

Mayor's Task Force on Zoning

Minutes: March 11, 2015

Present: Adam Blank, Leigh Grant, Joel Zaremby, John Kydes, Felix Serrano, Julie Burton

Guest: Diane Cece (CNNA) regarding public engagement

Will have updates on zoning and TOD summary by next meeting.

Special Permit code is being discussed by Zoning Commissioners in light of legal "requirements".
Considering different code for residential vs commercial zones.

Discussed Public Notification for zoning applications/public hearings.

Looked at current vs neighboring towns. Norwalk seems to have the bare minimum. Until recently only Public Hearings by certified mail to abutting properties plus web and newspaper. Felix said Redevelopment does more, e.g. blanket mailing of whole parcel area.

Other Trigger options: applications for CAM, special permit, other(?)

Delivery options from other cities: register for emails (by type/location), signs in addition to(?) letters, web, newspaper

Area Notified (Norwalk currently just abutting): 100 - 500 ft radius. Can differ depending on zone.

Content: what should be included in notification? e.g. contact information, meeting information, project specs? Julie Burton wondered if there could be a link to a short web page that explained zoning process, e.g. committee meetings, how to contact Commissioners during the committee process, public hearings, etc.

John Kydes to check with IT/Karen Delvecchio re: ability to have residents sign up for email notifications.

Discussed if process would cross departments. perhaps streamline process, make more efficient?

Any liability issues?

Diane Cece spoke about the difference between public notification and public engagement. She gave several examples of cities that had public outreach/engagement policies. She asked if task force would consider convening a public outreach panel. Adam Blank thought that the CNNA and others could come up with recommendations and present to Task Force later in the year.

Adam suggested Task Force focus on public notification revisions regarding:

1. Adding notices for applications - with/without 1 paragraph description of project

2.expanding delivery options

Discussed current notification process for Bd. of Ed., especially regarding large residential projects. Apparently Staff gets notified but Board does not get notified directly. Suggest improvement.

Discussed traffic studies and area studied. Do they always include as much area as they should, e.g. BJ's study. Should they include pedestrian and bike traffic? What about RR crossings that can delay/back up traffic?

For redevelopment state/zoning have requirements, so the Redev. Agency itself does not specify.

TOD study: Felix said Susan S. will give us an update. Have zone changes been recommended/implemented? Should zoning be involved?

How should/could zone changes be implemented/communicated to residents living within the area? Norwalk currently does no notification other than public hearing. Need to look at what other cities do to see if there is a reasonable way to notify.