

TOWN OF NORTH EAST ZONING REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES June 5, 2023

The Town of North East Zoning Review Committee meeting took place on Monday, June 5, 2023, at the North East Town Hall, located at 19 North Maple Avenue, Millerton, New York at 4:30 PM. Board members present were Chair Edie Greenwood, Dave Sherman, Julie Schroeder, Ed Downey, and Bill Kish. Also in attendance were Will Agresta, Chris Kennan, Lana Morrison, and Meg Winkler.

Reponses from Will Agresta to May 30, 2023, ZRC Workshop questions

Agresta felt the distance between the curb line and the sidewalk was more important given the safety concerns relating to driveway cuts. You do not want the sidewalk behind an exiting car as this can be unsafe for pedestrians.

The discussion moved on to the need for an overall plan for the boulevard district and the desirability of a sidewalk/utility district. It was noted that Agresta has previously outlined the various approaches the Town could take regarding sidewalks.

Agresta asked if bike lanes had been looked at in the 2019 Comprehensive Plan. He was told that no specific bike path plans are outlined in the current plan. Agresta said that developing regulations for bike paths without a specific plan (that would be developed outside of a review of the zoning code) was beyond zoning regulations. Reference was made to the adopted 1985 Route 44 Corridor study.

Kish made the argument that he wants as much done in the zoning code because our recommending a study be done may never happen. The discussion turned to the need for a separate planning process, possibly done concurrently with the zoning review. Agresta felt a Map, Plan and Report of a sidewalk district could be done in less than a year.

Downey does not agree that incorporating the rendering from the 1985 Corridor Study is the way to go. It is too old. He agrees that a separate study of the Boulevard District is needed. Downey feels we have time to develop a plan for these districts as the development of this area is contingent on a functioning wastewater system. He feels that such a plan needs to address sidewalks, bicycle paths, and the travel lanes. In the long term such an analysis will lead to a better Comprehensive Plan and will create a better framework for the Planning Board to work with an applicant.

Agresta felt without more complete information we should leave what is already in the code and revisit the section when we have more data. He does not recommend making decisions without information.

Kish suggested that the additional language Agresta had provided in his answer to the question of how far back from the road the sidewalk should be, be added to what is already in the code.

The committee agreed that a formal request be made by the Town Board to retain a consultant to undertake a study (the scope of which needs to be clearly defined) of the boulevard districts.

Required Rear Yards (Minimum distance)

The committee decided the rear set back should be 25 ft.

Required Side Yards (Minimum distance)

It was decided the side yard setback should be 25 ft and would not include parking. Further discussion is needed regarding what set back is needed in the case of taller buildings. The side yard setback could be reduced to zero if an interconnection parking incentive was requested by the applicant and agreed to by the adjoining parcel owner. Kish would like to see two setback numbers: one for parking and one for buildings.

Schroder felt that nothing should be allowed in the agreed upon side yard. It should be a green space properly landscaped.

Discussion as to what exceptions (structures) would be allowed in the side yard. EV charging station equipment and below ground structures (propane tanks or storm water storage) that typically can't be planted or landscaped were discussed as possible exceptions to the side yard setback. Agresta suggested a "not to exceed a percentage" limitation be added. He indicated 20 – 40% is typical. The committee agreed 20% would be an acceptable percentage.

Agresta urged the committee to keep the language as uncomplicated as possible to avoid confusion. He suggested we decide on one standard with a few exceptions written into the code and leave it at that.

Discussion of outbuildings and dumpsters needed for additional storage and trash. The committee agreed that such structures should not be exceptions but be put in the parking area. Agresta suggested that at the next ZRC workshop meeting, we create a list of exceptions.

Public Comment

Meg Winkler: In her review of the revised purpose statements in the May 15, 2023, minutes she noted that the Boulevard Districts statement clearly notes that dark sky lighting and unifying landscaping shall be required site design elements. Winkler felt that these concepts should be stated in a similar way with regard to the purpose statement for the Irondale Business District.

She asked if we might consider a top line Purpose Statement for the entire code and include dark sky outdoor nighttime lighting and unifying landscaping for the entire town.

Chair Greenwood adjourned the meeting at 6:00 PM. The next meeting will be held on June 19, 2023. There will be no ZRC meeting on July 3, 2023, but an additional workshop meeting will be scheduled.

Respectfully Submitted by
Edith Greenwood - ZRC Chair