

**TOWN OF COLUMBIA
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT
Monday, December 11, 2023 7:00 pm

Regular Meeting – HYBRID

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85688676220>

Meeting ID: **856 8867 6220**

Or join by phone 1-646-558-8656 same ID and passcode
THIS IS A HYBRID PUBLIC MEETING. THE PUBLIC CAN ATTEND IN-PERSON OR ELECTRONICALLY. THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN THIS AGENDA CONTAINS THE LINK TO ACCESS THE MEETING ELECTRONICALLY.

AGENDA

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. ROLL CALL AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES**
- 3. ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO AGENDA**
- 4. APPROVAL OF PZC REGULAR MEETING MINUTES of November 27, 2023**
- 5. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS**
- 6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS (Discussion/Possible Action)**
- 7. NEW BUSINESS (Discussion/Possible Action)**
 - 7.1 Election of Officers
- 8. REGULATION REVISIONS (Discussion)**
 - 8.1 Section 3 revisions
 - 8.2 Section 52.7.19 Planned Neighborhood Housing
- 9. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS**
- 10. COMMISSION OPEN DISCUSSION**
- 11. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:**
- 12. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**
 - Pending Legal Action per State Statutes Section 1-200(6)(B)
- 13. ADJOURNMENT**

**TOWN OF COLUMBIA
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT
Monday, November 27, 2023 7:00 pm

**Regular Meeting – HYBRID
Minutes**

Members Present: Chairman Rick Nassiff, Vice-Chair Vera Englert, Thomas Currier , Robert Powell, Richard Napolitano, Ed Madrak (Alternate), L. Preston (Alternate)

Members Excused: Walter Tabor, Justin Riendeau, and Don Schofield (Alternate)

Staff Present: Town Planner John Guskowski (via Zoom), Board Clerk Mary Kay Hyman

Others Present: Fire Chief Scott Haddad (via Zoom), Fire Marshal Mike Lester (via Zoom), Rhonda Kincaid of CDE, Michael Magaldi (via Zoom) and and 3 Others Present

1. CALL TO ORDER: R. Nassiff called the meeting to order at **7:00 PM**.

2. ROLL CALL AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES:

E. Madrak was seated for J. Riendeau

L. Preston was seated for W. Tabor

3. ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO AGENDA: None

4. APPROVAL OF PZC REGULAR MEETING MINUTES of November 13, 2023:

R. Powell asked that the November 13, 2023 Minutes be modified to reflect that he stated he is opposed to the new verbiage which would allow zero side yard setbacks from lot lines.

R. Nassiff **MOVED** to **APPROVE** the Amended Minutes of November 13, 2023 R. Powell **SECONDED**, R. Napolitano **ABSTAINED. MOTION PASSED 6:0:1**

5. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS:

5.1 ZEO Report – R. Nassiff tabled discussion to a future meeting.

6. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:

Rhona Kincaid of the Coalition of Diversity and Equity provided the following input regarding the Regulation Amendment Section 52.7.19.

I'm speaking as a member of Coalition on Diversity and Equity. Our Columbia Affordable Housing Subcommittee has met to review the Draft Zoning Regulation Amendment (based on current Section 52.7.19) and would like to submit some brief preliminary comments and questions tonight.

We want to thank the Planning and Zoning Commission for your efforts to encourage a broader range of housing options in Columbia, including affordable housing. Our larger group next meets on December 12th and may provide the Commission with additional input.

1) Was there any developer input as this draft amendment was written? If not, we'd respectfully recommend that the Planning and Zoning Commission look for developer input to help ensure the draft is as development-friendly as possible.

2) With clear criteria for Planned Neighborhood Housing, is a Special Permit necessary? A developer might be more encouraged to build in town if he/she didn't have to go through that process.

3) Is it intended that this amendment would replace Section 52.7.21 Multi-Family Housing? If not, there appear to be some inconsistencies between the two.

4) It would be helpful to understand the reasoning for a number of the proposed criteria, e.g., maximum unit density, minimum number of acres, minimum frontage, etc. We believe the more flexible the regulations, the more likely a developer can build something that is affordable and sustainable. For example, if we read this correctly, the draft amendment has a limit of six units per building, but the existing Multi-Family Housing regulations allow 12 units (if it is a two-story building).

5) Evaluation criteria includes consideration of "the existing and future character of the neighborhood" and "safeguards to prevent detrimental impact to adjacent property and the neighborhood in general." Without clear definitions, these criteria appear subjective. Are the criteria actually needed if a developer meets all the regulations listed in the amendment?

