

Nancy Owens  
4-28-15

## Safford Commons

Woodstock, Vermont



In October 2012, the Vermont Supreme Court affirmed the decision of the Environmental Court to allow the construction of twenty-eight apartments and eight for-sale condominiums on an 8-acre site on Woodstock Road near the Woodstock Union High School in West Woodstock. The owners of abutting properties had brought cases in both the Environmental and Superior courts to prevent construction of the homes. *From the time of the first DRB approval, it took over five years to resolve the appeal of the land use permits.*

The legal process and delays attributable to it added significantly to the cost of the project. Below are the costs resulting from the delay:

<b>Cost directly attributed to the appeal and resulting delay</b>	<b>Total</b>
Legal	185,675
Architect/Engineer studies, redesign, and testimony	202,916
Additional Wetlands study and testimony	13,090
Additional Traffic study and testimony	12,869
Taxes during the appeal period	35,853
Carry cost during the appeal period	21,834
Acquisition loan interest during appeal period	140,286
<b>Total</b>	<b>612,522</b>

The Act 250 Commission and the Woodstock Development Review Board both unanimously approved the project as designed because it met or exceeded all regulations and requirements.

From the date of the appeal filing, it took a year to schedule the hearings at the Environmental Court. After hearings were closed, another year passed before the Environmental Court issued a decision.

Delay is a tactic used by the opposition to halt an affordable housing project. Delay adds significant costs to affordable housing, and ties up public resources for years. More importantly, delay means that Vermonters in need of safe and affordable housing have to wait years before they can move into their new home.