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Zone Change Could Change Face of Portland

by Michael McCoy

A major development project may loom in Portland's future if the developer can persuade the town to agree to a new mixed use zone.

The proposed zone would allow combined residential and commercial developments for parcels of ten acres or more.

Passage would allow a consortium called Portland Town Center to establish a 140,000 square foot \$40 million self-contained community on the old Elmcrest property on Route 66. Principal of Portland Town Center is developer Anthony Fonda.

The property, located at the southeast corner of the intersection between Routes 66 and Main Street, is currently used by the Rushford Center, which offers rehabilitation services to youths with addiction or other problems. Rushford's lease is set to expire later this year.

Portland Town Center hopes to develop the parcel with a mix including a bookstore, grocery store, office space, various restaurants and housing.

The property is currently zoned B-3, which translates to "central business." That means that virtually all of Portland Town Center's goals would be feasible under the regs, except for the housing component. Adding housing to all the other commercial and retail functions would require that it be deemed "mixed use."

Portland Town Center has requested a special permit, which would grant the mixed-use function. However, town officials noted that this change—if approved—would apply to all B1, B2, or B3 zones, and is not exclusive to this specific venture.

The Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC) conducted a public hearing on the matter on April 5. Attorney Peter Alter, legal counsel for Portland Town Center, made his case for the change.

Alter acknowledged the validity of concerns that go along with a project of this size. "Like most communities, you still have your town center to protect," he observed.

The proposal, he said, would provide more of a community center. The hous-

ing, presumably, would result in greater foot traffic.

By contrast, Alter pointed to drawbacks that have emerged in the built-up areas in the center of Glastonbury. The lack of mixed use in that area has resulted in an unforeseen problem: people don't live nearby and so there isn't as much traffic for the businesses, costing the area a certain vibrancy.

Commission members asked about the proportion of housing to commercial. Alter said the developer must come up with a complete plan, but noted the Portland project tentatively called for at least one square foot of residential property for every 5,000 square feet of commercial property.

Among the more fervent supporters of the proposal during the public comment session was Larry McHugh, President of the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce.

"Most towns in the state of Connecticut would literally die to get this kind of project," said McHugh. "The amount of taxes that this town will get for this project is substantial. Portland will be a leader in the state of Connecticut."

Chris Edge, a consultant working with Portland Economic Development Commission, concurred, "I think that this could be great for the community." [This week the Portland Economic Development Commission issued a statement unanimously supporting the mixed use change.]

One of the more controversial aspects of the proposal concerns the maximum "footprint" for a single retail entity.

When the PZC concluded its mammoth undertaking of producing a new Plan of Conservation and Development last year, they agreed on a 40,000 square foot maximum for retail structures. Portland Town Center, in their efforts to court a grocery store for the project, wants to expand the maximum to 65,000 square feet. A building of that size would be about the size of a major Stop & Shop.

There was also some concern about the residential/commercial mix. Frank Magnotta, a Portland resident and engineer by trade, wor-

ried, "I have never seen this mix of family dwellings and commercial property."

As for the expanded footprint, he observed, "If you're going to go to 65,000, you might as well eliminate the restriction completely."

Rick Sharr, owner of Tri Town Foods, observed that while the mixed use would technically be available to all qualifying entities, from a practical standpoint it would only benefit huge projects and concerns with major money. "I'd like to be the national chain who comes in and gets 65,000 square feet," he remarked.

Resident Susan Ellis Young challenged the PZC to not be bullied into changing the footprint limit. "You guys were so strong about this before. Don't roll over now. Stick to your guns," she said.

Rumors have circulated that this project will in fact include a Stop & Shop. Attorney Alter denied that any specific store has been selected. While a grocery store was certainly a goal for the project, Stop and Shop was not currently in the picture, he said.

Alter also talked up the potential benefits of the project. "If you drove into Portland right now, you'd be hard pressed to park your car and meet more than one need," he remarked. Alter sees the Portland Town Center as an opportunity for "one-stop shopping."

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield has offered her support, declaring, "I'm looking forward to the process. I think it's a good thing for the town."

On the one hand, the project would presumably contribute greatly to the local tax base. On the other hand, a large store such as a Stop & Shop would inevitably have an effect on local businesses, including the two primary grocery stores in town—Tri Town Foods and Portland Market.

As for the Rushford Center, their Portland facility has leased the Elmcrest property for the past three years. After June 30 of this year, their lease will be renewed on a month-by-month basis. Their Portland campus treats 13-17 year-olds facing substance abuse problems or behavioral health issues.

Amy Hickey, Director of Business Development and Community Relations for Rushford, hoped to be able to stay at the current location as long as possible and said, "We have been looking for a place to relocate the program."

April 5's PZC hearing on the issue will be continued to May 3 at 7 p.m. in the Buck-Foreman Room, 265 Main St.

Marlborough Arts Festival to be Held May 5

by Sarah McCoy

It has become an annual event to kick off spring in Marlborough. Yes, the Marlborough Art Fest is back and bigger than ever.

The festival, which is in its third year, will be held on Saturday, May 5 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Town Green. The Marlborough Arts Center and Museum, or MAC&M has hosted the event each year with proceeds going to the group's building project.

The nonprofit organization is wrapping up construction on a community arts center at 236 North Main St.. The project began in 1999 and should be completed some time this summer.

Next Saturday over 40 artists will promote the mission of MAC&M as they display and sell their work.

"One great thing about this year's artists are the variation in types of artwork," MAC&M Vice-President Judy Friday said. "We had to turn away a great deal of artists to maintain the variety we wanted."

Next weekend artists will descend on Marlborough from all across New England, sharing their individual talents. There will be quilters, jewelers, painters, sculptors, potters, glass blowers, and so much more.