6) We'd also suggest the evaluation criteria include consideration of how a proposed project contributes to achieving the Town's Affordable Housing Plan goal of 30 additional affordable housing units.

Thank you for your time and work on this amendment, and for the opportunity for input. We will continue to review the draft and submit any additional questions or comments.

R. Nassiff welcomed continued input from the CDE and invited them to attend the PZC Subcommittee Meetings.

Fire Marshal M. Lester Spoke regarding the Drafted Regulation changes not mentioning the water supply for Multi-Unit Structures. He asked if the current regulations for Cisterns would apply. He stated he has ideas and will plan to attend the next meeting.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS (Discussion/Possible Action): None

8. NEW BUSINESS (Discussion/Possible Action)

8.1 C.G.S. 8-24 Review - HVAC and Air Quality School Project

R. Nassiff asked J. Guskowski why this is in front of the PZC.

J. Guskowski described the Statutory requirement of Section 8-24 that requires any acquisition, sales, or significant improvement of Town property to be referred to the Planning Commission for comment related to the Plan of Conservation & Development”

R. Nassiff stated this is mechanical in nature.

T. Currier asked where this would impact Planning and Zoning.

R. Napolitano replied maybe regarding noise.

R. Nassiff asked J. Guskowski for his input regarding the impact.

J. Guskowski stated the impact is primarily the Cost and Land Use.

R. Nassiff stated his perspective is to consider, as there is no change to Zoning and it is being managed by the Board of Selectmen.

R. Nassiff **MOVED** to **APPROVE** and Support the HVAC/Air Quality Project (C.G.S. 8-24), R. Powell **SECONDED**, R. Napolitano and V. Englert **ABSTAINED. MOTION PASSED 5:0:2**

8.2 Section 51.7 - Minor Modifications of Approved Special Permits

R. Nassiff stated he feels the following Regulation changes are ready to go to Public Hearing. He asked J. Guskowski to give a brief overview of each of the changes.

J. Guskowski stated changes to 51.7 are to streamline minor changes for property owners.

R. Powell asked that J. Guskowski change the first line in 51.7 to “Minor Changes to (not in)”.

J. Guskowski agreed.

8.3 Section 31.2 and 31.3 - Site Plan vs. Special Permit Uses in CM Districts

J. Guskowski stated changes to 31.2 and 31.3 are to streamline the Application Process and to move items, from Special Permit to Commercial District.

8.4 Section 21.2.1 - Family/Home Day Care

J. Guskowski stated changes to 21.2.1 are to Comply with changes to recent State Law.

R. Nassiff **MOVED** to **RECEIVE** and **SCHEDULE** the Public Hearing for Regulation Changes to Sections 51.7, 31.2, 31.3 and 21.2.1 for Monday, January 08, 2024. R. Powell **SECONDED. MOTION PASSED 7:0:0**

9. REGULATION REVISIONS (Discussion)

9.1 Section 3 revisions

9.2 Section 52.7.19 Planned Neighborhood Housing

R. Nassiff stated discussion of these revisions will be discussed at the PZC Subcommittee Meetings set for 6:00 PM before the Regularly scheduled PZC Meetings.

10. COMMISSION OPEN DISCUSSION:

R. Nassiff asked D. Holcroft if he had any comments or questions.

D. Holcroft responded not at this time.

R. Nassiff thanked R. Napolitano for his time and dedication to the PZC.

R. Napolitano said a kind farewell and reminded the Commission that it is about the people.

11. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS: None

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Pending Legal Action per State Statutes Section 1-200(6)(B)

The Commission did not go into Executive Session

13. ADJOURNMENT:

R. Napolitano **MOVED** to **ADJOURN**; R. Nassiff **SECONDED**. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting was adjourned at **7:34 PM**.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Kay Hyman, Board Clerk.

Please see the minutes of subsequent meetings for approval of these minutes and any corrections hereto.

