

Town Council Workshop

Minutes

November 27, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm.

Roll Call

Councilors Svedlow, King, Farber, Kitchel, Hemphill and Ferrante were present.

Councilor Jones was absent.

Item 1 Workshop discussion regarding residential density.

Councilor Farber provided an overview of some of the key Comprehensive Plan land use principles that were considered during LPAC's and CDC's development of the July 2016 zoning amendments. These principles included allowing for a diversity of housing types, a desire to protect the character of the rural areas of town, where much of the town's recent growth had been occurring, and directing a greater share of growth toward the town's growth areas. She mentioned that prior committee work had produced an alternative density scheme that would have set different density tiers for lots that were serviced by either public water or public sewer or both or neither. That alternative density scheme was ultimately discarded due to its complexity.

Councilor Svedlow suggested that an expedient way to resolve the two-family and multi-family residential density issue could be to equalize the density numbers for single-family, two-family, and multi-family development.

Councilor Ferrante said that one approach could be to work on two different phases of ordinance amendments. This could involve an immediate fix to equalize the density numbers, as was suggested, and then a second phase to investigate more complex questions that might require more time to vet such as determining whether the growth areas were designated in the correct places.

Councilors generally expressed agreement on the three "policy assumptions" described in the staff memo. (Directing growth to the town's designated growth areas, making two-family and multi-family housing feasible to develop, and reducing or eliminating the disparity in density allowances between single-family housing and two-family and multi-family housing)

In response to a question raised about the prospect of changing zoning to allow for single family detached condominium development, Ethan mentioned that the ordinance's Residential Planned Development (RPD) provision is the one example of how that type of housing is currently allowed in Falmouth. RPDs are currently only allowed in the MUC, VMU, and Route 100 Corridor Overlay Districts. Councilor Svedlow thought it might be worth exploring in greater depth the idea of allowing RPDs in certain other select areas of town.

Councilor King wondered how single family condominium development would look differently on the ground. Ethan said that, currently, single family dwellings are required to be on individual lots and are structured around a street network. This produces a certain pattern of development with certain spacing requirements due to lot dimensional standards such as minimum lot size, minimum lot widths, minimum street frontages, and setbacks from internal lot lines. Allowing single family condominium development would allow dwellings to be placed closer together and, in many instances, would allow additional residential density to be achieved.

Councilor King suggested that the issue of allowing single family condos could be a discussion for a later date.

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Councilor Farber asked if staff could sketch up two scenarios for a theoretical development with one scenario based on current zoning and one scenario based on a possible ordinance change reflecting an equalized density allowance. Councilor Svedlow thought that an example showing a development with multiple dwellings might be helpful.

Councilors Ferrante and Svedlow thought it would be helpful to understand how complicated it would be to allow single family condos in town.

Councilor King wanted to ensure that the Resource Conservation Zoning Overlay policy changes not be forgotten.