

10/20/2021

To: The City of Belfast Planning Board
FR: Jim Clark, Crocker Road
RE: Proposed Amendments to City Zoning Ordinances

Good morning,

In the name of encouraging more housing opportunities in Belfast, the Board will further consider whether to approve recommending to the City Council sweeping changes to the current zoning of 75% of Belfast. These changes will broaden uses, relax dimensional standards, and modify the language in reference to future development in all areas outside the bypass. As it deliberates, I think the Board should consider some of the bigger picture, long-term issues that are implicated before making any recommendation for passage.

So far, the explanation of the zoning changes and the deliberations around it have centered on whether a proposed new zone should include one parcel or another, and what formula should be used to compute the number of structure/dwelling/bedroom units that can dance on the head of .5 acres. But, the debate has raised far more questions than have been answered. Among those questions are:

What are the mechanisms by which such broad zoning changes will achieve the intended goals of increasing safe, affordable housing in areas outside the bypass?

Is simply opening the door and putting up a welcome sign the kind of planning that makes this sort of thing happen? Or does there have to be a more carefully articulated vision for what we want to see the outside of Belfast become in coming years and decades?

Comments made at the public hearing two weeks ago suggest that the matter of affordability will be left to chance—a kind of supply-side approach that holds if enough new housing is allowed, some of it will by default become affordable.

What are the unintended consequences of reducing density standards and incentivizing broad development on this scale? Will the potential gains outweigh the potential losses? Again, it seems some end vision would help guide these determinations.

What will be the city's commitment to supporting such development should it occur? In reviewing the proposed new use tables, many of the categories seem moot. Why contemplate new standards for various uses on public sewer when clearly public sewer is not available in most areas outside the bypass? Does the city intend to expand services? What about the resultant increases in traffic, the need for pedestrian access, street lighting, trash service, open space, etc.? I note that when the Springbrook Hill was developed, consideration of these elements was considered necessary and were addressed. What in the proposed changes hold future residential development to similar standards?

What will be the property tax and property value implications for the rural areas if they become more intensively developed as envisioned? Will property and housing become more affordable and accessible because property values will become depressed by over development?

What message are we sending (or not sending) to future owners/developers by removing all reference to the concept of "protected" and "agricultural" from land use plan—replacing them with vaguer terminology like "outside" and "road class"? The categories we use to describe ourselves I think convey our priorities. How do these comprehensive changes accord with the present Comprehensive Plan, which clearly places value on the rural, undeveloped character of open land beyond downtown?

With most frontage lots in the designated development zones already taken, what will be the effect on the larger back lots? Will there be incentives offered to property owners do not to develop larger lots into higher density "dwelling options" but instead choose to keep their larger, open, land intact? Does the Board see value in preserving such undeveloped land? How does it communicate that in the proposed zoning changes?

How do we integrate and evaluate proposed growth in terms of climate change and the environment? How, for example, does increasing the number of vehicles on our roads, and houses in our fields, square with Belfast's goals for reducing its carbon footprint?

What are the ecological and environmental implications of broad development supported by subsurface septic and individual wells?

A number of folks have raised these and other concerns. I hope the Board will entertain a more robust discussion of these issues before it votes to recommend the proposed changes to the Council.

Again, thank you for your efforts on behalf of the City.

Jim Clark
76 Crocker Road

October 19, 2021

TO: City of Belfast Planning Board

From: Denise Pendleton, 79 Crocker Road

RE: Comment on Proposed Amendments to City Zoning Ordinances

I am writing to express my concern about proposed changes to zoning that recommend most of the rural areas surrounding Belfast become available as 1-2 acre lots for multi-unit housing.

While I applaud the effort to address the need for affordable housing and to encourage clustered housing, this amendment provides a scattered helter-skelter approach as a solution. It does not provide the kind of comprehensive long-term planning so vitally needed to ensure the creation of desirable neighborhoods with proximity to shops, easy accessibility for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Such a neighborhood is within the realm of possibility in the near future already with the WaldoCap purchase of the former Baer property that lies behind Tractor Supply. Part of that property abuts the 27-acre property my husband and I own. We're delighted with the purchase, including the plan to create affordable housing on this land. We envision our woods trail will become more of a neighborhood trail and welcome that. We envision a neighborhood developing there that expands the downtown Belfast neighborhood to just beyond the bypass. Such a neighborhood would in fact provide proximity to shops, easy access to sidewalks for pedestrians and bicyclists. How does the new zoning take into consideration what is already being offered by the development of this newly purchased WaldoCAP property to provide affordable housing?

A few more questions I ask you to reflect upon if not answer directly for concerned residents:

Has the Planning Board created a trajectory of how much housing is needed, over what period of time and for what demographic? (Families, elderly, only low-income or also middle class who can't afford downtown homes?) Doesn't it seem wise for zoning changes to be made on the basis of such a long-term projection? Does Belfast need to provide housing for another 200 residents? 500? within 5 years or 15 years? Wouldn't the zoning changes then be made incrementally with careful planning and clear rationale for where and when? How will the City support and guide such developments to ensure that Belfast retains its charm throughout its streets and roads?