SECTION 3 - ZONING PERMITS & CERTIFICATES OF ZONING COMPLIANCE

(Entire Section revised 7/1/14) Proposed revisions June 2023

- 3.1 Zoning Permit.** No building or regulated structure shall be erected, added to, or structurally altered and no use shall be established until a Zoning Permit has been issued by the Zoning Enforcement Officer. All applications for such permits shall be in accordance with the requirements of these Regulations. Unregulated structures that require building permits may be reviewed by the Zoning Enforcement Officer for compliance without requiring a separate zoning permit.
- 3.1.1 Application. Every application for Zoning Permit shall be accompanied by such information and exhibits as are required by these Regulations or may be reasonably required by the Zoning Enforcement Officer in order that the proposal of the applicant may be adequately interpreted and judged as to its conformity with the provisions set forth in these Regulations. The application shall include a certification that the lot is on record by deed, including the date of recording, or is in a subdivision which has been approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission.
- 3.1.2 Plot Plan. The application shall be accompanied by two copies of a plot plan based on an A2 survey prepared by a land surveyor registered in the State of Connecticut, drawn to scale showing the actual dimensions of the lot to be built upon, the size of the structure(s) to be erected, the location of the structure(s) upon the lot, the floor area ratio, the dimensions of all open spaces and easements, the setback lines observed by the structure(s), the location of driveways and curb cuts, the area and percentage of impervious cover, both existing and proposed, any approval provisions under Section 51 or 52 of these Regulations and such other information as may be necessary. The Zoning Enforcement Officer may waive any of the plot plan requirements in cases where it is not needed to determine conformity with these Regulations.
- 3.2 Certificate of Zoning Compliance:** No land shall be occupied or used and no regulated structure built or altered shall be occupied or used in whole or in part for any purpose, until a Certificate of Zoning Compliance shall have been issued by the Zoning Enforcement Officer, stating that the premises or regulated structure complies with all the provisions of these Regulations. Such a Certificate is also required for any change, extension, or alteration in a use. Prior to issuance of a Certificate of Zoning Compliance, the applicant shall submit an as-built survey at the A2 level, prepared by a licensed surveyor, showing the exact placement of the regulated structures on the lot. No such Certificate of Zoning Compliance shall be issued by the Zoning Enforcement Officer until all zoning requirements and conditions have been met. The Zoning Enforcement Officer may waive the as-built survey requirements in cases where it is not needed to determine conformity with these Regulations.

Regulated Structure: Anything constructed or erected, the use of which requires location on the ground or attachment to something having location on the ground. As used in these Regulations, structures shall include, but are not limited to buildings, swimming pools, fences or walls greater than six (6) feet in height, permanently placed outdoor storage containers, ~~Above~~ ground storage tanks in excess of 250 gallons, and other significant buildings or building additions in excess of 200 square feet.

Retaining walls and public utility equipment (as defined herein) are not considered structures under these regulations.

In the Columbia Lake Protection Area Overlay Zones, new unroofed terraces, patios, and similar hardscape, semi-impervious and impervious surfaces greater than 100 s.f., or, modifications or additions to unroofed terraces, patios, and similar hardscape, semi-impervious and impervious surfaces after the effective date of these regulations that are equal to or greater than 100 s.f., shall be considered structures and shall require a Zoning Compliance Certificate but shall be exempt from the setback and lot coverage requirements.

Unregulated Structure: Small accessory or appurtenant structures or structural elements that are not for human or animal occupancy with a footprint of less than 200 square feet, and do not require a building permit.

Unregulated Structures shall be exempt from all zoning permitting requirements.

Water-related structural improvements -such as piers, docks, boat ramps, and lifts are permitted structures exempt from the minimum yard requirements and are subject to the securing of the necessary permits from the Columbia Board of Selectmen and the Columbia Inland Wetlands Commission.

Structural Alteration: The term "structural alteration" shall mean any change or addition to the structure or supporting members of a building, such as walls, columns, beams or girders.

Formatted: Underline

Formatted: Font: Bold, Font color: Red

Formatted: Indent: Left: 0", First line: 0"

Formatted: Indent: Left: 0.13", First line: 0"

DRAFT ZONING REGULATION AMENDMENT – FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES

The following proposed regulation is based on the current Section 52.7.19, “Neighborhood Retirement Housing” but is revised to remove the current age restrictions and to encourage a broader range of housing options in Columbia, including affordable housing, while retaining some design and neighborhood-context control for the Commission. *Draft 11/14/23*

52.7.19 Planned Neighborhood Housing (Entire Section revised 6/01/15) (Draft 11/14/23)

52.7.19.1 Intent: To provide for a broader variety of housing in a development pattern that preserves the neighborhood residential character of the Town of Columbia by permitting an increase in density within the development and allowing alternative housing types with a site design that is in harmony with and preserves natural, scenic and historic site design features; and to provide incentives and opportunities for the creation of affordable housing while also preserving open space lands.

