

Farmington Land Trust Position Statement Summary

Farmington's Planning and Zoning [TPZ] and Inland Wetlands and Waterways [IWW] Commissions are currently combined. The Farmington Land Trust, Inc. [FLT] recommends that our town council amend the ordinance, which prescribes this structure. Revision of the town's charter is not required.

The Farmington Land Trust [FLT] recommends that the Council establish a separate appointed IWW agency to regulate activities affecting inland wetlands and waterways.

We do so for the following reasons:

1. Due to time constraints and the need for specialized knowledge in each area, combined commissions have difficulty giving adequate attention to each of their component functions.
2. A separate appointed IWW commission would attract long-serving volunteers with greater expertise, lighten their workload and free them from the demands of campaigning for office.
3. Commissioners less burdened and specifically tasked with IWW duties would be more likely to avail themselves of related educational opportunities.
4. The present system does not serve the needs of developers or the town in an efficient manner. An applicant presenting to a separate IWW commission would in many instances receive an initial yes-or-no decision and be spared expensive duplicate presentations to both conservation commission and TPZ/IWW.
5. The possibility of inappropriate decision-making by combined commissions increases the risk of litigation for the town.
6. Decreased availability of developable lands and increased pressure to develop parcels containing wetlands has increased the number of wetland decisions required and therefore increased the time required of combined commissions.
7. It is the opinion of experts in conservation and planning that "best practices" require separation of TPZ and IWW functions.