I note that Crocker Road, (presently Residential-Agricultural II) and Marsh Road have been singled out as "Residential Growth" zones. As a longtime resident of Crocker Road, I would like to know why and as a taxpayer, it seems I (and the rest of the residents) deserve an explanation. We already have the City Garage moved to this road,

adding heavy trucks to what is already a busy pass through for Morrill residents, with a speed limit of 45 mph which is regularly not observed. Is this a proposed "Residential Growth" zone because it's already considered to have lost all its meaningful rural character? If more housing is added, has the City Planner or Planning Board have a notion about how to address increased traffic issues or needs of increased residents to live in an attractive safe neighborhood? Will the City make an effort to provide sidewalks and slower speed limits to ensure safety and maintain value of the homes on the road? What lots do you have in mind for development? My husband and I own a 27-acre lot, perhaps one of the biggest on Crocker Road, and we have no plans to develop, especially with much of the woods in wetlands.

I heard Wayne Marshall say that other roads (Kaler and Mill Lane) have been set aside to "honor requests of several years ago" according to Wayne Marshall. Could Crocker Road residents make such a request and on what basis and rationale are neighborhoods given their various designations?

I also heard Wayne say that this proposed zoning amendment would provide housing for many who are commuting into Belfast for work. I would recommend that more research be done among those commuters before major zoning changes are implemented for them. Those I know who commute into Belfast choose to live in outlying areas because it provides acreage and rural character along with greater affordability. I can't imagine many would be interested in giving up those homes to live in multi-unit housing on a one-acre lot. Meanwhile, those of us who have purchased homes in the now zoned rural residential area just beyond "downtown" have done so exactly for the rural character combined with close proximity to downtown. Having the possibility of several multi-unit houses built next door could, in fact, cause some, if not many, to flee development to live in outlying towns and thus become the very commuters it is proposed the new zoning amendment will eliminate.

To conclude, I ask the Planning Board to *please* give these proposed amendments much more time for much more thorough and thoughtful consideration. Please involve more community members in a meaningful way with multiple information and input gathering sessions vs. a public hearing on a major complex zoning change which does not allow for this. Please take time to research progressive national and even international models for residential development that will help retain what makes Belfast unique and so desirable as a place to live and visit. I make this request as one whose family has lived in Belfast for generations and as one who made the choice to return after thirty years away to enjoy its mix of cultural riches and rural character.

Dear City of Belfast,

Sharon Hanson
209 Belle Belm
Belfast, ME 04501
10/6/21

Tonight I followed directions on the letter I received last Friday, to be able to make a statement at the "Public Hearing" about zoning changes.

When I called the 2nd phone number, I got a busy signal. When I called the first, it let me in, but told me I would be "muted" for the whole meeting.

The letter has a deadline for typed comments, and only an email option, (which I am unable to do as eyes don't tolerate much plus power is too low in fall) - The deadline was 6 hrs. ago. How was I to know from the letter that I would not be included by phone?

It felt like a very pressured window to find out about this on Friday, and try to know what was going on by today, be late for milking chores, only to be shut out.

I am hoping you can therefore

include this written statement: (2)

When I moved from western Maine to Belfast in 1999, one of the first things I did was go to the Code office to understand the zoning, before I bought a place to farm here.

These huge changes feel like betrayal - ~~the~~ trees I farm. I now find myself ^{I now cannot move} wishing the roads would not continue to roar ever louder in the early morning that the woodlands would not be subjected to excavators on so many places at once near our farm, and for that matter across the world, as we are losing the rhythms of precipitation that best support plant life, and all life - and the woodlands are strong participants in what are called the "small rain cycles".

Please stop these zoning changes.
Please encourage people to

have existing dwellings. There is (3)
life on every inch of "open" "un-
developed" land, and we have no
environmental wiggle-room left - already
too much has been stripped, covered, ~~trampled~~
trampled.

If there is a way to Double
lot-sizes ~~minimums~~ (or more), and
then allow multiple units on $\frac{1}{4}$ acre of
each lot, with driveways, lawns, outbuildings
etc. staying off the rest of the parcel, ~~so~~
that would be a better way to welcome
the flood of humans coming our way.

I have been keeping an open door to
those interested in ^{my} farming. It is
difficult - culturally challenging. But
it will be more difficult than that if we
drain, pave, build, and lose our air + our
rain cycles.

The grocery store is making us think

that everything is more okay ecologically than it is. I am closely watching my soil and woodland, and we can tip into desertification and heat waves so easily right now. Every bit of deep moist duff that supports trees and plants is ~~then~~ supporting their transpiration - their breath that even the International Panel on Climate Change says has strong local effects, to protect us from unlivable temperature extremes.

