



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mandi Jo Hanneke, Chair, Community Resources Committee
FROM: Jack Jemsek, Acting Chair, Planning Board
SUBJECT: Zoning Amendment Priorities
DATE: September 1, 2020

At its meetings on August 5 and August 19, 2020, the Planning Board discussed its top priorities for zoning amendments. On August 19, 2020, the Board voted 5-0-0 to approve the following list of zoning priorities:

1. Improve Downtown Zoning
2. Unlock Housing Development and Increase Diversity of Housing Stock
3. Recodification of Zoning Bylaw

This list represents the “big picture” view of zoning priorities that the Planning Board has been discussing over the past few years. There are also many individual detailed zoning amendments that are being considered.

During the discussion before voting the Board reviewed the Zoning Issues Priorities chart, dated 2019, that the Planning Board has been developing over several years, Michael Birtwistle’s revised and annotated Zoning Issues Priorities chart, Janet McGowan’s email dated August 13, 2020 and Maria Chao’s list of Top Zoning Priorities as Discussed at Planning Board 8/5/2020 meeting.

The topics that were consistently included in discussions and on the lists were:

- Review the dimensional requirements in the General Business (B-G) zoning district, including setback, maximum floors and heights
- Fix the Limited Business (B-L) zoning district (the transitional zone between the General Business and General Residence (R-G) zoning districts) where redevelopment is currently infeasible due to the unworkable dimensional requirements
- Clarify the definitions of mixed-use buildings and apartments
- Revise the Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw to require that more developments include affordable units
- Establish Design Guidelines or Form-Based Code
- Consider removing single-family only zoning from some residential zoning districts
- Consider allowing accessory dwelling units by right and expand the allowable size
- Consider allowing 2 and 3 family housing by right
- Consider allowing townhouses and apartment buildings by right in more zoning districts
- Modernize the parking requirements to take into account the trend for less vehicles per apartment unit
- Plan the Village Centers and redirect development to Village Centers
- Address groundwater quality/supply issues anticipated for the small lot sizes in North Amherst/Flat Hills Road area