



Memorandum

To: Planning Board
From: Ron Wolanski, Town Planner
Date: August 30, 2024
Re: Project updates

Following is an update on the status of projects that the Planning Board is involved with, either as part of Comprehensive Plan implementation, or items otherwise initiated by or referred to the board for consideration:

Planning Board work complete

1. **Historic Resource Preservation** - Consideration of potential Regulations and/or Zoning Ordinance amendments to promote preservation of historic buildings (Comp Plan) – Draft documents were revised based on input received during public workshop meetings and Board discussion. During its February 5, 2020 regular meeting the board voted to forward the proposal to the Town Council for consideration. Presentation to the Town Council was delayed due to potential budgetary impacts of the proposed program and uncertainty of COVID-19 impacts on Town finances. **Status: During its December 2023 regular meeting the Planning Board voted to forward the proposal to the Town Council for consideration. The proposal was included on the Council’s January 2nd meeting agenda for discussion. At that time the Town Administrator stated that an assessment of the economic impact of the proposal would be needed before he would be able to advise the Council. The Tax Assessor will assist with evaluating the tax revenue implications of the proposed program.**

Ongoing Planning Board work items

1. **Comprehensive Community Plan update** – Complete draft of the new 2025 Middletown Comprehensive Community Plan. **Status: Work on the draft housing element is complete for the time being. Stantec has begun work to assist with completing the remainder of the plan. They will provide a workplan for this effort during the next CPUC meeting on September 12th.**
2. **Affordable Housing/State legislation** – Consideration of Comprehensive Plan action items on affordable housing. **Status: The draft Inclusionary housing zoning ordinance will be revisited based on revisions to the statute passed by the legislature in the 2024 session. Additional amendments to the Town’s ordinances will be required to address other new housing-related legislation, including accessory dwelling units (ADUs). The ADU ordinance revisions were presented to the Board during its August 14th meeting, and were then forwarded to the Town Council for consideration. Staff is working to draft other required amendments.**

3. **Airport Zoning** - Draft overlay for airport zoning (Comp Plan) – A Planning Board Subcommittee asked staff to create a draft ordinance based on the Westerly ordinance, which was approved by the subcommittee and forwarded to the full Planning Board. During its March 11, 2020 meeting the Board requested that a public workshop meeting be scheduled, which was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. **Status: During the April 26, 2023 special Planning Board meeting the revised draft ordinance was deemed acceptable and the Board voted to forward the amendments to the Town Council for consideration. The Town Council received the draft during its June 20, 2023 meeting, and ordered the public hearing to be advertised. It appears that the hearing will be scheduled for this summer.**
4. **Use Table Review** - The Board’s use table subcommittee was tasked with reviewing potential amendments to the Zoning Ordinance use table. **Status: The use table subcommittee completed its work to review and recommend amendments to the use table. The proposed amendments were presented to the Planning Board for consideration during its special meeting on April 26th. A public workshop meeting was held on August 3rd, during which the board voted to forward the amendments to the Town Council with a positive recommendation. The Town Council received the recommendation during its September 18^h meeting. It appears that the public hearing to consider the proposed amendments will be scheduled for later this summer.**
5. **Rural Village District zoning amendments** (Comp Plan) – The Planning Board subcommittee met with subject property owners to seek input and buy-in for creation of the new district. Given the lack of urgency on the part of the impacted property owners, the subcommittee advised the board that action on this item be delayed. The Planning Board agreed to table the matter. **Status: Tabled by the Planning Board for further discussion at a future date. Mr. Weber is in the process of reaching out to the impacted property owners to determine if there is interest on their part in proceeding.**
6. **Transportation Options** - Consideration of amendments to the Regulations and/or Zoning Ordinance to promote transportation options (Comp Plan) - Following a public hearing in January 2020 the Planning Board adopted the requirement to provide bike racks (and other items) on site plans and forwarded those amendments to the Town Council for approval. **Status: Planning Department staff are researching other options for promoting transportation alternatives. We are participating in a RIPTA Safe Streets of All (SS4A) grant-funding transportation study of much of the state which will result in safety action plans for participating communities. Having this plan in place will make the Town eligible to apply for implementation funding for safety improvement projects identified in the action plan. We also continue to work with the “Ride Island” effort to identify opportunities to expand bicycle infrastructure on Aquidneck Island. The group will continue to work towards implementing improvements to bicycle infrastructure and Planning Department staff will participate. Also, the Town Council has asked the Town Solicitor to draft a green & complete streets ordinance to require inclusion of pedestrian and bike facilities on road projects.**

Cc: Town Administrator
Town Council