There is no use in housing more people if/when this place then becomes unlivable.

I realize that I sound extreme and crazy most likely, to you. Please try to remember the points I raise, 5 years from now if we are still here. Best wishes and prayers,
 (207)338-3301 Shana Hanson

3 Streams Farm
 209 Beddell Rd.
 2019

Follow up comment

Sanna McKim <sannamckim1@gmail.com>

Wed 10/6/2021 8:55 PM

To: Public Hearing <public@cityofbelfast.org>

(For someone in the future to respond?)

Thank you all for the time you continue to invest into the well-being of the future of Belfast. I really appreciate it. The level of detail you all deal with is mind-boggling.

I've reviewed the Comp Planning Committee docs, scope, subservient relationship to City Council, and the Comp Plan spring survey--and was wondering if you could address the question of context for me.

Where does "housing" fall in the bigger picture (of other priorities)? Are the various priorities looked at as a whole, like how they affect each other?

Who holds the BIG BIG picture of the creative, responsive future of Belfast? And what outside resources, like the latest Climate Change Report, the most successful European models, what COVID is teaching us, or whatever... inform how we plan and make decisions for the future of this special place?

In listening to tonight's meeting, I often wondered where the various assumptions came from. Regarding the proposed amendments to City Zoning Ordinances, what are the (are there) next steps and avenues for public input?

Again, thank you for your service and this chance for input.

Sanna McKim
Edgecmomb Rd, Belfast

Zoning Ordinance Question

Lynn Karlin <lynn@lynnkarlinphoto.com>

Wed 10/6/2021 7:02 PM

To: Public Hearing <public@cityofbelfast.org>

Good evening,

I have a question pertaining to RES-5:

Can you please explain again the zone change that will take place on Robbins Road? How will it differ from what we have now? The sound cut out on my computer when RES-5 was being explained.

Thank you,

Lynn Karlin
35 Robbins Road

planning question

Alan Gibson <alan@gologic.us>

Wed 10/6/2021 7:08 PM

To: Public Hearing <public@cityofbelfast.org>

How many dwellings/bedrooms would be allowed in the proposed Outside Rural 2 zone?

On 2-acre lots that are proposed to allow 3 separate dwelling units or triplexes or quadplexes, will these be subject to subdivision law?

Thanks,

Alan

Alan Gibson

Principal • G O Logic LLC

Belfast, Maine • 207-323-3079 cell

gologic.us

Re: October 6 Public Hearing

Wayne Marshall <wmarshall@cityofbelfast.org>

Wed 10/6/2021 12:24 PM

To: Dorothy Odell <dorothy.odell@gmail.com>

Dear Ms. Odell.

A short note to acknowledge receipt of your public comment. I will be providing such to the Planning Board this afternoon in advance of tonight's public hearing.

Wayne

Wayne Marshall
Project Planner
Code and Planning
City of Belfast
131 Church St
Belfast, ME 04915
(207) 338-1417 x 125
wmarshall@cityofbelfast.org

From: Dorothy Odell <dorothy.odell@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 6, 2021 11:54 AM
To: Wayne Marshall <wmarshall@cityofbelfast.org>
Subject: October 6 Public Hearing

Dear Marshall,

Thanks for your work in undertaking this proposed revision of our zoning ordinances, and I'm looking forward to your presentation this evening.

Your office was wonderfully generous and responsive and supplied me with the 43 pages of technical information I would need to fully understand the implications of the proposal. Not surprisingly, I did not become instantly proficient in understanding the abbreviations and technical terms! Trying to read and understand them made me even more aware of the highly skilled and difficult work done by your department.

The announcement of tonight's meeting came too late for some people to attend and furthermore our community needs more time to understand, interpret and discuss the proposed changes. I ask that you therefore schedule additional hearings for those of us who appreciate the effort you have put into the project but need more time to understand it.

Mailings were received about a week ago by owners of property directly affected. Please understand that others also have a stake in zoning, because in terms of citizenship, all of Belfast belongs to all of Belfast. We love returning home, regardless of which route we're on.

Could you not create a video or series of photos showing the current situation and then some examples of what the change in density or commercial development would look like? I am going to try something like that with my cell phone prior to the meeting.

Hypotheticals - that is rough sketches of buildings that could result from applications of the ordinances would give ordinary citizens like me a chance to better understand the implications of the new rules for development. We would expect something like that from an architect we hired, and the citizens might have a reasonable expectation from their planning board of a few sketches of how our hometown might look if the amendments are adopted.

Even more important would be a broadly advertised series of public discussions about how we would like our city to respond to the challenges of our success in becoming the place where everyone wants to live!

Sincerely,

Dorothy Odell

Re: Comments Attached

Public Hearing <public@cityofbelfast.org>

Wed 10/6/2021 12:21 PM

To: James Clark <clark.ja@gmail.com>

Dear Mr. Clark

A short note to acknowledge receipt of your comments for the 10/6 public hearing. I will be emailing such to the Planning Board this afternoon.

