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Silvermine residents oppose development at zoning hearing

Proposal calls for 11 homes on 4.5-acre lot at 241 and 249 Silvermine Ave.

NORWALK
By **ROBERT KOCH**
Hour Staff Writer

Silvermine residents and their attorney kept up the pressure against a proposed 11-unit conservation development along Silvermine Avenue opposite Mary Austin Place during a public hearing before the city's Zoning Commission at City Hall on Wednesday

night.

The proposed development, put forward by brothers Dennis and Martin Brown under the entity Silvermine Homes LLC, calls for 11 single-family homes on the nearly 4.5-acre lot at 241 and 249 Silvermine Ave.

The development has been proposed as a conservation development,

see **RESIDENTS, A6**

Residents oppose homes

From A1

where land would be set aside as a permanent conservation easement in return for the allowance of more units to be built.

Jane Freeman, attorney representing the Norwalk Association of Silvermine Homeowners, told the commission that the proposed development does not meet the goals of a conservation development. She described the proposed conservation easement as "narrow and limited."

"I ask you to consider whether this is truly usable space," Freeman said. "This is not the kind of open space that a conservation development is supposed to provide."

Freeman said a conventional subdivision with six units would be a "much more appropriate use of the site."

At one point, disagreement erupted between commission Chairwoman Jackie Lightfield and Freeman over the latter's request to call in specialists to speak as part of her presentation on behalf of NASH.

"You are here speaking as a member of the public," said Lightfield, who invited the others to sign up and speak later.

Said Freeman: "(Silvermine Homes) didn't have to have all its witnesses signed up. Why do I have to have my witnesses signed up?"

Architect: Proposed homes would have an "artsy, crafty, bungalow style"

About 50 people attended the hearing, including at least 20 members of NASH, based upon a show of hands requested by Freeman.

Gary Macintyre, architect for Silvermine Homes, told Zoning commissioners that he and the Browns also live in Silvermine and are just as concerned as other residents about the property.

"All three of us are direct neighbors to the direct core of the Silvermine area," Macintyre said. "We are concerned about what goes on in the Silvermine area."

Macintyre described the style of the proposed homes as an "artsy, crafty, bungalow style." The homes would be low in profile, rising to 33 feet at their ridges, according to him.

Elizabeth B. Suchy, the attorney representing Silvermine Homes, said the plan has been changed as a result of

input heard by the city's Conservation Commission, which is also reviewing the plan.

Those changes include the installation of nine rain gardens to collect roof runoff, alteration of the conservation area, and delineation of the easement with boulders and markers, according to Suchy.

Traffic from the development would exit onto Silvermine Avenue opposite Mary Austin Place and operate at an excellent level of service, according to the traffic engineer for Silvermine Homes.

The Conservation Commission, which also must lend its approval for the development to be built, opened its public hearing in January and continued it this month. Residents also spoke against the plan at that hearing. The Zoning Commission cannot act on the proposed development plan until the Conservation Commission has acted.