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**City of Newburgh Zoning Code Revisions
Leadership Team/Advisory Task Force Joint Meeting**
April 15, 2013 6:00
City Hall

In attendance for City of Newburgh:

Mayor Judy Kennedy, Richard Herbek*, City Manager; Mike Vatter, Fire Chief and Code Compliance Officer; Michelle Kelson, Corporation Counsel; Ian McDougall, City Planner; Lisa Daily, Chairperson, Planning Board; Elizabeth Evans, Assistant to the City Manager**

In attendance for City of Newburgh Advisory Committee:

Doug Hovey, Independent Living; Denise Ribble, Waterfront Advisory Committee; Peter Smith, Quassaick Creek Watershed Committee; Tiombe Tallie Carter, Newburgh Business Association; Rae Leiner, Community Voices Heard; Allan Atzrott, Greater Newburgh Partnership; Joshua Smith, Industrial Development Agency; Deirdre Glenn, Newburgh Armory Unity Center; Nancy Proyect, Orange County Citizens Foundation

In attendance for AKRF:

Nina Peek, Project Manager and Sr. Technical Director; Keith Rowan, Technical Director of Economics Group; Peter Feroe, Project Planner;

In attendance for Greater Newburgh Partnership:

Sue Sullivan, Executive Director;* Marcy Handler, Director of Administration & Grants**

In attendance for Orange County:

Megan Tennermann, Orange County Planning

Absent:

Regina Angelo, Deputy Mayor; Joanne Lugo, Chairperson, Zoning Board; Mary Crabb Architectural Review Committee; Rev. Byron Williams, Newburgh Christian Ministerial Fellowship, Peter Gonzalez, Latinos Unidos; Dawn Fuchek, Board of Education, Newburgh Enlarged School District

*Ex-Officio

**Support Staff

Ms. Peek called the meeting to order at 6:05. This meeting will focus on getting consensus on broad issues after which the next steps in the process will be a fine grain zoning map review spread over two consecutive meetings. Future meeting dates will be decided based on availability of the majority of participants.

The first discussion item was one of process: how should the city administer site plans review, building permits and other actions. Pace has recommended a streamlining of the application approval process but did not elaborate on how this should be done. A move to form based code will partially assist streamlining the process. Discussion centered on whether some of the application processes usually handled by the Planning Board could be expedited through an administrative staff review.

Ms. Ribble felt this is a particularly relevant conversation that would be aided by having a list of action items they could agree to streamline. Ms. Kelson recommended the exemption list as a place to start and recognized that the Planning Department is not code certified and not able to do an administrative sign off on a code application. Mayor Kennedy suggested a single entry point with a criteria test. The Code Compliance Department has some staffing issues but is capable of taking on the responsibility. Mr. Herbek stated a gatekeeper is on the right track and the City will find the staffing to do it. Mayor Kennedy agreed that a gatekeeper would do wonders for the city, not only with developers but homeowners. The consensus was that certain applications (such as certain site plan applications and possible certain historic area applications) can be handled administratively to ensure compliance with the code. These applications would NOT be presented to the Planning Board.

All the plans talk about revising the zoning standards, yet what are the priority revisions to look for? Lot size and setbacks, for example? Setbacks almost always need a variance as older parts of the City have no front yards or side yard. The consensus was that the dimensional and bulk standards of the new zoning code should more accurately reflect the context of the City and be more 'urban' in nature. Specifically, lot sizes should be more consistent with prevailing lot sizes and represent true minimums. Eliminating minimum lot sizes and relying on subdivision regulations in some districts may be appropriate. The same is true for setbacks and building coverage. The code should more accurately reflect the current condition and the desired urban character of the city.

Mr. Peter Smith brought up the problem of garbage storage and Mayor Kennedy brought up the opportunity for crime on narrow lots that provide hiding places between buildings.

Ms. Peek asked if this group was ready to take a look at parking, off street, parking garages and municipal lots. Mr. Atzrott expressed his concern over the existing abandoned car problem and the unlicensed vehicles currently in the city and suggested how Beacon has addressed the issue. The group will make a recommendation for parking, to either reduce or eliminate or provide more realistic parking expectations. Ms. Glenn felt that parking must be part of public education. Mr. Herbek added that as the desire is to increase density in the City; parking must be part of the equation. Most attendees agreed that parking requirements/ratios needed to be reduced, especially in the more 'downtown' areas of the City. In addition, design requirements should encourage or mandate that on-site parking be in the rear of buildings. It was acknowledged that parking issues in certain areas and neighborhoods would need to be addressed through other policy and actions of the City and that mandating excessive off-street parking would hinder the type of development and redevelopment that is desired.

There is a discrepancy between the Orange County and Future Land Use Plans relative to maximum recommended building height. Discussion ensued on height recommendations in each of the policy documents. Mr. Vatter suggested they not get

hung up on a number preferring to let the market decide. It was decided that there are places to go big and height is negotiable. Mr. McDougal stated that the height recommendations in the FLUP were only recommendations. What was important was the concept of increased height and density in the downtown that tapered east and west from Lower Broadway. The group agreed that what was of most concern was not the absolute height of a building, but the protection of certain important viewsheds.

The East End Historic District design guidelines will continue to be referenced in the proposed code and the zoning will be revised to address Pace's streamlining recommendations for properties within the Historic Districts. Mayor Kennedy and other members of the group expressed their preference that the zoning be revised to allow large detached homes to be used as two and three family homes. Most of these houses, it was mentioned, were designed for multiple families, or at least for multiple generations and that restricting their use is not consistent with the City's development goals.

Ms. Ribble brought up the illegal SRO's in the City suggesting to add code clarity to enforce usage of the buildings.

The group addressed the Leyland Waterfront Charette process and recommendations report, agreeing that the process was very collaborative. The group recommended that elements of the Plan to keep in the proposed code include: the idea of connectivity between lower Broadway and the waterfront, a mix of residential and commercial properties, park access, and the design for Broadway.

As to recommended updates to the zoning map, Mr. McDougall suggested reducing the number of existing districts. Ms. Ribble offered support from the Waterfront Committee to expedite issues related to the waterfront.

The final area of discussion raised by Mr. Herbek was the whether the meetings should be open or closed. Ms. Kelson advised that these meetings are proceeding in a similar fashion as that of the development of the Land Use Plan. Ms. Peek added that there will be opportunity for the community to participate and currently, the working group is just talking process with constituencies represented by group members who are available to discuss the work in progress beyond the meeting room. There will certainly be public information sessions and public hearings to give the public ample opportunity to observe and participate.

Meeting adjourned at 7:58.