While most will travel great distances for the Art Fest, the show will also feature the work of local artists.

Leah Miner, owner and operator of It's So Ranunculus Flower Shoppe in Marlborough, will take her talent across the street next weekend. She will have a booth set-up to display and teach the principles of floral design.

"It isn't what comes to mind when people think of art, but flowers, themselves, are a natural work of art and the arrangement of them can be absolutely breathtaking," she said of her craft.

Miner, who is originally from East Hampton, took floral design classes in Chicago only to return home an open It's So Ranunculus last year. She has never taken part in an art show, but is eager for the opportunity.

Another first-time art show participant is Hebron artist John Chesnes. Chesnes, now a

retired teacher, is a wood carver specializing in the Norwegian Acanthus style. There are ornate details in each of his pieces that range from serving dishes and bowls to accent frames and display shelves.

Chesnes has been carving for most of his life. "I got my first scar when I was four," he reported proudly. About 11 years ago the Hebron native decided to take a formal class and found his passion in the intricacies of Norwegian Acanthus woodcarving.

"I don't really know what to expect next weekend," said Chesnes. "But, I hope to meet nice people and enjoy good weather. If we have both of those, it will be a successful weekend."

Last year the Art Fest drew hundreds of visitors and this year the projections are much higher. In 2006, about 20 artists participated in the Art Fest. This year the number has doubled.

"Our plan is to move [the Art Fest] to Blish Park next year for space and parking reasons. We'd love to see it develop into what the MCA Fair used to be," MAC&M Treasurer Betty O'Brien said.

The MCA, or Marlborough Community Arts, Fair was an annual event in town that ended about 15 years ago. Artists, organizations, and businesses, would gather at Blish Park to sell artwork, food and distribute information.

"We want this to be an event that the whole town looks forward to," said Friday.

The way it looks, the MAC&M Art Fest isn't far from that point. The group has a partnership with the Marlborough Country Barn. Each year the show coincides with the Barn's warehouse sale, enabling residents easy access to both events. Food will also be available as the Marlborough Democrats and Republicans are banding together to set up a booth.

Parking for the Art Fest will be available at the Marlborough Town Hall and Dr. Hine's office. In case of rain, the show will be postponed to May 6.

For more information about the Art Fest and MAC&M, as a whole, please visit their website: www.marlboroughtarts.org



A new restaurant, The Pepper Barn, will open this weekend at 11 Hayward St. in Colchester. The restaurant offers breakfast options as well as soups, salads, sandwiches, and drink specialties.

Old Barn Transformed Into Town's Newest Eatery

by Sarah McCoy

Set back from the road, the red barn at 11 Hayward Ave. has been easy to miss. Falling into disrepair, the almost 200-year-old structure's future looked grim.

That is until 2005 when local contractor Aaron Tyler purchased the barn and the main building at the front of the property.

This weekend will mark an auspicious occasion as the historical Colchester landmark returns to use as The Pepper Barn—the town's newest dining spot.

Owned and operated by Jennifer and Scott Elsdon, The Pepper Barn's motto is "All About Food." There may be no better way to put it as guests are treated to a variety of eat-in and take-out options.

"There is really no place in town to go with your kids except pizza and Chinese," Jennifer remarked. "I wanted a family-oriented place that offered more options."

When The Pepper Barn opens this weekend, guests will be treated to everything from breakfast sandwiches and bagels to gourmet wraps, soups, and salads. And then there are the drinks. For the caffeine lovers, The Pepper Barn will offer a wide variety of hot and frozen drinks. Then there are fresh fruit smoothies, Jones sodas, and an array of teas.

Jennifer said she has taken a "half and half approach" with half the food being organic, low-fat breakfast and lunch options and the other half being food that just tastes good.

For Jennifer, the road to The Pepper Barn has been long. A former ING employee, she never felt comfortable in an office. With her husband's support, she left ING for the Johnson and Wales College of Culinary Arts.

Following graduation, she worked as a chef at Todd English's Tuscan Restaurant. Elsdon then moved to a management position with Garlic and Herbs, a catering company out of Westport.

Having gotten her feet wet in the food industry, Jennifer wanted her own place.

That's where Aaron Tyler came in.

For 22 years Tyler has been doing contract work, mainly for medical facilities. In fact, he purchased the barn on Hayward Avenue with the intention of converting it to a doctor's office. But when that fell through, Tyler decided to raze the structure. At that point, with a demolition permit already in hand, Tyler was approached with another idea.

Jennifer, who lives in Colchester, drove past the building and immediately fell in love with it. She persuaded Tyler to transform it into a restaurant.

Now, instead of whitewashed walls and exam rooms, The Pepper Barn has become an earth-toned eatery for anyone with an appetite.

Downstairs customers can place their order for a cranberry apple chicken wrap or a pas-trami reuben panini. The Pepper Barn will happily package any meal for those on the go. But, guests with a little more time will enjoy the

ambiance upstairs at The Pepper Barn.

Tables and comfy chairs fill the second floor. There is toy section for kids, cards and games for families, and a wireless Internet connection for those needing to be slightly more productive.

Upstairs there is also an array of non-perishable food items and artwork for purchase a la Cracker Barrel. The Pepper Barn will even create customized gift baskets full of cheeses, crackers, oils, baked goods, or any number of treats.

The process of turning the barn into a restaurant wasn't easy. "When we first got here there was a tree growing through the roof of the building," Tyler reported.

But it has been a labor of love for the contractor and his crew. "I've always said that almost anybody can build a new building. It is challenging to do a reconstruction," said Tyler.

One of the first things done to the building was straighten it out. Tyler's crew jacked the entire structure up and then tilted the foundation in place. Once straight, the siding was replaced and a new roof was installed.

