

## TOWN OF NORTH EAST ZONING REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES May 23, 2022

The Town of North East Zoning Review Committee meeting took place on Monday, May 23, 2022, via Zoom at 4:30PM. Board members present were Chair Edie Greenwood, Ed Downey, George Kaye, Bill Kish, Dave Sherman and Julie Schroeder. Also in attendance were Chris Kennan, Will Agresta, Kathy Chow, Laurie Kerr, Sam Busselle, Rich Stalzer, Rob Cooper, Paul Bengtson and Deb Phillips, secretary to the Zoning Review Committee.

Chair Greenwood opened the meeting at 4:30PM with a presentation of Boulevard West made by Laurie Kerr and Kathy Chow. The focus was on bulk and design standards and themes from the Comprehensive Plan.

The presentation talked about slowing traffic on Rt 44, advocating for a traffic light to create a central access to parking in the rear of parcels on the south side, narrowing the shoulders to create a bike path on the north side and street parking.

Sidewalks on both sides are important to increase walkability to Kelsey Brook.

Reduce the current set back of 80 ft to 40 – 45 ft on the south side and 15 – 20 ft from the sidewalk on the north side and create maximum setbacks to stop buildings being pushed to the back of the parcel.

Highlighted the importance of view corridors by limiting building widths to 80 ft. By making buildings deeper rather than wider a sense of space is created.

Height requirements should be raised to 40 ft to allow for generous heights in three story structures. Suggested minimum heights be added to avoid one story buildings.

Design standards should include pitches roofs, natural materials and landscaping. Encourage a tree lined street, using native plants, and required trees and shading in the parking areas, bio swales that would filter the run-off, using them as design elements to break up the parking.

Agresta: Asked about 80-foot limit for building frontage.

Chow: In the Village, the buildings are all stuck together. The Boulevard is a transitional space that's still walkable, but the buildings are individual with a space around them.

Kerr: If you want the scale of development that's going to be ADA accessible and affordable, you're going to want to go to buildings that can be big enough to pay for all of that.

Agresta: The idea of changing and getting the buildings closer to the street is great but at the same time the developer has to have enough building to make the investment worthwhile. Are we cutting ourselves off by limiting how wide that can be?

Kish: I definitely agree that very wide buildings are going to hamper the ability to create a Village extension concept. I think it's possible to build a pair of buildings with space in between them that does that, and they can even share some infrastructure.

### Definitions:

#### **Light Industrial** – May 20, 2020, draft

Chair Greenwood: Asked about "capital intensive machinery" in the last sentence of Light Industrial.

Agresta: Light Industrial is taking things that were made somewhere else and then putting a final product together. It's not just clearly the dollar value; it's also the size and the room that it needs, the maintenance of it, etc.

Kish: I would replace hydrochloric acid with hydrofluoric acid.

Sherman: Asked what geothermal resources was meant to address.

Agresta: I think of this as something that generates geothermal, it's not something that uses geothermal.

Kish: Asked what it is that generates geothermal.

Sherman: An electric generating plant.

Kish and Sherman agreed geothermal resources should be removed.

Agresta: Suggested taking out the last sentence in the first paragraph: "Such use does not use capital intensive machinery or production equipment or include on-site sale to the general public."

The Committee agreed.

The Committee decided to leave the draft list of excluded uses in this draft definition knowing it might be simplified when we come back and do the standards.

The draft clause at the end of the definition "which would not constitute a major hazard to the life or health in the community in the event of an industrial accident" was removed.

Sherman: Mentioned that McEnroe Organic is not agriculture, it's light industry. Suggested thinking about how that might become a use in Light Industrial or whether composting is different category altogether.

Chair Greenwood: Asked Agresta if he sees a totally different definition for Light Industrial on agricultural property.

Agresta: The only difference is where it's located in the zoning. If that use does meet this definition, then you would need to make it another use permitted in the district.

Kish: It seems like the best approach to deal with it would be create a use for composting that's an accessory to agriculture that would require special permitting.

Schroeder: Asked Kish what he meant by accessory to agriculture.

Kish: You have to have a farm and growing something as well.

Schroeder: She doesn't think McEnroe would qualify. It's a question if you list it as a separate use.

Sherman: Concerned about tying it into the M-A District. It needs to be defined as a use.

Agresta: Asked if the use was all outside and Sherman said it was primarily outside.

Schroeder: Suggested visiting the site.

Chair Greenwood: Composting is an activity that does not sound like it fits into Light Industrial the way we are defining Light Industrial. We will have to working something out because it exists, and it may get bigger.

### **Tourist Home:**

Chair Greenwood: Thinks tourist home is an obsolete term.

Kish: Suggested getting rid of it.

Agresta: We will visit that when we get into the residential districts.

### **General Merchandise Retail, Online Call Sales:**

Kish: Asked if we want online call centers with no walk-in retail component allowed on BD West. His recollection was it would be allowed in BD East, but we wanted to encourage foot traffic in BD West.

Chair Greenwood: Asked why it's different than an office or general merchandise retail.

Kish: If we want to try to maximize the density of businesses that attract walk-in/drive-in traffic in the BD West, then we want to differentiate businesses which are more like wholesale businesses that don't deal with the public directly. We want to keep those in areas like the Irondale Business District or the BD East.

Agresta: This doesn't do that. The definition of general merchandise retail could be someone who only sells online. The last part of the definition of general merchandise retail is "may also include retail sales via mail order, online or phone."

Kish: That may need to be fixed in the definition of general retail if this is a problem that we agree needs to be solved.

Agresta: Not all offices attract customers.

Kish: I'm trying to tighten up what we allow in BD West.

Agresta: If you have a multiple-story building, it's a nice use for upper story where straight retail isn't going to go.

Chair Greenwood: I'm an advocate for allowing somebody who's making an investment in the community to have some flexibility.

Downey: I'm prepared to assume the risks that it's not probable. Chair Greenwood and Kaye agreed.

Kish: We decided that we didn't want to have any large warehouses with trucks going in and out all the time, but we thought we might want to have in the Boulevard District smaller types of operations which have shipping and receiving and the element of online sales. The business of a call center is obsolete. What we are defining here is a shipping and receiving operation in its entirety.

Agresta: If it's what Bill is saying, it doesn't belong in either the BD West or BD East, it belongs in the Industrial Districts.

Sherman: Suggested taking it out of BD East or West and stick with general merchandise retail in BD West.

Agresta: In the general merchandise retail, we can allow the online sales and we can put some language that it's not exclusive.

Kish: What I see coming out of this discussion is that we keep or slightly improve the definition of this call center use and online sales operation. **We make sure that the standard retail operation can include an online component but it's not exclusive and we allow that use in the Irondale Business District but not in the Boulevard Districts and the M-A District.**

Agresta: That makes sense.

Kish: Before we jump into the bulk standards specifics, we should really talk about the concepts that the Kerr and Chow presentation brought up.

Kish: Encouraged the Committee to measure the setbacks and get a general idea about what would make sense. The idea is to bring the buildings closer to the street to give more of that streetscape and Village feel.

**Public Comment:**

None.

Chair Greenwood adjourned the meeting at 6:00PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deb Phillips  
Zoning Review Secretary