52.7.19.2 Required Approvals: A Special Permit shall be required for any proposed Planned Neighborhood Housing. The Special Permit may be issued only by the Columbia Planning and Zoning Commission after a public hearing and shall be issued only in conformity to the provisions of Section 52.7.19 of these Regulations. A pre-application review with the Commission is strongly encouraged.

52.7.19.3 Definitions: For purposes of this Section, the following definitions shall apply:

Planned Neighborhood Housing: A building, or group of buildings located on a single parcel of land or multiple contiguous parcels, sharing common management and ownership, and consisting of detached, semi-detached, or multiple-dwelling units.

Dwelling Unit: A single unit providing complete, independent living facilities for qualified occupants including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation.

Planned Neighborhood Housing Complex: All buildings, structures and land associated with the development site. Ownership of the Complex shall be by one entity, either a Common Interest Ownership as defined by CT General Statutes or Private Ownership.

Unbuildable area: The area, expressed in square feet, within the site that is comprised of wetlands soils, watercourses, lakes, ponds, swamps, marshes, flood zone A per FEMA maps, slopes greater than 20%, and easements prohibiting building development.

Dedicated open space: Land whose future use is legally restricted to conservation, recreation, or agriculture in perpetuity.

52.7.19.4 Application for Planned Neighborhood Housing:

- A. Approvals: A Special Permit is required under the provisions of Section 52.3.
- B. Information Required to be submitted:
 1. Application signed by the owner and agent, if any, stating the ownership of the property to be developed and summarizing the development proposal.
 2. An approval of the septic system design by the appropriate authorizing agency.
 3. An approval of the water supply system from the appropriate authorizing agency.

4. Key map of the neighborhood on a scale of 1" = 400' showing the relation of the proposed development to abutting properties and to existing and proposed streets.
5. Certified A-2 base map, on a scale of 1" = 40', showing the following:
 - a. Location of benchmarks.
 - b. Size of the Complex in total acreage.
 - c. Location of any ponds, brooks, or inland wetland areas, as certified by a soil scientist.
 - d. Two foot contours extending fifty (50) feet beyond site boundaries. Contour information shall be collected by an actual field survey or by means of photogrammetry (aerial topography).
 - e. Location of unbuildable area. Notes should reflect total area (in square feet) of buildable and unbuildable areas on the site.
 - f. Location of subsurface sewage disposal area and site testing locations for the same.
 - g. Location of water supply.
 - h. Location, dimension and basement floor elevation of all buildings; as well as foundation and footing drains.
 - i. Location of internal private roads, individual driveways, parking areas, and parking spaces.
 - j. Location of accessory buildings, structures and facilities.
 - k. Location of proposed dedicated open space.
6. Architectural plans showing accurate elevations, height, bulk, construction materials and other massing, architectural, and design features of the proposed development.
7. Stormwater Plan per Section 6.3 of Columbia Subdivision Regulations.
8. An erosion and sedimentation control plan prepared in accordance with Article VIII of the Zoning Regulations of the Town of Columbia.
9. Landscaping plan (may be incorporated as a part of the Site Plan referenced in Section 51) showing:
 - a. Planting schedules - type, number, minimum size of trees and/or shrubs and other plants.
 - b. Treatment of seeding and sodding.
 - c. Pavement types for vehicular and pedestrian movement.
 - d. Type, height and density of any proposed screening or fencing.
10. Open Space Plan.
 - a. Description of the proposed use of the areas of open space
 - b. Proposed ownership and maintenance responsibility. All conveyances of rights, title, interest and easements shall be in a form approved by the Town Attorney, shall be accompanied by a Certificate of Title and releases or subordinations of liens and encumbrances where appropriate, and shall be executed and recorded on the Columbia Land Records prior to or concurrent with the filing of the final Subdivision Plan, unless an alternative schedule is approved by the Commission.