Part of the difficulty in restoring the old barns comes from the balance of old and new. As a historic property, Tyler had to keep the building historically accurate. But this was a guideline he was happy to follow.

"They just don't build things like this anymore," he said patting the structure beams. The post and beam method of construction combined with the granite foundation translates into an incredibly sturdy structure.

But barn/restaurant is more than a modern business in an older building. Much of the character that existed when the barn was built in 1820 has been restored and used to create a one-of-a-kind ambiance. When customers enter The Pepper Barn they will do so through the building's original doors. When diners look up on the second floor they will see the cupola that adorns the building's roof. Tyler tried to preserve as much of the barn as possible.

He calls this latest project one of his favorites in his 22-years of work. "It is a beautiful building and each day you encounter new situations that make you think," he explained. "With every wall you tear down, you wonder what you might uncover."

Earlier this year Tyler unearthed newspapers from the mid-1700s. And, one of his crewmembers found a penny worth \$700.

The reconstruction process has made Tyler consider other similar projects. Currently he is considering renovating an old home in Wethersfield. "This whole experience has been great and the final product is one of a kind," he said.

The Pepper Barn, located at 11 Hayward Ave., will open this weekend. Normal business hours will be Monday-Sunday from 6:30am to 8:00pm. For more information, the restaurant can be reached at (860) 537-7709.

Matching Gifts Provide Boost for Upcoming AHM Telethon

The 17th Annual AHM Youth Services Telethon has received a major boost with the announcement of two matching gifts from local families.

The Corl family of Andover and the Wooster family of Hebron have joined forces to offer a unique donation that will match every new dollar raised for the telethon up to a combined total of \$10,000.

Patricia Morency, the chair for the 2007 Telethon, expressed her gratitude for the generosity of the two families, saying they "are two shining examples of how local residents passionately feel about AHM Youth Services. The outpouring of support for the youth service bureau is further evidence of the compassion that local neighbors have for their fellow citizens."

Organizers are calling the upcoming telethon the most important fundraiser in the history of the regional youth service bureau.

The Andover Telethon for AHM will take place on May 1, 2 and 3. The Hebron Telethon for AHM will take place on April 30, May 1, 2 and 3. The Marlborough Telethon for AHM will take place on April 26 and 30 and then again on May 2 and 3.

Volunteers will be calling neighbors from each one of the three town halls. Volunteer callers are still needed to make sure all of the lines are operating during the week of the Telethon.

Anyone interested in volunteering for the AHM Telethon can call 228-9488.

The 2007 AHM Telethon will be chaired by Patricia Morency of Hebron, the past president and current vice president of the AHM Board of Directors.

Town captains have also been named for this year's Telethon. In Andover, Marisa Giannella-Porco and Dianne Grenier will serve as co-captains. In Hebron Cindi Lynch, Anne Emt, and Joleen Yorio will serve as tri-captains. In Marlborough Craig Williams will serve as captain with the assistance of Kathy Eastman, Eileen Tofil and Barbara Meyer.

The goal for this year's Telethon is to raise \$60,000. This goal would allow present services to continue.

AHM is one of 99 youth service bureaus in Connecticut. The regional nonprofit bureau was formed by a group of local citizens in 1983. The vast majority of youth service bureaus in Connecticut are funded directly through a single municipality. The towns of Andover, Hebron, and Marlborough presently provide 30% of the revenue needed for the regional youth service bureau to operate.

For more information about Andover, Hebron, Marlborough Youth Services, Inc. visit www.AHMYouth.org or call 228-9488.

Hebron Board of Finance Offers Compromise Budget

by Sarah McCoy

Compromise allowed the Hebron budget to move forward last week.

The compromise didn't please any of the Hebron Board of Finance members. But they all agreed, it was probably for the best.

An overall budget increase of 6.6% will now come before voters at the referendum on May 8. This includes a 6.16% increase to the local Board of Education budget, an overall 5.1% increase to the RHAM budget, and a 6.05% increase to the General Government budget.

Going into the public hearing last Monday, the Board of Finance (BOF) had failed to agree on a budget recommendation. At the time, the overall increase stood at 6.84% with all seven members agreeing on every aspect of the \$31 million budget except one: General Government.

Earlier this month the General Government budget called for an 8.3% increase.

During their April 9 meeting, the Board of Finance failed to agree on a cut, leaving the 8.3% number for residents to comment on at the public hearing.

About 60 members of the public came to voice their opinion last Monday, most in favor of the Board of Education's budget and in support of a requested full-time position at the Fire Department. Three residents expressed their feelings that taxes are too high in Hebron.

"I can't, for the life of me, understand how you spend your money," Edward O'Leary stated to the BOF Monday night. "When I ask myself, what services am I paying for? I'm left scratching my head. I don't think this budget is fiscally responsible."

Finance board chairman Brendan Shea didn't go as far as O'Leary, but he did express agitation in the General Government budget. At Tuesday night's meeting he pushed for a \$120,000 cut to bring the General Government budget under the education budget..

He got his wish. Sort of.

The 8.3% increase to the General Government budget did not show the almost \$50,000

that the town will receive in reimbursements.

Hebron will receive \$30,300 in reimbursement for the purchase of a new senior van and another \$18,742 from the Lion's Club after the Hebron Harvest Fair. Once these two items are accounted for, the real dollar increase is 7.35%.

To bring the increase down even further, the BOF unanimously supported a \$70,000 cut to the budget. This brings the total increase down to 6.05%, below the 6.16% increase proposed for the Board of Education budget. Because the Board of Finance doesn't have line item control, they could only recommend that it come from the General Government portion of the budget.

The Board of Selectmen will decide where this reduction is realized. It could come out of General Government, Open Space or Capital Projects.

