



Town of Middletown Planning Department

350 East Main Rd., Middletown RI 02842 (401) 849-4027

PLANNING BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES

AUGUST 25, 2016

Town Hall, 2nd Floor Conference Room, 350 East Main Rd., Middletown, RI

Board members present:

Art Weber, Chair

John Ciummo, Vice Chair

Paul Croce

Bill Nash

Ron Wolanski, Planning Director

Drew Pflaumer, Principal Planner

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Weber at 10:30am.

1. Discussion with town staff of potential amendments to the Middletown Zoning Ordinance regarding floor area ratio (FAR) and other options to limit building size for construction in residential zoning districts.

Mr. Wolanski provided a revised version of the draft FAR ordinance, which addressed some of the concerns expressed during the August 3rd public forum. He also provided draft minutes from the August 3rd forum and written public comments that have been received. A copy of the ordinance amendments put forward to the Town Council in 2004 was also provided. Those amendments would have tied the allowed height of a structure to the roof pitch. Homes with roof pitch less than 8:12 would have been limited to 30 feet in height, rather than 35 feet.

There was discussion of the Planning Board's charge related to this issue. It was noted that the action item in the comprehensive plan states that the town shall "explore" residential bulk limit zoning regulations.

Mr. Pflaumer reviewed the changes to the draft ordinance. There was consensus that the ordinance should be limited to apply to R-10 and R-20 districts only, since that is where most smaller lots are located. There was consensus that additional work is needed on the section regarding basements, and how they are counted toward the FAR. Given the revisions, there was a request for an update to the figures previously provided to estimate impact of the ordinance across the affected areas of town.

Mr. Nash stated that he is in favor of the proposed revisions to the draft ordinance, but is generally opposed to the FAR concept. Architectural review might be considered. He is not convinced that there is a problem with ongoing development practices, including the size of new homes, provided that existing zoning regulations are enforced.

Mr. Ciummo agreed, stating that there is no need to take action at this time.

Mr. Croce stated that he is not in favor of the current FAR proposal, but will give further consideration to other options for regulation.

Mr. Weber noted that the primary concern for many of those supporting new regulation seems to be for view protection. He and others questioned whether the town should be involved in regulation for view protection.

Mr. Pflaumer suggested that an alternative to FAR restrictions could be to look at limiting the number of stories. He references the Jamestown ordinance which limits homes to two stories.

It was decided that another meeting of the subcommittee will be scheduled within the next two weeks. Further revisions to the draft FAR ordinance will be made. Copies of the Jamestown ordinance will be provided for review. Board members will also review the ordinance that was put forward to the Town Council in 2004.

Meeting adjourned at 11:20 am.

Respectfully submitted:
Ronald Wolanski
Planning Director