



PLANNING BOARD

Report to Town Meeting

Article 9. Zoning – Parking Facilities (Planning Board)

To see if the Town will amend Article 3, Use Regulations, Section 3.384, Parking Facilities, of the Zoning Bylaw, as follows:

~ SEE WARRANT ~

Recommendation

The Planning Board voted 5-0-0 (with four members absent) to recommend that Town Meeting adopt this article.

Background & Purpose

In the summer of 2017 the Downtown Parking Working Group made a recommendation to review the permitting requirements for commercial parking facilities. Currently such facilities are allowed by Special Permit in the B-G, B-VC, B-L, and COM districts. Facilities which are privately owned as well as facilities which are the result of a public-private partnership are both regulated by this section. Wholly public facilities currently have less stringent permitting standards. (They are allowed by Site Plan Review in these districts.). The purpose of the article is to mitigate one of the many barriers to the creation of new parking facilities in the downtown and village centers.

Mechanics

The article would change the permitting requirement for “Commercial parking lot or parking garage” from Special Permit to Site Plan Review in the B-G, B-VC, and COM districts. The B-L district has been omitted from the change because there have been many recent conversations and proposals for the areas that are zoned B-L, which, taken together, warrant a more comprehensive approach.

Benefits/Risks

The article would make it somewhat easier for private or public/private development of parking in the downtown and village centers. The topic of parking is both wide-ranging and complex, and there are a variety of opinions on what amount of parking is needed, especially in the downtown.

Process

The Zoning Subcommittee prepared this article in the summer of 2017. The Planning Board has in prior years considered amendments to this section of the Bylaw, which would have introduced additional design standards for parking uses, but no consensus was reached on such standards. A public hearing was held on September 13th, 2017, and the Planning Board voted 5-0-0 (with four members absent) to recommend that Town Meeting adopt this article.