"My fear is that we are just showing an accounting move to hide numbers," said Shea Tuesday night.

BOF member Michael Hazel, who is an accountant by profession, said this method actually discloses more to voters. "We're not being deceptive. We are showing a more accurate number," he said.

The Board of Finance also unanimously supported the \$875,000 Capital Improvement Plan budget. All expressed interest in seeing more money allocated to these projects in the future.

Voters will have a chance to express their feelings on the CIP issue at next month's referendum. There will be an advisory question asking residents if they would support increasing the CIP budget. This year the CIP Committee had \$2 million of requests and only \$875,000 to dole out.

The agenda for the May 3 Board of Selectmen meeting has not been finalized but Town Manager Jared Clark said the board would most likely discuss where the \$70,000 reduction would come from. Voters will have their say on May 8. The polls will be open from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. at the Hebron Elementary School.

Andover Finance Board Holds Budget Hearing

by Jim Salemi

The 35 or so residents on hand at Andover's budget hearing last Wednesday night were generally receptive to the approximately \$10 million combined school and town budgets.

Much of the discussion focused on a proposed raise for the first selectman and concern about removal of a raise for the town clerk.

Some residents also expressed concern that the proposed increase was too high.

The totals are only approximate because of a number of typos for some of the figures in the budget.

Residents will have the opportunity to send the budget to referendum at the annual town meeting, scheduled for Thursday, May 10. The budget referendum will be held Tuesday, May 22.

The \$10,083,710.82 bottom line figure represents a projected \$687,000 increase in spending over current year spending.

The \$10 million proposed spending package includes the town operating budget as well as the two schools in Andover's school district—Andover Elementary School and RHAM middle and high school.

The local school is requesting a \$3.8 million budget for the next fiscal year, representing approximately 4% over current year spending. The town operations budget request is \$2.4 million, \$386,000 over current year spending. The payment for Andover's share of the RHAM budget as it stands now is \$3.86 million.

Finance board Chairman Steven Reade explained some of the reasons for the increase.

"Our largest increases are utilities and gasoline and diesel. Those prices skyrocketed. Insurance is up \$19,000...roads, one of our biggest priorities, we set aside \$81,000."

While residents were generally receptive to the figure floated by the finance board—or if they had any objections they kept them to themselves—there were questions about specific line items.

Resident Bob Wanagel, a longtime advocate for seniors and senior services, asked why once again money to pave the old firehouse parking lot had not been included in the proposed budget—a question he also asks regularly at Board of Selectmen meetings.

Reade told Wanagel that the quote to install a water drainage system in conjunction with the work came in at over \$15,000.

"It's not the paving, but the associated drainage that is the problem," he said. "We started looking for grant money to do the paving and talked to Edith and Pam (state Sen. Edith Prague and state Rep. Pam Sawyer), and they're seeing if we can replace or remodel the entire

firehouse, where the paving and drainage improvements would be included."

A number of residents questioned a \$10,000-plus raise for the first selectman.

Reade explained that present First Selectman Bob Burbank has been working full time as first selectman; has been working as clerk of the works for the town hall expansion project; and has been doing all his own clerical work since he does not have a secretary or administrative assistant.

"As I understand it he's been putting in 50-60 hours a week because he doesn't have an assistant," said Reade. "If an assistant was hired it would mean another position with salary and benefits in excess of \$35,000."

He added that the raise would bring the town's first selectman's salary—currently at \$37,080—more in line with towns of similar size and demographics.

"That projection is still low...we thought it was reasonable that the first selectman's salary equal the base pay of the highest paid full time town employee," he said. The highest paid employee in town is currently the town's road crew foreman.

Burbank was then afforded a chance to justify his request, pointing to a number of grants that saved the town thousands of dollars, and managed to upgrade the town's bond rating to 'A' status, which commands better interest rates if the town has to borrow money.

"Am I worth it? That's for you to decide," he told residents.

Another resident questioned the fairness of the first selectman's raise.

"The town clerk's requested raise was taken out months ago and the [imposed special tax] killed us. This is not a year to be raising salaries," another resident commented.

Wanagel suggested that the discussion of salaries was not appropriate for that particular hearing.

"This dispute about wages is unfair. Out of 2,000 registered voters, there are maybe 35 people here, a poor representation of the town. I've been advocating to people, 'Come to the meetings,'" he said.

The comment struck a chord with Reade.

"Can you repeat that please, Bob. I want to make sure the reporters got that."

After the hearing the finance board restored the town clerk's requested raise in the budget. The clerk currently earns \$33,164. According to the original proposal, the raise would be about \$3,000.

The finance board will now correct the typos and make the other adjustments to it.

Colchester Budget Proposal Evokes Little Public Reaction

by Jim Salemi

Despite a \$2.2 million proposed increase in next year's \$48 million budget, residents have so far expressed little public concern about the plan.

The total figure includes a \$33.8 million proposed school budget and the \$14.1 million town budget, which includes \$5 million in debt service and capital projects.

The budget referendum will be held Tuesday, May 15, at the town hall between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Most concerns verbalized at a hearing last week had to do with technical issues involving specific line items rather than the overall proposed increase.

Resident Betsy Ciccone, who also serves on the Board of Education, asked about the status of a lawsuit that is holding up the construction of a shopping plaza in town—a project expected to generate additional tax dollars for the town.

First Selectman Stan Soby said final briefs by both sides of the suit have been filed and the judge presiding over the suit is close to making his decision.

"We're looking at land to identify as a business park in that same area," he said, the "area" being Parum Road near Fedus Road.

Resident John Fedus filed suit against the town years ago trying to stop the project, claiming that drainage from the plaza will impact his farm which is just across the street from the plaza.