Wayne

From: James Clark <clark.ja@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, October 6, 2021 11:59 AM

To: Public Hearing <public@cityofbelfast.org>

Subject: Comments Attached

Thank you.

10/6/2021

To: The City of Belfast Planning Board
FR: Jim Clark, Crocker Road
RE: Comment on Proposed Amendments to City Zoning Ordinances

Good day,

I am a resident of Belfast who resides on Crocker Road. I am writing to offer comments and concerns regarding the proposed changes to the City's zoning ordinances, as they apply to the "outside the beltway" area.

Like many communities whose star has to some degree risen, Belfast is now striving to deal with the problems associated with its increased visibility and popularity. Long standing re-gentrification of the downtown, along with the recent explosion in real estate prices, combined with a relative scarcity of long-term rental housing has left us frozen out of affordable options for living "inside the beltway." Those pesky laws of supply and demand seem to be reframing the very demography of our city, such that people with the means to pay higher prices and rents live "inside the beltway," while others are forced to look farther afield.

In response to this, the city has recently attempted to increase the housing supply by endorsing new multi-family developments on Wight and Peirce School, and partnering in the development of a large housing project on Congress Street. It has also tweaked zoning requirements in the in-town residential districts to encourage multi-family development. These initiatives are commendable and similar projects – those that attempt to increase the supply of affordable in-town housing should be supported and encouraged. This is where they make the most sense, as they are served by city water, sewer, and are generally within walking distance to services.

However, I am concerned about the Board's current proposal to address Belfast's affordable housing shortage by making sweeping changes to the present zoning of pretty much everywhere "outside the beltway." If I understand what is currently being proposed, the Board is considering major amendments that would redraw the boundaries of most of its existing zones, adopt an entirely new nomenclature to reference these new zones, and modify the existing use tables and dimensional standards that apply to each new zone. In its letter that was recently sent to Belfast property owners: the Board stated, "If adopted, most existing zoning districts would be altered, sometimes quite substantially, and would be replaced by new districts."

This occurs to me a somewhat disproportionate response to a problem that I suspect might be solvable with less sweeping changes to our entire existing zoning.

The Belfast Comprehensive Plan is clear that at least two priorities exist for the city. The first is to support and promote housing, educational and economic opportunities for its citizens. Equally important, the city has committed to maintain inasmuch as possible the rural, open character of its outskirts. Rural area, according to the Plan:

"...comprises greater than 50% of the land area in Belfast. While there are a significant number of single-family homes in the area, most are located on larger lots and there is a significant amount of undeveloped land that is either forested or active or former farm fields. Many of the

lots are greater than 50 acres in size. The City recognizes that development will occur in this area, but it is an area in which the City should not extend public sewer or allow significant levels or types of nonresidential development. This is a rural area."

At the same time, the Plan recognizes that residential growth should and will occur, and identifies certain areas outside the beltway as "Encourage New Residential Area, [which] presents real opportunities in which to encourage new or additional denser housing development. These areas often are located close to services, schools, shopping and major employers, and there is adequate land to encourage new housing without facilitating sprawl. This is a growth area."

As a resident on Crocker Road in what is now Residential-Agricultural II, if the proposed changes are adopted, I will have the distinction of living in one of Belfast's newly-minted "Residential Growth" zones (RES-4). This designation implies that the Board believes denser housing should be encouraged because we are closer to necessary services and employment, and because there is adequate land available for development.

I would argue with both propositions.

There are currently +/-48 lots on Marsh Road between Rt. 137 and Crocker Road (1 mile) that have either frontage on or access to Marsh Road. Forty-six of these lots have existing residences or structures on them. The lots range in size from .33 acres to 57 acres, with the average lot size about 3.4 ac. However, in this total are two large lots (57 ac. and 23 ac.) that tend to skew the picture. Removing the two largest and two smallest lots from total, the average lot size on Marsh Road is 1.8 ac, and 96% of these lots have a house on them already. Further, a quick drive-by count reveals 49 curb cuts on this stretch of Marsh Road. Rezoning this stretch of Marsh Road for more residential development will do two things: it will encourage existing property owners to build more structures on existing smaller lots, and more likely, it will paint a huge bull's eye on the lots with larger acreage, both those with road frontage (which are few) and the large back lots.

A similar situation exists on Crocker Road. In the mile between Rt. 3 and Marsh Road, there are 38 lots with frontage or access to Crocker Road, on which 33 (87%) currently have residences. (This does not include the Springbrook Hill condominium complex with 46 residential units, nor land on Barn Way on which the City's new maintenance yard and solar farm is sited.) The average lot size ranges from .35 ac to 27 ac., with the weighted average on Crocker Road (culling out the two largest and two smallest lots) being 2.4 ac. As is the case with Marsh Road, designating Crocker Road for more residential development could encourage existing property owners to build more structures on existing lots, but more likely, it will make existing lots with larger acreage more vulnerable to development in the future.

