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Moratorium on multi-family housing goes to a hearing

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Chronicle Staff Writer MANSFIELD - The town's planning and zoning commission is hosting a public hearing Tuesday regarding the possible adaptation of a nine-month moratorium on multi-family housing development. The hearing will take place at 6:35 p.m. in council chambers at the Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building. The moratorium puts a temporary freeze on the ability for developers to build new multi-family housing buildings and it would not affect applications already submitted to the town. For those unable to attend the meeting, comments to the commission are being accepted until 4 p.m. Tuesday by e-mailing planzonedept@mansfieldct.com, but comments will not be accepted once the public hearing closes. Mansfield Director of Planning and Development Linda Painter said the proposal came from the planning and zoning commission as it looks to update its regulations in light of ongoing interest for multi-family buildings from developers. She said she was unsure whether the commission would close the public hearing Tuesday night, adding it is based on the number of people who attend and the comments it receives. However, she said the moratorium would not need to be approved by the town council, as it is considered part of the commission's role of following the town's plan of conservation and development. Planning and zoning commission documents indicate such development is likely to increase once the new water line, built by Connecticut Water along Route 195, becomes operational. As an example, Painter said the inland wetlands and watercourses commission is currently reviewing a 692-unit, multiple-building residential complex on Hunting Lodge Road by **Storrs Lodges** LLC. Mansfield Deputy Mayor Bill Ryan said he believes the commission feels (Housing, Page 4) (Continued from Page 1) the moratorium is necessary so it can update zoning regulations to better deal with "neighborhoods that are getting messed up by students living in the area." Rebecca Shafer, a member of the Mansfield Neighborhood Preservation Group, said the proposal "comes as a complete surprise to me," as she had suggested a moratorium on the conversion of single-family homes to rental units. Shafer said the **Storrs Lodges** LLC project has proven to be controversial, as it would add more traffic and student partying to a road that already has a number of students living there. In a recent letter to the town council, she wrote that each week, a single-family home is converted to a rental unit and between fall 2015 and July 2016, 50 more homes became rentals. These conversions are happening due to an increased demand for off-campus housing by University of Connecticut students. She also wrote a moratorium on converting single-family homes to rental units was enacted in Hamden as it deals with off-campus housing demands by Quinnipiac University students.

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