



Town of Middletown Planning Department

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To: Middletown Planning Board
From: Ron Wolanski, Town Planner
Date: September 30, 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 reviewed by the Board during its March 11th meeting. The Board requested that staff and the Town Solicitor review and make final edits to the draft documents and forward them to the Town Council for consideration. Final drafts were forwarded to the Solicitor for review on March 27, 2020. Planning Board recommendation and drafts sent to the Town Council for consideration on June 15, 2020, received by the Town Council July 6th. Town Council public hearing and first reading to be scheduled by the Town Clerk after the upcoming election.
2. **Development impact studies** – Crossman Engineering completed analyses of impacts on water resources and traffic resulting from full buildout town-wide. A special Planning Board meeting was held on January 29, 2020 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 11, 2020 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 after the upcoming election.
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 26, 2019. Amendments were then forwarded to the Town Council with a positive recommendation on September 20, 2019. The amendments were ordered advertised for a Town Council public hearing. Town Council public hearing and first reading to be scheduled by the Town Clerk after the upcoming election.
4. **Use Table Review** - The Board's use table subcommittee (Bill, Art, John) has completed review of the LB district use table and has begun review of the full use table. The subcommittee has met on a regular basis to continue work to review and propose revisions to the full use table. Per the subcommittee's preference, meetings will resume once in-person meetings are possible.

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 first set of amendments was approved by the Town Council on June 17, 2019. The second set of amendments was approved by the Town Council on June 15, 2020. The final set of amendments will be advertised for a future Town Council public hearing after the upcoming election.
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. The Planning Board agreed to table the matter.
7. **Historic Resource Preservation** - Consideration of potential Regulations and/or Zoning Ordinance amendments to promote preservation of historic buildings (Comp Plan) – Draft documents were revised based on input received during public workshop meetings and Board discussion. During its February 5, 2020 regular meeting the board voted to forward to the Town Council for consideration. Draft documents and cover memo have been forwarded to the Town Council. Presentation of the proposal will be during a future Town Council meeting.
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, including 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. **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.
10. **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 20, 2019 meeting and referred back to the subcommittee for additional review and confirmation that the proposed ordinance will satisfy statutory requirements. Subcommittee met on January 15, 2020 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 11, 2020 meeting the Board requested that a public workshop meeting be scheduled. The meeting will be scheduled once in-person meetings are possible.

11. **Light Pollution** - Consideration of amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to limit light pollution (Comp Plan) – Draft Zoning Ordinance amendment provided to the Planning Board for the May 13, 2020 meeting. Discussion included on the Board’s October 14th agenda.
12. **Ground-mounted Solar Arrays** - Consideration of amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to allow solar carports and to clarify limitations on ground-mounted solar arrays in residential districts – Draft Zoning Ordinance amendment provided to the Planning Board for the May 13, 2020 meeting. Discussion included on the Board’s October 14th agenda.
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 11, 2019 and forwarded to the Town Council with a positive recommendation. Town Council public hearing and first reading to be scheduled by the Town Clerk after the upcoming election.
15. **West Main/Coddington Development Center** – During its Dec. 2, 2019 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. At the request of the Town Council a public workshop was held on February 26, 2020. The RFI was issued on March 9th, with responses due on April 6th. One response was received from The Landings Real Estate, Inc. (Chris Bicho) which was forwarded to 4th Economy. Due to the limited response, consideration being given to reissuing the RFI or proceeding with discussion based on available information.

Cc: Town Administrator
Town Council