

Public Forum 1 – City Council Chambers March 23, 2010

Regulatory Issues identified:

- Open Space/ Conservation Easement Requirement – Needs to be looked at because the 60% requirement is too much on small lots. If the purpose is to have linked open space, but property owners can post the property that does not make sense.
- Need consistency and fairness for all property owners. The City seems to favor big developers over small landowners/citizens.
- Do not lose sight of the need to preserve open space as the open space subdivision requirement is revisited.
- The RO District's mandatory cluster requirement is intended to preserve open space, but it does not work from an economic perspective. It is better for the developer to do a not lot line development. One of the issues is the requirement for contiguous land.
- A transfer of development or transfer of credit program should be considered to shift density inside the Growth Boundary and protect land in the RO District.
- The Zoning ordinance is complex and not user friendly.
- There is a need for intelligent and humane mixed use in the RO District. Worried about the isolation of residential only in this district.
- The City needs to make information more accessible and easier to understand. This includes the regulations and the process, but also for tracking applications.
- The items that need to be heard by the Planning Board versus the Zoning Board of Adjustment. Can some of the regulations in the zoning be moved to the site plan and subdivision regulations to fall more clearly under the Planning Board?
This could provide too much flexibility and compromise the "safety" and predictability of the zoning ordinance.
- Downtown parking needs to be examined
- Signage needs to be examined. Should there be standards?
- How many trees should be required in new developments?
- Is there enough Industrial space for businesses that wish to expand within the City?
- Older neighborhoods seem to have issues with the setback requirements.
- The design review process seems to lack consistency. It depends on who attends.
- Grandfathered properties
- Too easy to get variances sometimes
- There is not a good feedback system for abutters/citizens to track cases.
- A simpler easier process will encourage more involvement - internet or email?
- Revisit the zoning uses. Are they all current and needed?

- It is time to rethink the zoning standards for downtown
- Many of the ordinances are fighting green/sustainable initiatives that could be taking place by requiring excessive pavement and other items.
- The Municipal Housing Committee has identified a need for more work force housing. Much of the new housing being built is too expensive. More accessible housing will provide the employees needed by new companies. Need to meet the needs of changing demographics too.
- Need expanded use of accessory apartments, but possibly requiring the owner live in one of the units on the property.
- The current regulations do not work for small property owners. Too daunting and a difficult process to understand.
- There is a need for incentives for developers to work within the Growth Boundary, and reasons not to build in the RO District. There is a lack of opportunity to build housing for working families downtown. This is where the infrastructure is, and transportation options exist.
- Need a change in the regulation to allow for the keeping of chickens on smaller lots in the City.
- Building codes do not allow for the development of housing units in upper stories.