

East Lyme commission continues deliberations on Oswegatchie Hills proposal

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East Lyme — The Zoning Commission [continued Thursday to discuss](#) Landmark Development's application for affordable housing in the Oswegatchie Hills, but did not reach a decision.

The commission is expected to take a vote either next Thursday or on Aug. 20.

Landmark developer Glenn Russo has submitted an application to rezone 123 acres in the hills as an affordable housing district, setting aside 87 acres for open space. Russo also is applying for a preliminary site plan to build 840 housing units on the 36 acres proposed for development.

The proposal follows a 2011 state Superior Court remand order in an appeal case brought by the developer after the commission denied parts of his 2005 application.

Recapping previous discussions, Chairman Matthew Walker said Thursday the commission is not likely to approve the application as submitted, but is on track to either approve it with specific conditions, or deny it.

Walker reminded the commission that it cannot deny the application unless there is "quantifiable probability of harm to the public interest, and not simply the possibility of harm."

Mark Zamarka, an attorney for the town, presented the commission with a draft resolution to approve the application with conditions. But he stressed that the document is just a starting point and the commission can revise it or choose a different direction.

On Thursday, the commission discussed how to handle the Inland Wetlands Agency report, as well as reports submitted by intervening groups.

If the commission decides the proposed development would harm the public interest by affecting wetlands, the commission will have to decide if those concerns outweigh the need for affordable housing.

The commission also will determine if there are reasonable alternatives the developer could implement to resolve the issue, said Zamarka.

The commission is expected to hold a special meeting next Thursday to continue deliberations.

"We've got more work to do here," said Walker. "It's an enormous public record."