN H. SIDOR
GEORGE D. SOLOMON
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PLANNING BOARD OFFICE
TOWN OF SOUTHOLD

To: Scott Russell, Supervisor
Members of the Town Board

From: Heather Lanza, Town Planning Director

Subject: Potential moratorium on residential site plans

Date: November 18, 2007

The following are valid and defensible reasons to enact a moratorium on residential site plans in Southold at this time. Please keep in mind that a moratorium should never be considered lightly, however the Town is in a good position right now to enact a limited moratorium for the reasons explained below.

1. Provide time to draft and implement new town code relative to residential site plans.
 - a. Suggested time-frame: six months
 - b. Review zoning code where high density residential zoning (including HD and HB) is permitted to assure that residential development in these zones is consistent with the plans for the hamlet, and is compatible in scale with the hamlet.
 - c. Town Code lacks residential site design standards. The lack of residential site design standards may result in the destruction of community character, the creation of impacts related to over-clearing, traffic, runoff, erosion and significant and irreversible changes to natural features that form the basis for the character of individual streets, neighborhoods and communities.

- d. Allow for the application of cluster standards, where applicable. The lack of cluster standards associated with residential site plans may result in the creation of impacts related over-clearing, runoff, erosion, and significant and irreversible changes to natural features on certain sites.
 - e. Develop Floor Area Ratios for residential site plans. Floor area ratios are a better measurement of the intensity of development than our current lot occupancy maximum. The lack of floor area ratios may result in development inconsistent with the scale of other development in the town, thus affecting community character.
2. Provide time to complete an update of the Comprehensive Plan.
- a. Suggested time-frame: one year
 - b. Southold Town is under intense development pressure as it represents one of the last and best examples of quality rural and suburban development in Suffolk County. While there are many land use plans to guide development, the Town lacks an updated and effective comprehensive plan with which to properly guide development (last updated in 1985). The Comprehensive Plan represents a blueprint for development promoting development where it is warranted and discouraging development from open spaces, farms and other environmentally sensitive areas. The adoption of a reasonable, rational and defensible comprehensive plan based on broad stakeholder support and participation is the key to protecting existing community character and to effectively mitigating potential impacts associated with poorly planned and haphazard development.
 - c. The design and scale of residential site plans would be addressed in an updated Comprehensive Plan.
 - d. Residential site plans should be carefully considered in the context of the goals of the proposed Transfers of Development Rights and Planned Development District programs.
 - e. Updated Comprehensive Plan is already drafted – time-frame will be relatively short to complete (based on existing plans).
 - f. Subdivision and commercial site plan zoning code were recently assessed. These developments do not need to be included in moratorium.
 - g. Assess town zoning code for inconsistencies with existing plans
 - i. Grant is already in place to do so