

# **TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION**

## ***Building & Planning Committee***

### **Issue Briefing**

**Topic:** Zoning Revisions

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**Date:** June 28, 2019

#### **I. Action To Be Considered By The Board:**

The Board is continuing to review revisions to the draft Zoning Code. No formal action is required by the Board at this time, but any direction provided will be incorporated into the version of the draft Zoning Code scheduled to be advertised for adoption on July 31<sup>st</sup>. A Public Hearing to adopt the revised zoning code will be scheduled for September 18<sup>th</sup>.

#### **II. Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:**

The Board of Commissioners must adopt Zoning Code amendments in compliance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

#### **III. Current Policy Or Practice (If Applicable):**

The Zoning Code update is part of a multi-year effort to synchronize the Township's land use codes (Zoning, Subdivision & Land Development, Natural Features and Stormwater Management) to implement the goals and recommendations of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan.

#### **IV. Other Relevant Background Information:**

The Township received a Preliminary Draft Zoning Code from DPZ Associates in October 2018. Since the October delivery, the B&P has held five public workshops to review the details and policy implications of the Draft Code. Additionally, staff has engaged in an extensive public outreach process to solicit comments, questions and suggestions regarding the Draft provisions. The six-month public engagement process included meetings with Ward Commissioners, Civic Associations, stakeholders and property owners and generated over 500 suggested substantive questions/edits to the document.

Staff will present the attached revisions on Wednesday, July 10<sup>th</sup> at the Building & Planning Committee, but is providing them to you in advance of that meeting, as the Planning Commission will be reviewing them at their meeting on July 1, 2019.

The Building & Planning Committee review schedule is/has been as follows

- May 22<sup>nd</sup> review revisions to Articles 3, 4, 5 & 11
- June 5<sup>th</sup> review revisions to Articles 6 (sections), 7, & 8
- July 10<sup>th</sup> review revisions to Articles 1, 2, 6 (sections), 9 and 10.

Wednesday's meeting will focus on revisions to Articles 1 (Introduction), Article 2 (Definitions), Article 9 (Signs), Article 10 Supplemental Uses and Nonconformities and portions of Articles 6 (Special Districts) relating to City Avenue and Bala Village. Revisions Articles have been posted to the Township's website. Pages that are revised are marked with a 'June 28, 2019' revision date. The public comment chart will be updated and reposted to the website.

#### **ARTICLE 1. Introduction.**

Language has been revised to reflect revisions made within specific districts. No substantive changes have been made.

#### **ARTICLE 2. Definitions.**

Definitions have been consolidated from various sections of the existing code so that they are centrally located. Terms have been refined to address updated circumstances and public comment.

#### **ARTICLE 6. Special Districts.**

Article 6 contains Special Districts. Special Districts were reviewed at the June 5<sup>th</sup> Building & Planning Committee meeting, with the exception of the City Avenue/Bala Village District. The City Avenue/Bala Village District has been reformatted to be more consistent with the structure of the new code and obsolete form standards have been removed. No changes to use density have been made. The revisions are intended to reinforce the legislative intent of the Districts and to improve the structural functionality of the document. The following revisions have been made:

All Districts:

- The amendments adopted by the Board in December of 2018 have been incorporated.
- The text has been reorganized to follow the organizational structure of the other zoning districts. Graphics have been reorganized and new charts and tables have been added to consolidate information.
- Sign Standards have been moved to Article 9- sign standards.
- Building area standards have been removed and primary frontage standards have been added.

CAD- RCA (Regional Center Area)

- Building separation provisions have been removed as they have proven difficult to comply with and to determine compliance with.
- Architectural standards have been rectified with other commercial districts in the proposed Code.

CAD- BV (Bala Village)

- Specific standards have been added to be more consistent with Village Center, examples include streetscreens, building configuration standards, fences and walls, and additional parking structure design standards.

- Policy Topic- Removal of supplemental .05 OSTI density increase in Bala Village.

Impact to Affordable Housing- The City Avenue District provides for a variety of housing options, including rental units, which may prove more affordable to residents. Although not directly related to housing, the requirement for consideration of multi-modal transportation, potentially decreases the need for the costs associated with vehicle ownership for residents, which promotes overall affordability.

## **ARTICLE 9. Signs.**

Article 9 includes regulations applying to signs. The following revisions have been made.

- Standards have been refined to consider local application.
- Information has been reorganized for ease of implementation of standards and usability.
- CAD sign regulations have been incorporated into this Article.
- Sign standards associated with MCD & BMMD have been incorporated.

## **ARTICLE 10. Supplemental Use Regulations.**

Article 10 includes the additional regulations that apply to specific uses. The following revisions have been made.

- Nonconforming Uses have been moved to this Article from Article 11 and Article 10 has been retitled Supplemental Uses and Nonconformities.
- Section 10.1 has been amended to include uses that are accessory to a residential use, including:
  - Family Day Care for less than 6 children. This use functions as a neighborhood babysitter providing child care.
  - Home Occupation has been modified to maintain the current Township regulations, including the 500 foot separation for minor home occupations and 300 foot separation for historic home occupations.

## **V. Impact on Township Finances:**

This discussion will have no immediate impact on Township finances.

## **VI. Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends the Building & Planning Committee provide feedback on the revised articles of the draft code and the topics in this Issues Briefing.