52.7.19.5 Standards: Any application for a Special Permit under the provisions of Section 52.7.19 shall meet the following requirements:

- A. Complex Size and Location: The minimum size of Planned Neighborhood Housing Complex is four (4) acres, shall be located in a Residential District (RA) and shall have a minimum frontage of fifty (50) feet at the street line of a public street.
- B. Dwelling units per acre: The maximum number of dwelling units in the Planned Neighborhood Housing Complex shall be determined by soil capacity and State Public Health Code but shall not exceed 8 units per acre of market-rate housing units, or 12 units per acre if a minimum of 20% of units are set aside as "affordable" as defined in this subsection, excluding "Unbuildable Area" as defined in Section 52.7.19.3
 - 1. Affordability Percentage. At least twenty percent (20%) of the dwelling units will be rented or conveyed subject to an incentive housing restriction. Such restriction shall require that, for a least thirty (30) years after initial occupancy of the development, the dwelling units will be sold or rented at, or below, prices that will preserve the units as housing for which persons pay thirty percent (30%) or less of their annual income, where the income is less than or equal to eighty percent (80%) or less of the area median income. In determining compliance with this Section, the Commission will use regulations or guidelines published by the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, the Connecticut Department of Housing, or any other successor agency designated in accordance with Conn. Gen. Stats. §8-13m. to 8-13x.
 - 2. Affordability Plan. Each applicant for multiple housing units within the Planned Neighborhood Housing development will provide an affordability plan that will detail the administration, monitoring, and enforcement of the dwelling units to be sold or rented at below market rates as described above. The plan will include proposed deed restrictions or covenants, lease agreements, common interest ownership documents, bylaws, rules and regulations, sample income calculations, and any other information as the Commission may require, to establish compliance with this Section and Conn. Gen. Stats. §8-13m. to 8-13x.
 - 3. Designation of Administering Agency. The applicant will indicate the name, address, and other contact information for the agency that will administer the sale or rental of the dwelling units that are subject to the below-market sale or rental in accordance with this Section.
 - 4. Affordable dwelling units may be offered for sale or rental in individual, public, cooperative, or condominium ownership. Documentation as to management, organization, and incorporation of applicable ownership associations will be submitted to the Commission at the time of filing the application for a Planned Neighborhood Housing development.
 - 5. Affordable units shall be of a construction quality and design that is comparable to market-rate units within the development and shall be dispersed throughout the development.
- B. No dwelling unit shall contain more than three (3) bedrooms and no more than one-third of the total number of dwelling units in the Complex shall contain three (3) bedrooms.
- C. No building shall contain more than six (6) dwelling units
- D. Community buildings, recreational facilities and open spaces designed for, and used principally by, the residents are permitted as accessory uses.

- E. Building Height: Maximum height of 28 feet if one-story and 35 feet if two-story.
- F. Separating distance for buildings with dwelling units within the Complex: Minimum separating distances shall be not less than twenty (20) feet for one-story buildings, and thirty-five (35) feet for two-story buildings.
- G. Setbacks: All buildings shall be setback 50 feet from property lines of residential properties that abut the perimeter of the Complex parcel(s) and 35 feet from existing town or state right of ways.
- H. Sewage Disposal: Each dwelling unit shall be connected to an approved sewage disposal system.
- I. Water Supply: Water Supply facilities must meet the requirements of the State Health Code.
- J. Parking, driveways, and roads: The following standards shall apply to parking, driveway and roads:
1. All public streets within the Planned Neighborhood Housing Development shall be constructed in accordance with these Regulations, town ordinance and the Town of Columbia Construction and Development Standards.
 2. All internal roadways and driveways shall be private roads and shall be maintained by the owner or Homeowners Association.
 3. Emergency Vehicle Access
 - a. All streets must provide adequate fire truck and emergency vehicle access.
 - b. Developers are encouraged to design roads and accesses that minimize the expanse of pavement through the employment of "natural" roadside surfaces that accommodate the turning radii and clearances necessary for the maneuvering of emergency vehicles.
 4. Driveways shall be constructed in conformance with Section 8.12 of the Zoning Regulations of the Town of Columbia and shall be bituminous concrete.
 5. There shall be at least two parking spaces provided for each single-family dwelling unit. One of these parking spaces may be provided within an attached garage.
 6. Guest parking shall be provided throughout the complex in small lots or pull-off areas in close proximity to dwelling units and other areas such as near a community building or passive/active recreation areas.
- K. The entire Planned Neighborhood Housing Complex shall be owned by one entity. Driveways, parking areas, utilities, water, sewage, streets, landscaped areas, accessory buildings, structures and facilities, and open spaces designated on the site plan shall be owned and maintained by the owner of the Complex. If the owner is a common interest ownership association pursuant to the Connecticut Common Interest Ownership Act of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Association By-Laws and Association Rules shall be reviewed and approved by the Town Attorney.
- L. All utility transmission and service lines shall be underground, except when waived by the Commission due to site limitations.