Finance Board Chairman Bruce Hayn said that even if the judge made his ruling in the immediate future, the town would not see any revenue generated from the property for two years.

Like every other municipality in the state, Colchester schools as well as the town side are seeing some of the largest increases in energy.

Soby told residents on hand for the hearing—about 40 in all—that he recently formed a committee to identify areas where the town and school could cut costs.

"We have a number of members who are engineers in the business. This is what they do for a living. They'll be conducting walk-

throughs soon," he said.

Soby said he hopes the town can enjoy a 30% reduction in its fuel and energy consumption, though admitting that figure is optimistic.

Another matter of contention for the town is recent legislation requiring soundproofing standards for portable classrooms. The school district is set to use portable buildings removed from the former elementary school to alleviate space problems at the high school.

Hayn said the legislation was passed at the final hour of the session, despite expert testimony that the standards are impossible to meet.

"Rep. Orange and Sen. Dailey are working on it," he said, meaning that they are drawing up special legislation to introduce in June, when the legislature takes up special bills.

The town had already gone through the approval process. If it failed to comply, the district stands to lose almost \$550,000 in state reimbursements for the relocation project.

Residents commented on the proposed budget after a lengthy presentation by Schools Superintendent Karen Loiselle.

Loiselle said the driving factors of the budget increase include increased costs for fuel and energy as well as raises for district teachers.

Loiselle said the Board of Education discussed and approved raises for teachers. Loiselle said that she learned in exit interviews that teachers were leaving for better offers from other school districts.

The school budget also calls for a number of new positions, including a traffic agent, facility security, the reinstatement of middle school sports and the elimination of "pay to play."

For this year's referendum, all voting will take place at the town hall, despite the fact the town was recently been divided into districts. There will, however, be three separate voting areas at the town hall representing the three districts.

Voters will vote on one figure—the total of both the town and school district budgets. While voters approved the separation of the two budgets in a series of questions on town charter changes last November, that will not go into effect until next year's budget referendum.

Portland EDC Endorses Mixed Use Zone Proposal

The Portland Economic Development Commission (EDC) this week issued a statement endorsing a special permit application for a zone change to allow mixed use developments.

While the EDC did not mention a specific proposal, a special permit application for such a zone change has been filed to develop the Elmcrest property on Route 66 with a mix of commercial and residential construction.

EDC Chairman Fred Knous said adoption of the special permit regulation would make the town more attractive to business developers while allowing the Planning & Zoning Commission "to ensure Portland's interests are protected."

Knous said, "After reviewing the special permit application for a zone change to allow mixed use developments (MUDS), the commission unanimously endorses the special permit application. We are confident that the applica-

tion provides the Planning & Zoning Commission with sufficient oversight authority and the ability to ascertain that any future mixed use developments will enhance both the appearance and Grand List of the town."

The Portland Economic Development Commission's main role is to assist and promote existing commerce in town and encourage appropriate commercial, retail and industrial development.

"Such development is crucial to expand the tax base and provide jobs for local residents," noted the EDC in a news release announcing its endorsement of the zone change request. "Failure to expand our tax base will result in a continual shift to residential homeowners to assume a higher tax burden. Local residents are already facing skyrocketing energy and utility costs, along with higher insurance and health care costs."



Hampton Watson from H. W. General Construction in Middletown adjusts the forms for concrete footings for the Portland Veterans Memorial. All work was donated.

Construction Begins on Portland Veterans Memorial

Construction has begun on the Portland Veterans Memorial.

Early Monday morning a group of contractors started work on the foundation for the memorial behind the flagpole at the Town Hall on East Main Street.

The first to show up was Mike Brown with his backhoe from Valli Construction. Within an hour he had excavated a large hole in the ground for the footing.

Shortly thereafter, Hampton Watson from H. W. General Construction in Middletown went to work in the pit, putting together forms for the concrete footings.

By late afternoon, American Concrete Pumping from Portland had a machine on site and a short time later L. Suzio Concrete Company from Meriden had a concrete mixer ready with a load of readymix. Half an hour later the foot-

ings were finished.

First thing Tuesday morning, Watson was back on the job with a load of concrete forms and after stripping the footing forms he started work on the foundation walls. Again in the afternoon American Concrete Pumping and Suzio Concrete were on the job and within minutes the walls that will support the three granite slabs for the memorial were in place.

All the labor and materials for this part of the memorial were donated by the firms that did the work (installation of the memorial stones was not included in the \$55,000 cost of the memorial).

So far the American Legion in Portland has raised \$52,000 for the project with only \$3,000 left to go. Donations can be mailed to The Portland Veterans Memorial Fund, P.O. Box 161 Portland, CT 06480.

Colchester Police News

4/23—Police will be conducting a sobriety checkpoint on Friday, April 27 on Route 16 at Cabin Road.

4/19—Colchester police seized over four ounces of marijuana following an investigation into a one-car accident on Route 16 near Waterhole Road.

Police arrested Andrew Aultman, 26, of 237 Old New London Rd., Salem, and charged him with possession of more than four ounces of marijuana, possession of marijuana with intent to sell, possession of paraphernalia, speeding, making an improper turn and following too closely, according to reports.

Aultman was released on a \$5,000 non-surety bond and is scheduled to appear in court on May 10, police said.

4/20—Alden Hendrickson, 21, of Columbia was arrested for possession of marijuana, possession of paraphernalia and failure to wear a seat belt, according to reports.

4/23—Police are investigating burglaries into two cars parked at the Airline Trail trail head at Bull Hill Road. Miscellaneous items were reported stolen, according to police.

Andover Police News

4/17—Peter Krzywicki was arrested on a warrant for 6th degree larceny, according to reports.

