

Planning and Development Committee
Monday March 11, 2013
6:00 PM East Hartford Parks And Recreation Department

WRITTEN TESTIMONY
FOR HB 5242

Mr. Chairmen and members of the committee, my name is Gregg Schuster and I am the First Selectman of the Town of Colchester. Please accept this written testimony in regards to HB 5242.

As I had testified previously, it would be in the best interest of both municipalities and developers to have a fee-in-lieu program to alleviate developers from costly, unnecessary sidewalk development and allow them to pay into a special, designated and restricted fund that would assist in the redevelopment and construction of sidewalks in more pedestrian-used areas, such as downtowns and connecting side streets.

Unfortunately, this particular bill would not allow for that to occur. This bill would allow for open space fees to be used for sidewalk construction. This was never the intent of the current program and I would hate to see open space fees applied to a vastly different purpose. I believe that the state would be best served if municipalities could accept fees-in-lieu for both sidewalks and open space through separate programs.

The Town of Colchester developed and enacted an open space fee in lieu program several years ago and the program has already paid dividends. Instead of receiving a few fragmented open space parcels that were never utilized, the Town was able to direct open space funds to a fee in lieu account which permitted the purchase of a substantial addition to the Ruby Cohen Preserve Property. We simply ask to be allowed to enact the same program for sidewalks.

In Colchester, developers and the Town are fully supportive of this bill because it benefits both parties. The developer is not required to construct infrastructure that would not be utilized and the Town will have resources to upgrade pedestrian facilities that will be utilized by residents and visitors.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Gregg Schuster
First Selectman
Town of Colchester