I am left wondering how drawing a big green line around certain neighborhoods outside downtown Belfast in which the division of land into ever-smaller pieces is encouraged and on which the concentration of residences can be doubled or tripled comports with the Comprehensive Plan's stated priority to preserve the rural character of the "outside area"?

These currently proposed "residential development areas" arguably have already seen some of the most substantial residential growth in recent decades unassisted by targeted supportive zoning measures (see Figure attached). The 1979 USGS map shows nine structures on Crocker Road (two of them businesses). Today, there are 33, along with a 46-unit subdivision, a city maintenance facility and a solar farm. Similarly, since the 1979 map was issued, residences extending from Rt. 137 to the corner of Marsh

Road and Pitcher Road have swelled from 31 to 53. In short, Crocker Road and Marsh Road have already achieved an average 2-acre per residence density that is a stated goal for the rural zone. And I am sure similar comparisons could be made for the Rt. 137 area, the proposed new RES-5 zone along Robbins Road, as well as along Swan Lake Avenue (SLA).

As for these areas' assumed proximity to services, employment, and schools, a 3-mile radius drawn from the city center shows that there are other existing neighborhoods outside the beltway that are equidistant or closer to downtown than the proposed residential development zones. And when you look at where Belfast's schools, its hospital, its major employers (e.g., Mathews Brothers, Athena) and retail centers are located, RES-4, Rt. 137 and RES-5 are actually more distant from these than are other closer neighborhoods on the outside. So, it is hard to argue the exceptionality of these specific neighborhoods when judged by this criterion.

I speculate that these proposed wholesale zoning changes are an attempt by the Board to in effect "cut its losses"—a means by which the outside rural character of some neighborhoods can be preserved at the expense of others. And I wonder: is the intended outcome to locate intensive residential density within a designated area (one that is already densely residential), while preserving in other areas the rural values that are expressed in the Comprehensive Plan—a sort of zero sum thinking?

If this is the case, and the city decides to create what will essentially become suburban zones, is the city also prepared to provide the necessary services that come with an increase in residential density? Crocker Road, Marsh Road and outer Rt.137 are not on City sewer. This means, short of plans to build a new sewer line there, any new development will need to be supported by numerous individual wastewater systems. Except for the water main serving Springbrook Hill and the city garage on Crocker Road, city water is also not available. Increasing by two or three-fold the number of wells and septic systems that are packed onto smaller lots will necessarily add pressure on existing natural resources. Increasing density will create increased need for investments in stormwater control and mitigation, as well as fire control infrastructure. Increasing density will result in the removal of tree cover and a net loss of open land. What, if any, provisions for open space preservation in these neighborhoods are envisioned by the Board?

Increased residential density will also bring increased traffic on our existing roadways. Crocker Road and Marsh Road already support not only local traffic, but they are major routes for a heavy, daily commuter flow from outer Poor's Mills Road and Morrill. Although there is language in the proposed amendments that addresses amended parking requirements, what will be the proposed measures to control traffic volume, traffic speed (e.g., speed tables, signage, enforcement), and to provide for safe bike and foot traffic (e.g., shoulder widening and grading, installation of sidewalks, cross walks, street lighting, etc.)? Will there be some form of public transportation option for residents without cars who might otherwise need to live inside the beltway to access goods and services? What will be the impact on property values and taxation? Will new residential zones truly be more affordable, or will the increased tax revenue necessary to provide for the added services and infrastructure defeat the overall objectives? If the city is not prepared to take on *all* of the challenges associated with increased-density residential areas, is it prudent to encourage them? If the city seeks to increase housing in already densely populated and growing rural zones without a commitment to add necessary infrastructure, I believe it will result in the sort of "sprawl" that the Comprehensive Plan specifically seeks to avoid.

I come back to my initial question here: is it possible to achieve what are essentially modest goals—to encourage multi-family and affordable housing development outside the beltway—while *at the same*

time maintaining the city's expressed priority to preserve its rural character, and can this be done without a wholesale reinvention of the existing zoning?

I do not believe there is an army of bulldozers idling at the borders of Belfast, waiting to break ground on a dozen new affordable housing projects as soon as Belfast changes its current regulations. Nor do I believe the economics are especially ripe for existing homeowners on larger lots to flood City Hall with applications to build a lot of accessory dwellings. But economies and social conditions change and what seems a distant prospect today might have unintended consequences in the future.

