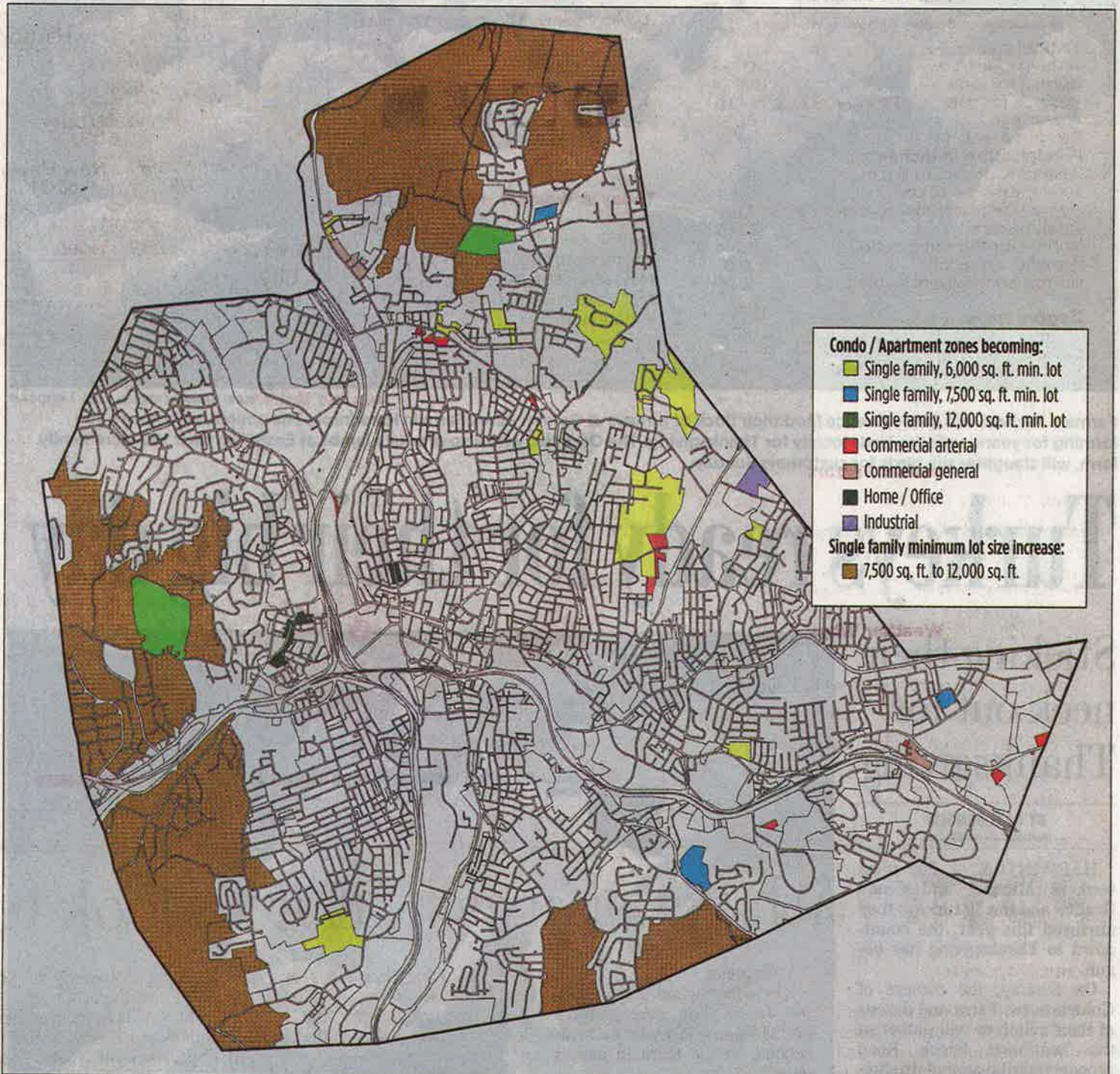


New face sought for Waterbury



CURTIS KRAVIT REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

This map highlights zoning changes in Waterbury proposed by City Planner James Sequin. Several areas that recently were targeted for condominium development would be restricted to single-family houses. Several single-family neighborhoods would see their minimum lot sizes nearly double.

Rezoning seeks larger lots, single-family homes

BY MICHAEL PUFFER
REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

WATERBURY — Waterbury officials this week will consider changes to land-use laws affecting some of the city's largest developers, along with many homeowners.

City Planner James Sequin is recommending the city rezone several "multifamily" proper-

ties — including a handful recently targeted for large-scale condominium development — into areas restricted to construction of single-family houses or businesses.

Sequin's proposal also aims to nearly double the minimum house lot sizes in several areas, including portions of the Bucks Hill and Country Club neighborhoods. This increase, from

7,500 square feet to 12,000 square feet, would prevent homeowners from splitting their properties to create additional building lots.

The City Plan Commission will debate Sequin's proposals this week, and forward a recommendation to the Zoning Commission, which could vote to adopt or reject the changes as early as Nov. 29.

Sequin's suggested changes are part of a larger effort to change city land-use laws to reflect the recommendations in the 2005 Plan of Conservation and Development, a development guideline drafted for the city by a consultant at a cost of \$200,000.

The plan suggests dozens of

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ZONING: Some aren't happy about it

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changes to land-use law aimed at expanding the city's health-care and manufacturing industries, lowering housing density and many other goals.

By tackling the multifamily zones, Sequin aims to deal with one of the more pressing concerns facing the city. And drafting larger lot sizes for single-family areas was one of the more easily accomplished tasks recommended by the 2005 plan.

At the same time, a committee of city officials and residents has been created to draft new city laws based on the remaining goals. This group meets Thursday, beginning a task expected to take up to 18 months.

Predictably, not everybody is happy about the changes.

Developer Norman Drubner is also scheduled to go before the City Plan Commission on Wednesday, asking it to change the 2005 guide to remove a recommendation that his 131-acre property next to the Western Hills Golf Course be restricted to single-family homes. Drubner has proposed building 431 condos here.

The steep-sloped property is covered by forest and thick rock outcrops. These features, he contends, make the land unsuitable for anything but tightly packed condos, which could be woven into the landscape, leaving much of the forest intact.

In a letter to the City Plan

"IF IT COULD BE DEVELOPED (FOR SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES) EASILY, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN HOUSES THERE 50 YEARS AGO. WHY DO YOU THINK THERE ARE 131 ACRES OF OPEN SPACE IN THE WEST OF WATERBURY?"

**NORMAN DRUBNER
DEVELOPER**

Commission, Drubner's attorney warns that a single-family housing development would require clear-cutting and about five years of continuous blasting to level it for home construction.

"If it could be developed (for single-family homes) easily, there would have been houses there 50 years ago," Drubner said. "Why do you think there are 131 acres of open space in the west of Waterbury?"

The City Plan Commission meets Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. in the City Hall Annex, 26 Kendrick Ave. The City Plan Steering Committee — responsible for implementing a broader array of suggestions from the 2005 guide — meets Thursday at 7 p.m. at Rotella Magnet School.