

Town Council Workshop Meeting Minutes December 11, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 5:36 pm.

Roll Call

Councilors King, Farber, Kitchel, Hemphill, Jones and Ferrante were present and answering roll call.

Councilor Svedlow was absent.

Item 1 Workshop discussion regarding residential density.

Councilor King recommended that the Council move forward with an amendment to equalize density for single-, two-, and multi-family housing in the RA, RB, and RD Districts with the intent being to not have the ordinances incentivize one form of housing over the other.

Councilor Farber suggested that there are at least four possible options for addressing the residential density issue: Keep the current zoning with no changes; have densities revert back to the pre-July 2016 figures; equalize density for the three different housing types by lowering two- and multi-family density to be the same as the current single-family density; lower two- and multi-family density to be closer to the current single-family density allowances but revert back to the pre-July 2016 density structure that set density for two- and multi-family housing at a 25% higher level than for single family housing.

Councilor Ferrante thought that the benefit of equalizing the densities is that it will help retain the single-family character of certain areas of town but she wonders if this will result in no two-family housing being built.

Councilor Farber said she still supports the overall policy intent behind the July 2016 amendments which was, in part, to purposefully allow for targeted infill opportunities such as adding a dwelling unit to an existing residential property.

Councilor Kitchel expressed some concern even allowing additional single family infill in the Foreside area.

Chair Hemphill said one policy goal of the July 2016 amendments was to change the distribution of housing in town in a way that steered more development to the designated growth areas and away from the rural areas.

Councilor King pointed out that the July 2016 amendments provided several development incentives and thinks the focus should be on how to balance the incentives.

Councilor Farber thought that the two options to either equalize density or lower two- and multi-family density while providing a 25% density bonus over single family density gets the town closer to where it should be. Additionally, she stated that her preference would be to move forward now with adopting the proposed Resource Conservation Zoning Overlay District (RCZO) amendments to expand the District's applicability to include two- and multi-family development, and to return to the originally-adopted open space requirements of providing a 50% open space set aside in the rural zoning districts. She is not supportive of moving forward at this time with exploring the idea of expanding allowances for single family condominiums.

Chair Hemphill stated that he was open minded to the option of lowering two- and multi-family densities but allowing those housing types to have a 25% density bonus relative to single family housing. Ethan Croce, Community Development Director said it is hard to predict how the market would respond to allowing a

25% density bonus for attached housing but thought that people should be prepared to accept a possible outcome whereby a disproportionate percentage of new development in town continues to be two-family or multi-family housing.

Councilor Ferrante said she, too, could support either of the two preferred density adjustment scenarios but leans slightly toward equalization. She was interested in keeping an open mind toward a possible future discussion about whether the town's growth areas are in the right location.

Councilor King would like to create a scenario where developers have choices but are responsive to a neighborhood's character. She supports moving forward now with density equalization and with moving forward with the two RCZO recommendations. She is open minded to a future discussion around single family condominiums.

It was the consensus of the Council to have staff draft amendments to implement the concept of density equalization among the three housing types in the RA, RB, and RD Districts and to also move forward with adoption of the two RCZO District recommendations previously discussed.