Marlborough Police News

4/19—Elizabeth Boyce, 48, of 21 Roberts Rd., was arrested for DUI, police said.

4/22—Police are investigating a small forest fire near the Salmon River fishing area on South Main Street, according to reports.

Hebron Police News

4/21—Jeremy J. Burns, 19, of 46 Hemlock Dr., Marlborough, was arrested for DWI and traveling too fast for conditions, according to reports.

East Hampton Woman Injured

An East Hampton woman was seriously injured Saturday, April 21 after being struck by a delivery truck.

Constance Labella, 63, of 9 West High St., was struck by the truck at about 9:25 a.m. on Route 66 at the intersection of Main Street. She sustained serious injuries, said police, and was transported to Saint Francis Hospital by Life Star helicopter.

The driver of the truck was John Grice, 34, of Uncasville. He was not injured.

The accident is under investigation. No charges have been filed.

Obituaries

Colchester

Loren W. Marvin

Loren W. Marvin, 85, husband of the late Martha Johnson Marvin of Pierce Ln., passed away Thursday, April 19, in Colchester. He was born on June 9, 1921, son of the late Dwight H. and Celia Rathbone Marvin.

He was the past president/treasurer of D.H. Marvin & Son Inc. He served in the U.S. Army Air Corps and was a veteran of World War II.

Loren had 20 years of service as the chairman on the Board of the Water Commissioners, in the Borough of Colchester. He had 12 years as the First Selectman, plus four years on the Board of Selectmen, and also served on the Board of Directors - Colchester Business Association. He was a lifetime member of the Colchester Hayward Fire Department and served 25 years as their treasurer.

Loren was the former incorporator of the Farmers & Mechanics Bank, past president of New England Farm and Power Equipment Dealers Association, past Board of Directors of the Multi-State Equipment Dealers Association; the treasurer of the Cragin Memorial Library for ten years, a member of Colchester Water Pollution Authority, and member of Colchester Utilities Commission, president of Linwood Cemetery Association, Deacon Emeritus, Colchester Federated Church, member of Nathan Hale chapter of S.A.R., a member of the American Legion Post 54 of Colchester and a long-time member of the Studebaker Drivers Club.

Surviving are two sons and their wives, Keith and Sheryl Marvin of Palm Coast, FL, Robert and Nancy Marvin of Atkinson, NH; a daughter and her husband, Eleanor and Dale Keller of Colchester; two brothers, Bing Marvin, and Reynold Marvin of Colchester; three sisters, Cecelia Rogers and Frances Brown of Colchester and Flora Gustafson of Columbia; seven grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by a brother, Dwight Marvin; and two sisters, Edith Congdon and Carolyn Marvin.

Funeral services were held on Tuesday, April 24, at the Colchester Federated Church, 60 Main St., with Rev. Linda Barnes officiating. Interment was in Linwood Cemetery with full military honors. Visitation was Monday evening, April 23 at the Belmont Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., Colchester. Memorial donations may be made to the Colchester Hayward Fire Department or to the Colchester Federated Church.

East Hampton

Francis Reilly Coughlin

Francis Reilly Francis Reilly Coughlin, 85, the oldest native resident of Middle Haddam, born June 24, 1921, passed away peacefully on Monday, April 23. He was predeceased by his loving wife of 53 years, Rita Sweeney Coughlin.

A veteran of the United States Army, he served in the European Theatre in World War II. A master craftsman, carpenter and millwright, his talents had no limits. After his retirement from CT Carpenters Union Local #24, he continued to work at the Portland Boat Works for many years.

He is survived by a large, loving family including his four daughters, Rita C. and Rockford Gibbons, Denise C. Painter, Anne C. and Red McKinney, Catherine C. and William Holmes; grandchildren, Sarah Gibbons, Steven Gibbons, Reilly Painter Cargan, Mairead Painter Phillips, Kenneth Painter, Jr., Katherine Painter, Kevin Painter, Brian Painter, Moranda Painter, Tighe Painter, Tiffany Painter, Nicodemus Painter, Charles Painter, Shannon McKinney Roy, Taren McKinney, Kirsten McKinney, Ryan McKinney, and Sean Kelly Holmes; six great-grandchildren; his brother and sister-in-law, Bernard and Patricia Coughlin of Middle Haddam; and numerous nieces and nephews, too many to name, and you know who you are. He had a special relationship with his nieces and nephews "on the hill." Due to his unique sense of humor, many lovingly knew him as "Uncle Smiley."

He was predeceased by his son-in-law, Kenneth "Duke" Painter, Sr., brother, Dennis Coughlin, and sister, Elizabeth McLean.

Relatives and friends were invited to call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton on Wednesday, April 25. The funeral proces-

sion left the Spencer Funeral Home Thursday followed by a Funeral Liturgy at St. Patrick Church, 47 West High St., Rt 66, East Hampton. The Reverend Charles R. LeBlanc, Pastor was the celebrant. Burial with military honors followed in St. Patrick Cemetery, East Hampton. Friends wishing may make memorial contributions to charity of donor's choice.

Colchester

Edwin Rutka

Edwin Rutka, 86, of Colchester passed into eternal life Sunday evening, April 22, at his residence. Born May 8, 1920 in Colchester, he was a son to the late Anthony and Sophie (Tarnowski) Rutka, Sr.

Mr. Rutka was a proud veteran of World War II serving in the U.S. Army with the Army Amphibian Engineers. He was a self-employed master carpenter known for his expert craftsmanship. Mr. Rutka's love for his trade extended well beyond his workshop.

Professionally, he was contracted by the former Schuster Express Trucking Co. for over 25 years. Personally Mr. Rutka was the major force behind the construction of the St. Joseph Polish Club and the renovation of the Colchester Farmers Club.

