



Town of Middletown Planning Department

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To: Middletown Planning Board
From: Ron Wolanski, Town Planner
Date: March 27, 2020
Re: Project updates

Following is an update on the status of projects that the Planning Board is involved with, either as part of Comprehensive Plan implementation, or items otherwise initiated by or referred to the board for consideration:

1. **Atlantic Beach District Zoning Overlay** – Following subcommittee work and public input revised ordinance draft and draft design guidelines were presented during a public workshop on January 22nd. Property owners in the area were notified by mail, and the meeting notice was posted in the Newport Daily News and online. The Planning Board held a special meeting on February 5th to consider the input received and requested modifications to the draft documents. The revised documents were provided to the Board for its March 11th meeting, during which the Board requested that staff and the solicitor review and make final edits to the draft documents and forward them to the Town Council for consideration. Final drafts have been forwarded to the Solicitor for review.
2. **Development impact studies** – Crossman Engineering has completed analyses of impacts on water resources and traffic resulting from project buildout town-wide. A special Planning Board meeting was held on January 29th for Crossman to present the results of the study. Final review and comments from Planning Board members and staff were forwarded to Crossman. Crossman provided the final revised draft, and during its March 11th meeting, the Board forwarded the report to the Town Council with a memo with recommendations. A presentation of the findings of the report will be provided during a future Town Council meeting.
3. **Mixed-use Development Amendments** - Consider modifications to the zoning ordinance regarding mixed-use development – Including review of uses, business hours, and other restrictions. A subcommittee forwarded recommendations to the full board for review on August 26th. Amendments were then forwarded to the Town Council with a positive recommendation.
4. **Use Table Review** - Potential revisions to the Zoning Ordinance Use Table regarding the LB district (Town Council) – This effort was combined with the ABD overlay district use subcommittee. The subcommittee has completed review of the LB district use table. There was discussion of the need to expand review to the full use table, and possible review and update of the full zoning ordinance. The subcommittee (Bill, Art, John) is meeting on regular basis to continue work to review the full use table.

5. **Future Land Use Plan/Zoning Map Consistency Project** (Comp Plan)– All proposed FLUP amendments have been received by the Town Council and will be scheduled for public hearing. The amendments will be addressed in groups, similar to the Planning Board process. The first set of amendments was approved by the Town Council on June 17, 2019. A Town Council public hearing and first reading on the next set of amendments was held on March 2nd. The second reading and adoption has been delayed due to the current virus situation.
6. **Rural Village District zoning amendments** (Comp Plan) – The Planning Board subcommittee met with subject property owners to seek input and buy-in. Owners had initially requested additional time to review and provide input. During the most recent meeting the largest business-property owner in the proposed district indicated that while the current R-30 zoning can be problematic, he has no immediate plans for new development and is not in a position to advise the subcommittee. Given the lack of urgency on the part of impacted property owners, and the Planning Board’s current workload, the subcommittee advised the board that action on this item be delayed for the time being.
7. **Historic Resource Preservation** - Consideration of potential Regulations and/or Zoning Ordinance amendments to promote preservation of historic buildings (Comp Plan) – Revised preliminary draft ordinance was provided to the Board for the August 26th agenda, and continued to the October 9, 2019 meeting for discussion. The Board held a public workshop meeting on November 19th to accept additional public input. Revised drafts based on that discussion were provided to the board for the February 5th regular meeting and the board voted to forward the proposed amendments to the Town Council for consideration.
8. **Application Fees** - Draft Regulations amendments to implement new application fees and revise application checklists (Planning Dept.) – Amendments approved and forwarded to the Town Council in February 2019. At the request of the Town Administrator, the Town Council referred the proposed fees back to the Planning Board for additional study. This will include review by the Finance Dept. to ensure that all overhead costs are included in the fees. We are awaiting response from the Finance Dept.
9. **Landscape Plan Enforcement** - Develop draft Regulations amendments to provide oversight and enforcement of approved landscaping plans. The public hearing was held on November 20th at which point the board voted to forward the amendments to the Town Council for consideration. Mr. Croce has suggested adding a requirement to the regulations for submission of a landscape maintenance plan. A public hearing was held during the March 11th regular Planning Board meeting for consideration of this amendment, following which the amendments were adopted and forwarded with the previously approved amendments to the Town Council.
10. **Marijuana Zoning** - Draft ordinance on marijuana production, distribution & sales (Town Council) – Town Solicitor has secured outside consultant assistance, Dwight Merriam, Esq. Planning Board subcommittee established, and drafting is underway. The latest subcommittee meeting was held on January 3rd where discussion focused on new state regulations for medical marijuana, which had yet to be finalized. It was also noted that approval of recreational marijuana use and sales in Rhode Island in 2020 is unlikely. The new state regulations have recently gone into effect and are being reviewed by the Town Solicitor and legal consultant. A subcommittee meeting will be scheduled following this review.
11. **Airport Zoning** - Draft overlay for airport zoning (Comp Plan) – Subcommittee asked staff to create a draft ordinance based on the Westerly ordinance, which was approved by the subcommittee and forwarded to the Planning Board. Draft provided to the Board for the

November 20th meeting and referred back to the subcommittee for additional review and confirmation that the proposed ordinance will satisfy statutory requirements. Subcommittee met on January 15th where the assistant town solicitor stated that the draft meets statutory requirements, and the draft was referred to the full Planning Board for consideration and recommendation to schedule a public workshop meeting. During its March 11th meeting the Board requested that a public workshop be scheduled.

12. **Light Pollution** - Consideration of amendments to the Regulations and/or Zoning Ordinance to limit light pollution (Comp Plan) – Planning staff research of options underway.
13. **Transportation Options** - Consideration of amendments to the Regulations and/or Zoning Ordinance to promote transportation options (Comp Plan) - Planning staff research of options underway.
14. **Building Height Definition** - Draft amendment to Building Height definition to be consistent with statutory change adopted by the General Assembly in 2019 – Proposed amendments approved by the Planning Board on September 11th and forwarded to the Town Council with a positive recommendation. The Town Council has yet to consider the amendments.
15. **West Main/Coddington Development Center** – During its Dec. 2nd meeting, the Town Council voted to approve a contract with 4th Economy to conduct a developer request for information (RFI) to solicit input on the viability and interest in development options. The Town Council requested that the Planning Board hold a public workshop meeting prior to the issuance of the RFI to gain public input and ideas. The public workshop was held on February 26th. Comments will be compiled and forwarded to 4th Economy. The RFI was issued on March 9th, with responses due by April 6th.

Cc: Town Administrator