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To: Concord Boards and Commissions

From: Jeff Taylor

Re: Regulatory Issues of Concern

As you are aware, over the past two months I have been meeting with a variety of community boards and commissions to alert them to the fact that the City of Concord is engaged in a process to review various elements of its regulatory framework, both to determine if there are some issues around which there may be consensus for some immediate changes, and also to see if there are issues of concern which will require further discussion.

Several groups asked when I met with them what other groups were thinking in this area. The following is a brief summary of the issues that surfaced, either in my meetings with the individual group, or in materials they have supplied to me afterwards.

Conservation Commission

January 13, 2010

A general concern about resource protection, and a specific question as to whether or not there were sufficient protections in place for aquifers in the community.

Planning Board

January 20, 2010

A general statement of support for this process. Specific issues that had been identified in a memo to the board in December 2009 include:

Zoning

- High intensity mixed use in the Northern and Central Opportunity Corridor
- High intensity mixed use and residential in the Southern Opportunity Corridor
- Creation of a Transfer of Development Rights program
- Inclusion of Traditional Neighborhood Development standards
- Retention of mandatory cluster outside of the Urban Growth Boundary
- Reduction of density outside of the Urban Growth Boundary
- Enhanced buffers between unlike uses

Continued resource protection
 Establishment of an Aquifer Protection District
 Reservation of Garvins Falls area for a unified economic development initiative
 Allowing for conversion of industrial buildings to office use
 Re-evaluating various current parking requirements

Site Plan Regulations

Preserving rail corridors
 Actively promoting connectivity between commercial lots, traffic calming, and access management
 Require landscaping along the street edge
 Promoting underground utilities when feasible
 Minimize destruction of natural vegetation
 Identify and protect historic resources where practical

Zoning Board

February 3, 2010

Again, a statement of support for the process. A general sense that many items that come before the ZBA on a regular basis because they are in the zoning ordinance are items that are more properly within the purview of the Planning Board, and ought to be elements of the Site Plan Regulations rather than the Zoning Ordinance.

Heritage Commission

February 4, 2010

A statement of general concern about preserving the built environment and the fabric of the community. A brief discussion regarding a Form Based Code, such as has recently been adopted in Dover, whereby new construction must conform to existing development patterns more fully.

Economic Development Advisory Council

February 5, 2010

EDAC is perhaps the group that has taken most fully Mayor Bouley's invitation for all elements of the community to take a close look at the local development regulations. Items agreed to by EDAC to date include:

Administration

Eliminate any requirements that the same design elements be reviewed by both the PB and ZBA;
 Move design standards out of the Zoning Ordinance and put them in the Site Plan Regulations;

Remove the authority to over-rule decisions of the Architectural Design Review Committee.

Move to (or adjust within) Site Plan Regulations

- Buffer requirements
- Parking requirements
- Authorize conditional use permits for stacking space at drive up windows
- Adjust curbing and guard rail requirements to industry standards
- Establish provisions for alternate surface parking lots
- Encourage sustainable design
- Transfer driveway widths to site plan regs

Zoning issues to examine

- Placement/setbacks for mobile homes
- Eliminate involuntary lot mergers
- Reduce parking requirements when near public parking facilities

Local Government Affairs Committee

February 12, 2010

A statement of general support for this effort. Specific suggestions included:

- Consideration of cottage zoning provisions. Also accessory apartments in SF (and other) zones;
- Bonus units for affordable housing development;
- The Architectural Design Review Committee (or others) should establish a Pattern Book that shows desired design features;
- Sign regulations are difficult to use;
- Again, move design standards out of Zoning and into Site Plan;
- The land use regulations are not user friendly. Too many amendments have not been entered on line.
- Board members need more training regarding their authority/responsibility.

Municipal Housing Commission

February 16, 2010

Support of process and concerns expressed included:

- The need to permit accessory apartments;
- The need for bonus units for workforce housing;
- The difficulty of the mandatory cluster requirements in outlying areas.

Transportation Policy Advisory Committee

February 25, 2010

A general discussion that included the following items as points where the development regulations and transportation policy have strong connections:

Increasing opportunities for residential density along public transportation corridors and in the vicinity of bus stops;

The need for greater interconnectivity between commercial lots, so as to minimize traffic in the public right of way.