If history is any predictor of future trends, it is more likely that residential development—especially of large, multi-family units—in the rural areas of Belfast will continue on a sporadic basis and will not necessarily be tied to specific areas designated by code, amended or otherwise. There are any number of examples one could cite of uses proposed in zones that don't allow them, and of zones being amended to provide for uses the city deems beneficial. If, for example, the city amends its zoning as presently proposed, and creates residential growth areas such as RES-4, and next year a developer proposes a new multi-family, affordable housing project on Woods Road, or Kaler Road, or Tufts Road, is the Board likely to deny it simply because the project is not located where the zoning intended it to be?

And Belfast is no stranger to the concept of contract rezoning, which essentially considers non-conforming projects on a case-by-case basis. (To wit, I note a number of red dots indicating "Special Use Properties" even on the proposed new zones). If it is the Board's ultimate goal to promote new, affordable housing opportunities outside the beltway, it seems to me that objective could be achieved simply by appending clear, declarative language to that effect to the allowable uses of all the existing outside zones. Such language would essentially state that, within the existing uses and dimensions, any project whose end result will be to increase the availability of affordable housing outside the beltway will be considered in a favorable light by the Board. Period. In this way, we preserve the concepts of "Agriculture" and "Protected" and "Rural" in our zoning nomenclature and give a strong message to developers and others that we value those qualities, while at the same time giving the Board the flexibility it might need to distribute new growth evenly across all zones in the rural area, instead of sacrificing selected areas in order to protect the rural character of others.

I appreciate the time and effort that has gone into the current proposal, but I think when trying to anticipate, and to some degree control for future change, often less is more and simpler solutions can often achieve the desired outcomes.

Thank you for your service to our community, and for your careful consideration of the matter before you.

Respectfully,

Jim Clark
76 Crocker Road
PO Box 815
Belfast, Maine 04915
clark.ja@gmail.com



Oct

23

Re: proposed changes to ordinance

Wayne Marshall <wmarshall@cityofbelfast.org>

Wed 10/6/2021 11:43 AM

To: Edmond J. Bearor <ebearor@rudmanwinchell.com>

Cc: Bub Fournier <directorplanning@cityofbelfast.org>

Hello Ed.

I generally agree with your assessment of the proposed Ordinance amendments.

The current Eurovia operations are in the GP-A zone and are now considered a non-conforming use of record because of the method of rock extraction. With the change to the operation being in the Outside Rural 1 zone, there would be no change in status, as the operation will continue to be considered a non-conforming use of record. I will recommend a small change to the proposed Use Table (a new footnote) that specifically acknowledges that rock extraction operations in effect prior to adoption of the OR-1 zone may continue, subject to compliance with established permit conditions.

Also, I have a similar footnote for bituminous asphalt plants (a separate Use on the Use Table under Industrial Uses), but I errantly identified such for the Swan Lake Ave Mixed Use district rather than the Outside Rural 1 zone. I will correct this error with the Board, meaning that established bituminous asphalt plant operations can continue, again, subject to compliance with existing permit conditions.

Thanks for forwarding the comment on behalf of your client. It was helpful.

Also hope that all is well with you.

Wayne

Wayne Marshall
Project Planner
Code and Planning
City of Belfast
131 Church St
Belfast, ME 04915
(207) 338-1417 x 125
wmarshall@cityofbelfast.org

From: Edmond J. Bearor <ebearor@rudmanwinchell.com>

Sent: Wednesday, October 6, 2021 8:48 AM

To: Wayne Marshall <wmarshall@cityofbelfast.org>

Cc: Bub Fournier <directorplanning@cityofbelfast.org>

Subject: proposed changes to ordinance

Hi Wayne,

I hope you are well. I am writing to you regarding the proposed amendments to the zoning ordinance that are set for public hearing tonight. As you know our firm has represented Lane Construction, now Eurovia, for decades and I assisted the company in obtaining both quarrying and processing approvals for its facility off Swanville Avenue in the 90's. I have reviewed the proposed changes and conclude that it doesn't impact our current operations. It appears that sometime after the facility was licensed (approved) by the planning board that

the ordinance was amended to prohibit such a use in the GP-A district thus making it a nonconforming use. It looks like the proposed changes to the ordinance and the new designation of the area of Eurovia's operations from GP-A to Outside Rural-1 will not have any impact on our operations. We remain a non-conforming use subject to the Non-conforming use provisions of the ordinance, but those provisions are not implicated in the changes being proposed. Can you confirm this for me?

Thanks.

Edmond J. Bearor | Partner
The Graham Building | 84 Harlow Street
P.O. Box 1401 | Bangor, Maine 04402
tel: 207.992.2626 | ebearor@rudmanwinchell.com



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Re: Comments to planning board on zoning changes

Public Hearing <public@cityofbelfast.org>

Wed 10/6/2021 11:17 AM

To: Jean Wakem <jeansearsmont@aol.com>

Dear Ms. Wakem and Ms. Johnson.

A short note to acknowledge receipt of your email. I will provide such to the Planning Board for the upcoming 10/6 public hearing. I also will provide such to the City Council as the Council has more authority over many of the issues that you identify.

