

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

The Zoning Board of Appeals is a local judicial board that acts upon requests for variances from the Zoning Regulations or the Flood Plain Management Ordinance, as well as appeals of decisions of the Zoning Enforcement Officer in upholding those standards. In making its decisions regarding variances, the Board considers whether the circumstances of the property are unique such that they result in an exceptional difficulty or unusual hardship in meeting the standards that are otherwise uniform for all other properties in the same zoning district.

During the 2006-2007 fiscal year, the Board processed 39 applications, which is a diminished number of appeals from previous years. Whether this increase is due to the economic slump or other factors is unclear. Similar to previous years, the majority of the Board's applications have been for residential variance applications on undersized lots, particularly in beach communities where these lots' non-compliance with current zoning regulations logically limits additions, renovations or repairs to existing structures. The Board granted a number of variances to allow residents to demolish and rebuild residential structures in situations where non-conformities to the zoning regulations have been eliminated or reduced, code complaint septic systems have been installed, and the proposed new structures were designed to meet FEMA Coastal Construction practices. Many applications have been controversial and have had high levels of public participation. The Board welcomes the comments of neighbors during the public hearing process and appreciates their input.

As a result of the November 2007 elections, the ZBA welcomed a new full time member, Joan Strickland and two new alternates Wendy Farah and Brain Dooley. The Board wishes to thank Adam Stillman, Jan Fenger and Carl Garbe who left the Commission this fiscal year. The ZBA appreciates the time and effort that members voluntarily dedicate to the commission. We also acknowledge our most efficient recording clerk, Kim Barrows, who records our minutes and ensures that the Commission maintains parliamentary procedure.

The Zoning Board of Appeals meets the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at Pasbeshauke Pavilion at Saybrook Point.

Rexford McCall, Chairman