

**Middletown Planning Board**  
**Public Workshop - March 26, 2018, 4pm, Town Council Chambers**  
**Proposed New Business Uses for Farm Landowners**

**What is being proposed?**

A revision to the zoning ordinance is being considered by the Middletown Planning Board that will provide farmers with the opportunity to establish new businesses on farm property. New business would be limited to properties that have active agricultural use. It would add new uses that are currently not permitted by the Middletown Zoning Ordinance. The revision would not restrict or limit any existing uses.

**Why is this needed?**

Current town zoning limits types of businesses permitted on farm property in residential zones. The purpose of the proposed amendments is to allow land owners to have more business options to *provide economic incentives to maintain their farms* and help preserve community character and agricultural lifestyles.

**What types of businesses would be permitted?**

Several uses are being considered including, but not limited to: food production, retail sales of farm/forest products, sale of landscaping materials, farm product processing, farm café, meeting space, classes and farm winery/brewery/distillery.

**Will there be limits on the businesses allowed?**

An owner may be eligible for new business uses provided reasonable limits on issues like signs, parking, noise, setbacks, and building size can be accommodated. Zoning currently requires all uses in town to follow such limits to protect public health and safety. The limits under consideration attempt to strike a balance between allowing expanded business opportunities for farm owners in residential zones, while limiting impacts on adjacent property owners. Simultaneously, the intent is to develop a user-friendly process for farmers to utilize these new opportunities by streamlining the review process.

**How will farm owners be effected?**

Farmers can continue to operate their farms with businesses currently allowed by the Middletown Zoning Ordinance. Nothing in this ordinance supersedes the RI Right to Farm Act. This process is meant to expand opportunities for farmers to gain economic benefit by allowing uses not currently permitted. This process is looking to expand, not restrict, the ways in which farmers can utilize their property.

**How can you be involved in this process?**

A public workshop will be held on March 26, 2018 at 4pm at the Middletown Town Hall to seek comments and answer questions. If you can't attend this workshop, contact Town Planner, Ron Wolanski at [rwolanski@middletownri.com](mailto:rwolanski@middletownri.com) or (401) 849-4027 to discuss your questions or concerns.