

NORTH EAST ZONING REVIEW COMMITTEE WORKSHOP MINUTES

July 26, 2021

The Town of North East Zoning Review Committee meeting took place on Monday, July 26, 2021, at the North East Town Hall at 3:30 PM. Committee members present were Chair Edie Greenwood, Ed Downey, Bill Kish, Dave Sherman, George Kaye and Dale Culver. Julie Schroeder was absent. Guest: Sam Busselle, Chris Kennan, Meg Winkler, and Ralph Fedele

Chair Greenwood opened the meeting by asking the Committee for their comments of the draft Boulevard Districts purpose statement dated July 5, 2021. In the fifth paragraph, first line, it was decided the word “rental” should be removed. In the fifth paragraph, fifth line, it was decided “and hospitality” should be removed.

The Committee began a review of the uses in the Boulevard Districts from the April 8, 2021, draft.

Dave Sherman started by saying that he felt we had agreed BD-W is for small shop retail.

Automotive

Gas Station with Convenience Store – as we have an existing one in BD-W we do not want an additional one. Remove as a permitted use in BD-W but allow in BD-E. **Ask Will to comment.**

Entertainment

Museum – question if it is a use that is compatible with small retail. Decided it should not be permitted in BD-W but could remain in BD-E.

Artisan Workshop – do not see a need to require instruction &/or retail component in BD-E but leave those restrictions in BD-W. Does the idea of a Markers Space fit here or does this concept, outlined in the Comprehensive Plan need a separate definition? **Ask Will to comment.**

Indoor Recreation – Should it be allowed in BD-W if a maximum square footage limit is added? Where would an arcade fit? Does it need to be defined separately? **Ask Will for comment.**

Lodging

Need to have limits, depending on the availability of sewer and water. Noted that there was not much perkable land in BD-E.

Office

Medical Radiology/Diagnostics Lab – does not need walkability. Does it limit us if we take it out of BD-W? Why do we have this as a defined separate use? **Ask Will for comment.**

Residential

Sherman questioned the concept of residential apartments over commercial in BD-E. He felt it was unlikely to happen and did not lend to walkability. He was concerned about the loss of transition from village to rural. Others felt his concerns could be addressed through standards and it should not be prohibited in BD-E. The committee left it in both boulevard districts.

Restaurant

All agreed there needs to be new definitions for various types of restaurants. Drive-in seems an obsolete term. There is no provision for outdoor tables. Drive through retail, whether for food, banking or pharmacies needs to be in our code. Bill Kish asked if we should define fast food restaurants. Others questioned how to define fast food and did not think it was necessary. **Ask Will for guidance.**

Retail Bakery – why is it separate? Seems too narrow. Can it be folded into Grocery Store? **Ask Will to comment.**

Catering – what is the difference between this and a take-out business? **Ask Will to comment.**

Acknowledged parking and restrooms need to be a part of the process of creating restaurant definitions. This section of uses needs more work. Ask Will what he recommends from past experience with restaurants in commercial districts. Site planning and landscaping viewed as important.

Retail

Florist – does this need to be a separate definition? Would it be covered under General Merchandise Retail?

General Merchandise Retail – Bill Kish wanted to discuss thrift stores, furniture stores and antique stores. He thinks antique stores should be prohibited in BD-W. In the Comprehensive Plan survey responses, it was often mentioned that more antique stores would be undesirable. If we want to be complementary to the Village, we should not permit them in BD-W.

Used furniture stores and thrift stores can be problematic given their impact on the visible landscape. Bill would like all these uses prohibited in both BD districts. Does this mean we will have to define everything we do want? Ask Will how to do this.

Bill would like to include General Repair businesses in BD-E. We need to add an outdoor retail use in BD-E, possibly in Garden Center Retail.

How does Hardware Store Retail differ from General Merchandise Retail? Does it need a separate definition? How broad is the definition of General Merchandise Retail?

Where would a kitchen design store fit?

It was suggested we could add size limitations in BD-W to contain the scale of a businesses in this district.

We currently show Vape Store and Cigar Lounge as prohibited in both districts. Does this need to be readdressed if cannabis sales are allowed in the town? **Ask Will to address all the questions in Retail.**

Bill wanted to go on the record that he opposes Data Centers. They are very resource intensive, use a tremendous amount of energy and provide few jobs. If allowed, we need to have specific standards and make it a special permitted use.

Public Comment

Meg Winkler – She feels we are micro managing and fragmenting the process. Meg advocates for a code that focuses on stating what we don't want. In response to Bill's comments regarding used furniture and thrift stores she told the committee that we want to encourage a circular economy and that the resale of used goods is good for our environment. **Bill acknowledged Meg's point on a circular economy and felt the resale of goods might be allowed and best handled with appropriate standards.**

Sam Busselle – How do we write into the code the desperate need for housing? **We need to eliminate the word affordable as the need is broader.** Referred us to the Rhinebeck code section on workforce housing. We need to address equity and diversity. Referred the ZRC to NeighborWorks America.

Ralph Fedele – Developers will know the market and what will be viable. We have a changing population and want to be forward looking in our approach to writing the code.

Meeting ended at 5:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Edith Greenwood, ZRC Chair