He was an active member of the St. Andrew R.C. Church in Colchester and had built a scale replica of the old St. Andrews Church for the Colchester 300th Anniversary several years ago.

He was married on Oct. 30, 1954 to the late Jane (Huron) Rutka. Mrs. Rutka passed away on Oct. 2, 2002. Mr. Rutka was a Charter member of the Colchester Lions Club, a member of the V.F.W. Adler Boluck post #6990 and the American Legion Donald Bigelow Post #54.

Surviving is a son, Ronald Rutka of Colchester; a daughter, Nancy and husband, Jack Wissler of Colchester; a sister, Helen and husband, Oscar Rozett of Port St. Lucie, FL; two grandsons, John and wife, Stephanie Wissler and Scott and wife, Erin Wissler; a great grandson, Owen Wissler; and numerous nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by three brothers, Leo, Anthony Jr., and Joseph; and two sisters, Anna Mansfield and Mary Trouton.

Funeral services were held Wednesday morning from the Belmont Funeral Home, 144 S. Main St., Colchester followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at the St. Andrew R.C. Church, Colchester. Interment with full military honors was in the St. Joseph Cemetery, Colchester. Calling hours were Tuesday evening.

Those wishing to make memorial contributions may do so to the Colchester Hayward Fire Dept., 52 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, CT 06415.

Portland

Jane F. Rich

Jane Frances Rich, 90, of Indian Hill Ave., Portland, died Sunday, April 22, in Hartford Hospital. Born in Lynn, MA, June 19, 1916, a daughter of the late James E. and Margaret J. Lee Rich, she had been a Portland resident since 1942.

She was a graduate of Lynn English High School in 1934, and graduated from the University of New Hampshire with a bachelor's degree in 1938. She earned her master's degree in Education in 1940 and had taught at Maine West Lebanon Academy until coming to Portland. She taught science and biology and later became Director of Guidance at Portland Junior High School until her retirement in 1977.

She was the recipient of the Alumni Meritorious Service Award in 1964 and had been an active member of the UNH Alumni and former Director of the Greater Hartford UNH Alumni Group. She was a member of the Alpha Xi Delta National Sorority and a life member of the Connecticut Education Association and the National Education Association. She was a member and former Legislative Chairman of the Connecticut Education Association representing Middlesex County, and a member and former president of the Portland Education Association. She had served on the Board of Directors of the Middlesex Schools Federal Credit Union.

She was a member and former president of the Brownstone Chapter of AARP. While a teacher at PHS, she was the band manager of the high school band serving under the director, Eric Osterling. She organized the band Booster Club, a very active

group of parents who worked to provide uniforms and contribute to the cost of band trips.

She was also a parishioner and former lector at the Church of Saint Mary as well as a member of the Ladies Guild.

She is survived by her niece Jayne E. Roy; her grandniece Lauren M. Campbell; her grandnephews Paul C. Roy and Neil J. Roy; and her great-grandnieces Brittany Campbell and Erica Roy and her great-grandnephew Jimmy Campbell. She was predeceased by her sister Margaret Kellett; her nephew J. Richard Kellett; and her dear special friend James J. Csere.

Calling hours will were Wednesday evening in the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Funeral services were Thursday morning from the Portland Memorial Home with a Mass of Christian Burial in the Church of Saint Mary. Interment will be today (Friday, April 27) at 11 a.m. in St. Mary Cemetery in Lynn, MA.

In lieu of flowers, gifts in Jane's memory may be sent to the Church of Saint Mary, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland, CT 06480.

Colchester

Mildred E. Lanier

Mildred E. (Chase) Lanier, 73, of Middletown, formerly of Colchester, died Sunday, April 22, at Middlesex Memorial Hospital, Middletown. She was born in Cleveland, OH, and was a longtime resident of Colchester before moving to Middletown several years ago.

Mildred is survived by her companion William Smith, of Middletown; her son Phillip Parrell and his wife Patricia, of Jewett City; her brother Robert Chase, of Ohio; her twin sister Margaret Dalbec of Arizona; two grandchildren; several great-grandchildren; and several nieces, nephews and dear friends.

Funeral services were held Thursday morning from the Newington Memorial Funeral Home, 20 Bonair Ave., Newington, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial in Church of the Holy Spirit, Newington. Interment was in West Meadow Cemetery, Newington. Calling hours were Wednesday at the funeral home.

Memorial donations may be made to the CT Humane Society, 701 Russell Rd., Newington, CT 06111 or to a charity of the donor's choice.

Hebron

Dorothy C. Haydash

Dorothy C. Haydash, died April 14. She was born in Wethersfield to Adolph and Anna Carlson of July 16, 1916. She was raised and lived her life in West Hartford until ten years ago when she moved to Hebron to live with her daughter.

She married Edward J. Haydash on November 8, 1941 and spent the next 57 years together until Edward's death in 1998.

She is survived by her children, Edward J. Jr. and his wife Sylvia of Manassas, VA., Joseph and his wife Judy of Enfield, and her daughter Gail Pasquell and her husband James of Hebron. She leaves nine grandchildren and eight great grandchildren. Besides her husband, she was predeceased by her son John and her devoted canine companion, Max, who gave her many hours of unconditional love and companionship. She was a 50 year member of the First Church of Christ Congregational in West Hartford.

A Memorial Service will be held on Saturday, May 5, at 11 a.m. at First Church of Christ Congregational, 12 South Main St., West Hartford. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Russell Mercier Senior Center, 14 Stonecroft Dr., Hebron, CT 06248

Hebron

John Weisel

John "Jack" Weisel passed away Sunday, April 15, at his home in Hampstead, NC. After leaving Wall Street and friends in Hebron, he moved to North Carolina, where he was an avid surf fisherman at Topsail Beach. He is now with his well loved Piper; as well as Glen, Wayne, Dennis, Brian, Kathy and the rest of the gang. To remember him are his wife, Diane; beloved daughter Shain; trusted son-in-law Nolan; and his granddaughter, Becca, who had his heart wrapped around her little finger. "We had a grand time watching the river run..."