I also note that the proposal by the Planning Board would result in decreasing the type of uses that could occur on Mill Lane itself. One of the main reasons for this proposal is because of past concerns expressed by residents of Mill Lane regarding traffic concerns in the area, and because nearly all current uses on Mill Lane are residences.

Many thanks for making your concerns known to the Planning Board.

Wayne

From: Jean Wakem <jeansearsmont@aol.com>**Sent:** Monday, October 4, 2021 4:06 PM**To:** Public Hearing <public@cityofbelfast.org>**Subject:** Comments to planning board on zoning changes

To the planning board regarding amendments to increase options for more affordable housing:

My spouse Vicky Johnson and I, Jean Wakem, reside at 3 Highfield Lane, off of Mill Lane. We have lived here 2.5 years, moving "to town" from Searsmont. We did not realize how heavily trafficked Mill Lane is, when we purchased this house. Large dump trucks and construction vehicles, as well as many kinds of laborers and contractors use Mill Lane due to the ability to more easily make a left turn onto Route 1. People often speed, slowing for the speed bump or crashing over it, then accelerating again very noisily.

In addition, numerous people walk the Lane to the convenience store, and since there is no sidewalk, they often take their lives in their hands to do so. Visibility is poor for drivers and speed makes it difficult to avoid pedestrians.

While we are not opposed to changes in the zoning ordinance that allow for more construction on Swan Lake Avenue, please bear in mind that both Mill Lane and Swan Lake Avenue require sidewalks for pedestrians. In addition, we suggest removing the useless speed bump on Mill Lane, adjust the speed limit to 25 mph for all of Mill Lane and increase the police presence during high trafficked times.

Thanks for your consideration,
Jean Wakem and Vicky Johnson

Sent from my iPad

Re: Zoning Ordinance Amendment

Wayne Marshall <wmarshall@cityofbelfast.org>

Tue 10/5/2021 12:25 PM

To: Ellen Hathaway <erayehathaway@gmail.com>

Cc: Bub Fournier <directorplanning@cityofbelfast.org>; Erica Nealley <planningandcodes@cityofbelfast.org>; Jon Boynton <cityplanner@cityofbelfast.org>

Dear Ms. Hathaway:

Thank you for submitting your comments for the upcoming October 6 public hearing. I will provide such to all Planning Board members today.

With respect to the speed limit on Waldo Ave, our Department will bring your concern to the attention of the City Council. The State Dept of Transportation (MDOT), and not the City, is responsible for establishing speed limits on all roads in the City. The City Council customarily takes the lead role in asking MDOT to review posted speed limits.

Wayne

Wayne Marshall
Project Planner
Code and Planning
City of Belfast
131 Church St
Belfast, ME 04915
(207) 338-1417 x 125
wmarshall@cityofbelfast.org

From: Ellen Hathaway <erayehathaway@gmail.com>**Sent:** Tuesday, October 5, 2021 11:25 AM**To:** Wayne Marshall <wmarshall@cityofbelfast.org>**Subject:** Zoning Ordinance Amendment

RE: Zoning Changes and Speed Limits in Residential 4 District

October 5, 2021

Dear Mr. Marshall,

The notice of proposed amendments to City Zoning Ordinances mailed to property owners this week includes proposed change in lot size on Waldo Avenue. That seems appropriate, although it is not clear whether a change in speed limits along the road is being considered for the future.

Currently, there are 35 driveways, two multi-family residences, and three active commercial establishments along the stretch of about 1,700 feet that is rated at 40 mph. Lots are large and could be divided with the new zoning, which would add more driveways. We also have a bike lane that is also used by disabled residents for their walkers and motorized bikes. This is a great convenience to the neighborhood, but the fact that most drivers now exceed that 40 mph speed limit in anticipation of the 50 mph limit less than a third of a mile up the road, means that traffic roaring through the section of town is already creating potential hazards for the children and disabled persons in the neighborhood.

Your consideration of lowering the speed limit in the densely populated section of Waldo Avenue as part of this change would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Ellen Hathaway
209 Waldo Avenue

OCTOBER 4, 2021
39 PEARL STREET
BELFAST, ME. 04915

CODE & PLANNING OFFICE
131 CHURCH STREET
BELFAST, ME. 04915

ATTENTION MR. WAYNE MARSHALL
PROJECT MANAGER


DEAR MR. MARSHALL

With the goal of increasing the possibilities of more housing the planning board is headed on the correct path.

People who have always lived in Belfast should not have to move outside of Belfast. Hopefully these amendments will allow more housing opportunities.

The planning board has dealt with this problem with expertise, forwarding thinking and easy to understand maps.

Sincerely


Joyce L. Fenner

August 3, 2021
39 Pearl Street
Belfast, ME. 04915

City of Belfast, ME.
Code & Planning Department

Attention: Mr. Wayne E. Marshall


Dear Mr. Marshall

I understand the Planning Department is in the process of considering some zone changes.