- M. Architectural considerations: All buildings shall share a common exterior architectural theme and be compatible with other dwellings in Columbia. Each dwelling unit shall contain a basement or attic for storage.
 - N. Home office uses shall be allowed in conformance with Section 8.5.1 of the Zoning Regulations of the Town of Columbia with the exception that no additional commercial vehicle is permitted.
 - O. Adequate street lighting for internal roads shall be provided.
 - P. Appropriate signage shall identify the entrance to the complex, intersections, directions, and patterns of vehicular movement. The placement, size and height of the signs shall conform to the requirements of Section 62.
 - Q. A minimum of 15% of the lot shall be preserved in perpetuity as dedicated open space for conservation, recreational or agricultural use where appropriate. Such open space shall be located so that it is an integral part of the residential area, readily accessible to residents of the parcel and to necessary maintenance equipment except where such accessibility would interfere with a stated conservation purpose or agricultural use.
 - R. The Planned Neighborhood Housing Complex may be developed in stages. The initial site plan shall show the full development with the first stage depicted in detail; future stages may be shown in concept. Future stages shall require Special Permit approval by the Commission.
- 52.7.19.6 Evaluation Criteria: In considering the proposed application, the Planning and Zoning Commission shall be guided by the following:
- A. The existing and future character of the neighborhood in which the use is to be located.
 - B. The location of principal and accessory buildings in relation to one another.
 - C. The height, bulk, and density of buildings in relation to one another.
 - D. Traffic circulation within the site; amount, location, and access to parking; traffic load or possible circulation problems on existing streets; pedestrian safety throughout the site and in the immediate neighborhood.
 - E. Availability of water to the site and adequate disposal of sewage and storm water.
 - F. Safeguards to prevent detrimental impact to adjacent property and the neighborhood in general.
 - G. Provisions for open space, common areas and amenities, including size, configuration, purpose, connectivity to other open space, public and environmental benefit, ownership, maintenance, and control. The proposed purpose, use and management of dedicated open space shall be reviewed based on the criteria listed in the open space section of the Columbia Plan of Conservation and Development.
- 52.7.19.7 The Commission may provide for bonding of all required common improvements and for soil and erosion control.
- 52.7.19.8 The owner of the Complex is responsible for the maintenance of all common improvements and for maintaining the provisions of the approved Special Permit and Site Plan and the verification of occupancy qualifications.

11/27/23 - Preliminary input from Coalition on Diversity and Equity re: Draft Zoning Regulation Amendment based on current Section 52.7.19

I'm speaking as a member of Coalition on Diversity and Equity. Our Columbia Affordable Housing Subcommittee has met to review the Draft Zoning Regulation Amendment (based on current Section 52.7.19) and would like to submit some brief preliminary comments and questions tonight.

We want to thank the Planning and Zoning Commission for your efforts to encourage a broader range of housing options in Columbia, including affordable housing. Our larger group next meets on December 12th and may provide the Commission with additional input.

- 1) Was there any developer input as this draft amendment was written? If not, we'd respectfully recommend that the Planning and Zoning Commission look for developer input to help ensure the draft is as development-friendly as possible.
- 2) With clear criteria for Planned Neighborhood Housing, is a Special Permit necessary? A developer might be more encouraged to build in town if he/she didn't have to go through that process.
- 3) Is it intended that this amendment would replace Section 52.7.21 Multi-Family Housing? If not, there appear to be some inconsistencies between the two.
- 4) It would be helpful to understand the reasoning for a number of the proposed criteria, e.g., maximum unit density, minimum number of acres, minimum frontage, etc. We believe the more flexible the regulations, the more likely a developer can build something that is affordable and sustainable. For example, if we read this correctly, the draft amendment has a limit of six units per building, but the existing Multi-Family Housing regulations allow 12 units (if it is a two-story building).
- 5) Evaluation criteria includes consideration of "the existing and future character of the neighborhood" and "safeguards to prevent detrimental impact to adjacent property and the neighborhood in general." Without clear definitions, these criteria appear subjective. Are the criteria actually needed if a developer meets all the regulations listed in the amendment?
- 6) We'd also suggest the evaluation criteria include consideration of how a proposed project contributes to achieving the Town's Affordable Housing Plan goal of 30 additional affordable housing units.

Thank you for your time and work on this amendment, and for the opportunity for input. We will continue to review the draft and submit any additional questions or comments.

Submitted by Rhonda Kincaid