

Approved at 01-14-16 Meeting

**City of Rockland
Comprehensive Planning Commission
Minutes for December 17, 2015**

Commission Present: Chair Valli Geiger, Adam Ackor, Ann Morris, Amy Files, Tom Keedy, Michelle Gifford, Eileen Wilkinson.

Staff Present: Kevin Beal-City Attorney, John Root-Code Enforcement Officer, and Kara Cushman-Recording Secretary

Meeting called to order at 7:04 p.m.

Previous Meeting Minutes:

ACTION: Ann Morris made a motion, seconded by Tom Keedy to accept November 19, 2015 minutes as written. VOTE: 6-0-0

Continued Discussion of In-Fill in Residential Zones

Chair Geiger said that after reviewing Christine Parrish's article, "Rockland's Rental Housing Crunch" in the Free Press on December 3, 2015, she wanted to re-address the in-fill ordinance. There is little available housing in Rockland for any level of income. Geiger attended an affordable housing meeting with Sen. David Miramant, Penquis representatives, Chris Rector, Jane LaFleur, and Habitat for Humanity to discuss the housing crisis. Penquis disclosed it is in very beginning phases to build housing with 30-units for extremely low-income families. Penquis and Habitat for Humanity also discussed working with the City of Rockland in the future to fix up foreclosed homes and make them affordable to families.

Chair Geiger said that Millennials and Baby Boomers want to be in walkable town areas. In-fill will encourage people to move back in town and provide more housing in mixed-use zones. CEO John Root said that existing, non-conforming lots of record are buildable. He has seen new buildings built on tiny lots. This in-fill ordinance would allow split lots, creating new lots. Almost every lot qualifies for a variance. Root said he could get an inventory of the lots.

Chair Geiger said that in-fill would allow: (1) a smaller minimum lot size, (2) accessory buildings on existing lots, and (3) single-family homes on flag lots (lots that have no public street frontage) irrespective of the size of the flag lot. CEO Root said the lot would have to be served by a right-of-way.

Ann Morris suggested changes for the ordinance, including the addition of a preamble, which she read:

"Purpose: The purpose of this ordinance is to encourage and accommodate compact residential development on appropriate locations in the City of Rockland. Sites should have access to public or private off-street parking or transit service. The intent of this zone change is to foster increased opportunities for compact in-city living for owners and renters representing a variety of income levels and household types."

Also, Ann Morris suggested the addition of cluster housing or pocket housing under "Residential Zone "B" Permitted Uses", (7). CEO Root said that with development closer together, some housing could be

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clustered. Morris said she would like to see cluster housing and common space. She would like to encourage cluster housing in Residential "B" Zone, as part of the In-fill Ordinance. Cluster Housing would need to be defined.

Morris also suggested under Sec. 19-303, removing part (10) that describes "Dormers" and thought that it would be better addressed in design standards than in the In-Fill ordinance. CEO Root said that people make a third-story of dormers and that section of the ordinance is needed. City Attorney Beal stated that the CEO's intent is to avoid using dormers as an end-run around the maximum story height. Root said that 2 ½ stories are allowed now, but people create another whole story with dormers, taking advantage of the ordinance. People could still have multiple dormers, not a single long dormer across the whole length of the building.

CEO Root recommended the 5' setback be changed to 6', because buildings built five or fewer feet from the property line must be fire-rated. If the building is 6' with a 1' overhang, it wouldn't have to be fire-rated, as it would already be rated for 1 hour.

Adam Ackor said he saw problems with this ordinance. He asked how we can apply design standards to in-fill and how do we determine what can be built. He felt it's a slippery slope to pursue with a couple 100 years' worth of house designs. Mixed architecture is good for a community, but it could be risky with accessory buildings, as there is no guarantee on the quality of their designs. It puts neighboring properties at risk. It could affect property values.

Eileen Wilkinson said she felt that design may not be top priority for people. Houses are in disrepair. There is no guarantee what type of accessory building is added to the lot. It could be a trailer or a camper. She said the original structure could be in disrepair and then they build an accessory building and leave the original to continue to deteriorate.

Tom Keedy said that the 19th century cannot be brought back. After moving to the State Street area of the City from Broadway, Keedy has noted the amount of noise of people coming and going all night long. Even if the City is made more walkable, it is not going to reduce the number of cars. There's a need for more parking. There are sensor lights everywhere. It's important to look at the noise, lighting, and parking. We can't look at in-fill with a romantic view, but look at the reality of it.

Amy Files said that there are things not covered by the noise ordinance and there would be an increase of the level of noise with more people in town.

Chair Geiger said that new buildings have to be built to new energy standards, and noise won't be heard as much. Additionally, on-street parking slows down traffic.

Eileen Wilkinson asked how many lots are actually available that could use the in-fill ordinance. Michelle Gifford recommended that the Commission look at the new assessing database, AXISGIS, on the City of Rockland's web site, to study properties.

Amy Files asked if the money is there to develop in-fill. She asked if there are incentives we can offer to assist property owners.

Michelle Gifford recommended doing a survey to see how many people are moving in to Rockland. Amy Files said it would be beneficial to know where people want to live in Rockland, how many are

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employed, what their income is, and general demographic data. Ann Morris said a survey is required for the Comprehensive Plan updates. The Commission agreed that a public workshop is needed to get feedback from the public.

General discussion regarding trailers ensued. City Attorney Beal said that there are separate regulations for trailer parks.. The State Legislature protects the right to have trailer parks. The City can look at the trailer issue, but they can't be taken out of Residential "B" Zone.

Chair Geiger said she would come up with a definition for pocket housing. A definition for cluster housing already exists.

The Commission agreed to make the following changes to the In-Fill Ordinance:

- 1) Add Ann Morris's Preamble.
- 2) Change the minimum lot size in Residential B to 6400' to be the same as in Residential "A".
- 3) Change the side setback to 8' for accessory structures.

ACTION: Ann Morris made a motion, seconded by Adam Ackor to recommend adoption by Rockland City Council of the In-Fill Ordinance as amended. VOTE: 7-0-0

Ann Morris Presentation of Proposed Revisions to the Transportation Chapter

Ann Morris said she created a narrative to the Transportation Chapter draft. She filled in numbers where there were blanks and followed the outline that new Comprehensive Plans must follow. She took out the italicized text. We don't have to use the same words as the state.

Amy Files asked what the goals of transportation are. She asked which goals have been completed. City Attorney Kevin Beal said that Eric Galant did not include the goals in the draft, but we can bring them in and change and/or add to the goals. Beal said he would check with Dave St. Laurent and John Root on the goals.

Eric Galant is to present the Local Economy Chapter in January. Chair Geiger asked that we let know Eric know that we want data comparisons to sister/neighborhood municipalities.

Next Meeting is January 14, 2016.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kara Cushman
Recording Secretary