

July 14, 2016

To: Cost Savings & Revenue Enhancement Committee

Mayor David Martin

From: Robin Stein, Special Assistant to the Mayor

Re: Increasing Application Fees to the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals and Zoning Board

In response to this request we have prepared an analysis of the current fee structure and recommendations for increases.

It appears that most of the current fees have been established under Section 8-1c of the Connecticut General Statutes. Interestingly, the Corporation Counsel's office on August 12, 1999, (Memo from Assistant Corporation Counsel, Richard Robinson) stated that certain fees could be set by the Zoning Board, due to Stamford's special act status. In any case most of the current fees have been established by either ordinance or resolution.

While most of the current fees were set in 2002, several up-dates occurred in 2003 and 2008. A list of the current fees is attached. In addition to the City's fees, the State requires an additional fee of \$60 for most applications.

As part of our analysis, we reviewed the fee structure in a number of other municipalities in Connecticut. They include: Hartford, New Haven, Darien, Fairfield, Greenwich, New Canaan, Norwalk, Weston, Westport and Wilton. While we had hoped to prepare a comparison table of the fees, there are so many different nuances in the ways that these municipalities calculate their fees that this proved impossible. However, where possible we have included a table showing the high and low range of fees in comparison with Stamford. A few interesting comparison points are worth noting. Stamford is one of only a few municipalities that includes a public hearing fee. For some applications, this fee of \$500 is significant. Several municipalities include the State \$60 fee within the fee structure while other add it an extra fee. There is no consistent date for the up-dating of fees although a number of municipalities have increased their fees more recently than Stamford.

Although not technically an application fee, we would be remiss if we did not include, in this analysis, the zoning permit fee. This fee, which brings in by far the most revenue, was last up-dated in 2002. Very few of the other municipalities examined appear to have zoning permit fees separate from building fees.

Recommendation

Clearly, Stamford's fee structure is out of date with most of the fees dating from 2002, 2003 plus a few up dates to 2008. Our review of the few schedules in other municipalities does not lead to any special

formula for the up-date process. Our analysis suggests that Stamford's fees are generally in line with those of other municipalities with the caveat that we have lagged behind most in up-dating our fees.

It is our view that the only rational formula for up-dating the fee structure is to use the cost of living index. Attached is Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) from 2005 to 2015. We have chosen this time period because it falls roughly at the mid-point between 2002 and 2008 when most of the fees were last up-dated. This will result in a twenty percent (20%) increase for the fees for Planning, Zoning and Zoning Board of Appeals. If these changes in the fees were to be adopted, using last year's revenue figures as a baseline, revenues would increase by **\$84,000** a year.

Proposed Fee Schedule

	Original Fee	% increase	new fee	
Zoning Board				
Zoning Text change	\$ 700.00	20%	\$ 840.00	
Special Exception	\$ 300.00	20%	\$ 360.00	plus \$20 per dwelling unit for residential, plus \$20 for commercial
Site/Architectural Review	\$ 300.00	20%	\$ 360.00	plus \$20 per dwelling unit for residential, plus \$20 for commercial
Public Hearing Fee	\$ 500.00	20%	\$ 600.00	
Coastal Site Plan Review	\$ 230.00	20%	\$ 276.00	
 Planning Board				
Subdivision (2 Lots)	\$ 250.00	20%	\$ 300.00	
Subdivision (3 lots)	\$ 325.00	20%	\$ 390.00	
Subdivision (each additional lot)	\$ 200.00	20%	\$ 240.00	
Master Plan Amendment	\$ 300.00	20%	\$ 360.00	
Public Hearing Fee	\$ 500.00	20%	\$ 600.00	
 Zoning Board of Appeals				
Variances, Residential 1(-3 family)	\$ 185.00	20%	\$ 222.00	
Variances, Residential (4+ family)	\$ 265.00	20%	\$ 318.00	
Variances, non residential	\$ 350.00	20%	\$ 420.00	
Special Exceptions	\$ 350.00	20%	\$ 420.00	
Appeal of ZEO Decision	\$ 350.00	20%	\$ 420.00	
Public Hearing Fee	\$ 500.00	20%	\$ 600.00	for all applications other than variances
Motor Vehicle	\$ 300.00	20%	\$ 360.00	
Land Records Recording Fee	\$ 58.00	20%	\$ 69.60	

Proposed Fee Schedule

	Current Fee	Increase	New Fee
Zoning Permits			
New Residential- (1-2 family)	\$ 140.00	20%	\$ 168.00
New Residential- 3+ units	\$ 140.00	20%	\$ 168.00 plus \$50, each additional unit
Residential (1-2 family) addition, renov., alteration	\$ 70.00	20%	\$ 84.00
Residential (3+units) addition, renov., alteration	\$ 140.00	20%	\$ 168.00 plus \$50, each additional unit
Accessory Structures, Pools, Fences, etc.	\$ 75.00	20%	\$ 90.00
non-residential < 3,000 sq. ft, new, renov., addition, alteration	\$ 200.00	20%	\$ 240.00
non residential > 3,000 sq. ft, new or addition	\$ 350.00	20%	\$ 420.00 plus \$125 per additional 1,000 sq ft
non residential > 3,000 sq ft+, renov., alteration	\$ 350.00	20%	\$ 420.00 plus \$75 per additional 1,000 sq ft
Ground (pole signs)	\$ 200.00	20%	\$ 240.00
Signs (other than poles)	\$ 120.00	20%	\$ 144.00
Antenna, Satellite, Radie, Tv masts	\$ 400.00	20%	\$ 480.00 per antenna

Revenue Comparison: Actual Fees with 20% Increase

	2015		
	Actual	20% increase	Difference
Application Fees-ZBA	\$ 13,695	\$ 16,434	\$ 2,739
Filing Fees-Planning	\$ 1,140	\$ 1,368	\$ 228
Zoning Applications	\$ 54,708	\$ 65,650	\$ 10,942
Zoning Permits	\$ 350,516	\$ 420,619	\$ 70,103
Grand Total	\$ 420,059	\$ 504,071	\$ 84,012

Table 24. Historical Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): U. S. city average, all items-Continued
 (1982-84=100, unless otherwise noted)

Year	Dec.	% Change Previous Year	% Change Vs 2005
2005	196.8		
2006	201.8	2.54%	2.54%
2007	210.036	4.08%	6.73%
2008	210.228	0.09%	6.82%
2009	215.949	2.72%	9.73%
2010	219.179	1.50%	11.37%
2011	225.672	2.96%	14.67%
2012	229.601	1.74%	16.67%
2013	233.049	1.50%	18.42%
2014	234.812	0.76%	19.32%
2015	236.525	0.73%	20.19%
2016	-		

Planning, Zoning, Zoning Board of Appeals Fees Comparisons

	High	Low	Stamford
Zoning Board of Appeals			
Variances Residential	\$ 400.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 265.00
Variances Commercial	\$ 500.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 300.00
Zoning Board			
Text Amendments	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 1,250.00
Special Exceptions	\$ 2,525.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 1,550.00
Planning Board			
Subdivision 3 lots	\$ 1,400.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 825.00

Note: Greenwich charges a public hearing fee of \$1000, which is included in applications to Zoning & Planning Commissions.

Stamford has a public hearing fee of \$500, which is included in applications to Planning and Zoning but not for variances.

Most other municipalities do not charge a public hearing fee.

Comparison municipalities, in addition to Stamford include: Hartford, New Haven, Darien, Fairfield, Greenwich, New Canaan, Norwalk, Weston, Westport and Wilton