The property I am referring to is on Lincolnville Avenue in "the airport growth zone".

I do not understand this restriction as across the street, not that far away, is not restricted.

Sincerely


Joyce L. Feiner

P.S. Fw: Planning Board Hearing on Proposed Zoning Amendments

Melanie Frazek <mfrazek@hotmail.com>

Tue 10/5/2021 10:49 AM

To: Public Hearing <public@cityofbelfast.org>

Cc: Erica Nealley <planningandcodes@cityofbelfast.org>; Melanie Frazek <mfrazek@hotmail.com>

P.s. I just opened the attachments you provided. Now I can perfectly see the boundaries of each zoning section and will be able to match up the written materials to the identified areas. Thanks!

From: Melanie Frazek <mfrazek@hotmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, October 5, 2021 9:31 AM

To: Public Hearing <public@cityofbelfast.org>

Cc: Erica Nealley <planningandcodes@cityofbelfast.org>; mfrazek@hotmail.com <mfrazek@hotmail.com>

Subject: Re: Planning Board Hearing on Proposed Zoning Amendments

Thank you, Mr. Marshall. The information you have provided below is quite comprehensive and very helpful. I will go to the website again following your specific instructions, and also review the attachments you have provided prior to the Wednesday hearing. I sincerely appreciate your efforts.

Again, thanks much.

Melanie Frazek

From: Public Hearing <public@cityofbelfast.org>

Sent: Monday, October 4, 2021 3:55 PM

To: Melanie Frazek <mfrazek@hotmail.com>

Cc: Erica Nealley <planningandcodes@cityofbelfast.org>

Subject: Re: Planning Board Hearing on Proposed Zoning Amendments

Dear Ms. Frazek

Thanks for submitting your comment. It will be provided to all Board members.

I know you stated that you checked the website, however, I would ask that you recheck the website to see if the information provided may help to address your questions. The website is: cityofbelfast.org, reference the link Planning and Codes, and then October 6, Multi-Family Housing Ordinance (first link on the left side of the Planning and Codes site).

I note that this site contains individual maps that compare the proposed zoning districts to the existing zoning districts. I also checked the Assessors link on the City website to find the location of your property, and have attached the specific individual zoning district map that applies to your area on Woods Road.

The Woods Road area is now in the Protection Rural zone. If the proposed amendments are adopted, this area would be in the Outside Rural 1 zone. The standards (lot size, structure setbacks and such) for

the Outside Rural zone are very similar to the current Protection Rural zone; for example, the minimum lot size remains at 2 acres. There are, however, some structure setback changes proposed, the current 30' front setback would increase to 50' for new structures, the side setback would increase from 15' to 25' for new structures, and the rear setback would increase from 15' to 20' for new structures.

The type of uses permitted in the Outside Rural-1 zone are very similar to the current Protection Rural zone. The main change that is proposed would result in allowing the construction of a triplex (3 units in 1 structure) or fourplex (4 units in one structure) in an area where this type of development is now prohibited. In addition, the Planning Board is proposing an option called Dwelling, Option 1, in which a property owner would have flexibility to develop a range of housing types on their property based on the size of the lot, the number of buildings constructed, the number of dwelling units in the buildings, and the total number of bedrooms in all of the dwelling units. You can find more specific information on the Dwelling, Option 1 approach by referencing the attached Footnotes (Document Q on the website) to the Dimensional Table (Document P).

I hope that this additional information is helpful. If you would like to discuss any of your concerns you can contact me at my email address, wmarshall@cityofbelfast.org, or by calling 338-3370 x 125.

Wayne

Wayne Marshall
Project Planner
Code and Planning Department
wmarshall@cityofbelfast.org

From: Melanie Frazek <mfrazek@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 4, 2021 3:41 PM
To: Public Hearing <public@cityofbelfast.org>; Wayne Marshall <wmarshall@cityofbelfast.org>
Cc: Melanie Frazek <mfrazek@hotmail.com>
Subject: Planning Board Hearing on Proposed Zoning Amendments

Good afternoon,

I have read the letter announcing the Planning Board's public hearing this Wednesday, 10/6, via zoom, and I intend to view the hearing. I've also carefully read the overview of the proposed amendments and studied the map which was enclosed. However, I am not making heads or tails of most of the information. I've also checked the website for better information and a better map, but to no avail. Therefore...

At the Wednesday hearing, would members of the Planning Board please present what exactly is being proposed in laymen's language - perhaps with examples? Moreover, in referring to the zoning districts being affected, would the speakers please give more detailed reference points (e.g., west of Road A at the corner of cross street B; extending to the east of what is commonly known as Business XYZ)? Please give us more concrete reference points to put the proposed amendments in perspective. The map enclosed in the letter was not helpful, at least not to me.

Thank you very much for considering my request. I look forward to seeing the results of the Planning Board's work.