Marlborough

Doris Dubiel

Doris (Young) Dubiel, 89, of Johnson Rd., Marlborough, passed away peacefully Wednesday, April 18, at Salmon Brook Nursing & Rehabilitation Center, Glastonbury.

Born November 5, 1917, in Hartford she was the daughter of the late Louis A. and Marie T. (Bergmann) Young. Doris moved to Marlborough in 1982 having formerly resided in East Hartford. Before her retirement she was employed by the Phoenix Mutual Insurance, Hartford. Doris was a member of the Connecticut Society of Genealogists and the Marlborough Seniors.

She is survived by her daughter, Denise B. Donze and her husband Alan of Marlborough; a son, Clifford Dubiel and his wife Lea of Spring Hill, FL; three grandsons, Paul, Michael and Jo-

seph Dubiel; three great-grandchildren, John Paul, Samantha and Caitlin. She was predeceased by two brothers Chester and Robert Young.

A memorial service was held on Tuesday, April 24, at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Burial was in St. Peter's Cemetery, Hebron. Calling hours were at the funeral home Tuesday morning prior to the service.

Memorial donations may be made to American Diabetes Association, 306 Industrial Park Rd, Suite 105, Middletown 06457

Hebron

Gilbert D. Negro

Gilbert D. Negro, 78, of Hebron, the husband of Dail (Converse) Negro died Wednesday, April 18, at Harrington Court in Colchester. Born in Manchester he was the son of Joseph and Leontina Negro.

Gil began working on his grandparent's farm in Manchester as a youngster; later he worked at the Bolton Dairy with his parents and brothers. He also owned the Bolton Lakehouse, worked for the Ernest Reed Construction Company and after retirement worked at Blackledge Country Club.

Gil's grandchildren were the love of his life. He loved going to their ballgames, fishing, playing checkers, riding on the golf cart and building things out of wood with them. He also enjoyed going to Dunkin Donuts with his friends and traveling to Florida and Maine.

Besides his wife he is survived by his children and their spouses, Karen Conderino and her husband Phil of Willington, Kathy Mund and her husband Randy of Hebron, James Beckwith and his wife Cindy of Bolton, Steven Beckwith of Vernon, and Deborah Barrett and her husband Roger of Bolton; his grandchildren, Amber and her husband John, Michele, Dan, Kim and her husband Jason, Jimmy, Roger, Michelle, Josh and Erica; and his great-grandchildren, Kelly and Tyler. He is also survived by his brothers, Raymond Negro and his wife Maureen, and George Negro; and many nieces and nephews.

Gil's family would like to offer a special thanks to Dr. Reale and all of the nurses at the DeQuattro Community Cancer Center and to all of the nurses at the AMU for all of their love and support.

Calling hours were Monday evening at the John F. Tierney Funeral Home, 219 West Center St., Manchester. Burial will be private and at the convenience of the family. In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to the John A. DeQuattro Community Cancer Center, 73-A Haynes St., Manchester, CT 06040 or to the Cyclic Vomiting Association, 2819 West Highland Blvd., Milwaukee, WI 53208.

East Hampton

Frederick A. Wheeler

Frederick Alden "Ted" Wheeler, husband of Velma June (Loper) Wheeler, died at home on Friday, April 20, after a time of declining health.

Frederick was born on July 23, 1922, at St. Stephen, N.B., Canada, the eldest of four sons born to Alden Gifford Wheeler and Gladys Mae (MacCready) Wheeler. Ted was joined later by twin brothers, Harold and Gerald and then Norman.

Bred graduated from St. Stephen High School in 1940 and the local Brown Business School in 1941. He then attended FDR's National Youth Administration School at Quoddy, ME, to study radio repair. Holding dual Canadian and American citizenship, Ted enlisted in the U.S. Army and was assigned to the Signal Corps. His tour of duty from 1942 to 1945 took him to England, Algeria, Tunisia, Sicily, Egypt, India, Burma, and Australia—thus completely circling the globe. As he passed through the international dateline, there were two Friday the 13ths and President Roosevelt died on the first one. He was promoted during the war to the rank of sergeant. Ted earned three bronze campaign stars, one each for North Africa, Sicily, and Myitkyina. Under the G.I. Bill, Ted graduated from the University of Maine at Orono in 1949. He passed the ROTC school and was promoted to the rank of second lieutenant.

During his early working years, Ted arrived in Hornell, NY, where he met and married Velma. They were together for over 50 years. Together they moved to Connecticut and he built his family's house while working for Pratt & Whitney Aircraft for 12 years. Frederick attended both Central Connecticut State College and Worcester Polytechnic Institute to complete his master's degree in 1969. Ted taught at E.C. Goodwin Technical School for two years and then transferred to Vinal Regional Technical School as a math and science instructor for 25 years, adding his service time. He retired in 1985.

Ted is survived by his wife, Velma Wheeler; and his two sons, Greg Wheeler of Bristol, and James Wheeler of East Hampton; and his daughter-in-law, Michelle (Goebel) Wheeler of Bristol. He is also survived by his three special grandsons who all call him "Bumpa," Nathan Alden Wheeler of Manassas, VA, and Zachary Wheeler and Maxx Wheeler both of Bristol. We have all lost a loving, good, and moral person who always knew the right thing to do. Arrangements are private and being handled by Spencer's Funeral Home of East Hampton.