

**TOWN OF ORONO
COUNCIL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE &
COMP PLAN IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETING**

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2020 AT 6:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBER – MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

MINUTES

1. Roll Call

Present: Council Chair Cindy Mehnert, Meghan Gardner (Comp Plan Implementation Chair), Sam Kunz (Community Development Chair), Laurie Osher, Cheryl Robertson, Terry Greenier and Town Manager Sophie Wilson. Absent: Tom Perry.

2. Presentation and Discussion on the Concept of a Mixed-Use Conditional Zoning District to Provide a Buffer Area Between the Village Commercial and Medium Density Residential Districts

Town Planner Kyle Drexler provided a brief presentation on this topic (*slides attached*). Mr. Drexler presented the concept of a mixed-use conditional zoning district that would provide a buffer area between the Village Commercial and Medium Density Residential districts. He explained he has had several requests for low-impact commercial uses near the village district and a mixed-use conditional zoning district would allow opportunity and flexibility to increase the density without changing the character of the area. He stated a mixed-use conditional zone would have its own table of uses. Dave Milan commented the Comprehensive Plan speaks of creating a transitional zone such as this.

Council expressed general support for this approach, but would like more information about potential “low impact” use for this mixed-use district at the Council Workshop, Monday, February 24, 2020. What exactly would be the allowed low impact uses and how would they interact with the Medium Density Residential (MDR) district? Council is looking for a global view of what this change would mean for the town and the impact on neighborhoods and how this would all work together with Park Street, MDR lot size reduction, Main Street overlay, and residential overlay.

3. Brief Town Manager’s Report

Ms. Wilson gave a brief update on the following items:

- Fluoride information update
- Portland sidewalks
- LD 2104 - Recycling packaging - MMA provides testimony to support legislation.
- MDOT - letter of support from Orono to support Old Town bridge repairs
- Labor bills - opposed to public sector ability to strike (not union related)

- Town Manager's schedule and website changes

4. Adjourn

At 7:35pm, Sam Kunz moved and Laurie Osher seconded to adjourn. All voted in favor, 6-0.

Minutes are not verbatim. A video-recorded version is available on the Town's website at www.orono.org.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy W. Ward
Executive Assistant

A Comprehensive Overview of Potential Zoning Changes

2.20.2020

Zoning

- Single-use zoning
 - Each zone designed for one use (residential, commercial, industrial)
 - Often promotes sprawl and vehicle dependence
 - Sometimes difficult to redevelop buildings that existed before the current zoning
- Mixed-use zoning
 - Allows for different types of uses to exist within the same district
 - Promotes walkability, less vehicular traffic
 - Provides flexibility for property owners in how they can use their property

Zoning District Intent and Uses Comparison

- Village Commercial
 - Mixed-use (commercial and residential)
 - Example uses allowed: all residential types, retail, restaurants, movie theaters, auto repair, laundromats, R&D facilities
 - Minimum lot size = 2,000 sq ft
- Medium Density Residential
 - Primarily residential
 - Example uses allowed: single- and two-family homes, home businesses, agriculture, nursing homes, public facilities/buildings
 - Minimum lot size = 20,000-40,000 sq ft (depending on utilities available)
- These districts are very different, yet directly border on one another.

Comprehensive Plan Opportunities

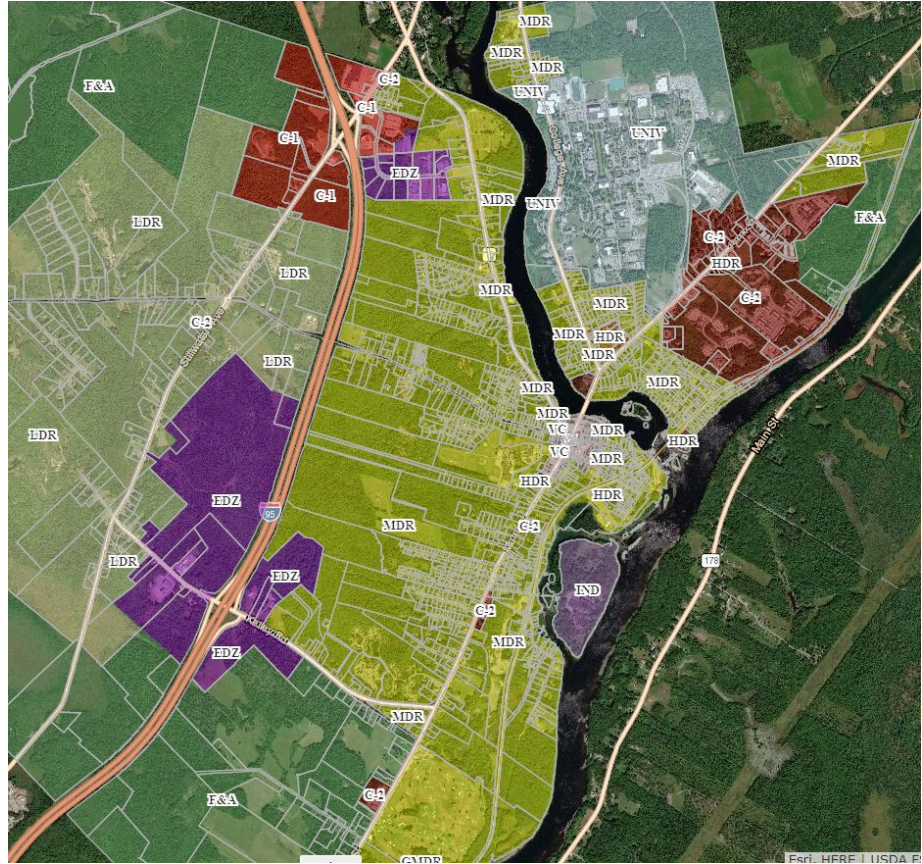
- Invest in the infrastructure, business development, and marketing of Downtown as a center of economic activity and a destination for goods, services, and entertainment
- Assure that in-town zoning creates the opportunity for affordable home ownership, especially for families with school-aged children
- Adjust the boundaries and standards of the Village Commercial district
- Revise “one size fits all” off-street parking requirement for new residential development

Comprehensive Plan Tools

- Village Residential Overlay
- MDR Lot Size Reduction
- Conditional Village Commercial Expansion
 - Not specifically mentioned, although expanding the VC and utilizing more conditional uses both mentioned

MDR Minimum Lot Size Reduction

- Reduce minimum lot size for lots with public water and sewer from 20,000 sq ft to 15,000 sq ft and minimum frontage from 100' to 80'
- Many existing lots in the MDR are already this size or smaller
- Would provide more opportunities and flexibility to property owners



Village Residential Overlay

- Incentive-based district that would allow people to build new housing or redevelop existing houses at a higher density than the MDR
- Designed to increase opportunities for affordable home ownership close to services, jobs, and downtown



Conditional Village Commercial Expansion

- Extend Village Commercial further down Mill St and Myrtle St
- Make these areas a conditional use district
 - Only allow certain lower-impact VC uses
- Provide a transition area between VC and MDR



Why consider making all these changes at once?

Avoiding Constant Small Changes

- Potential Projects
 - Property with potential for redevelopment currently in MDR, which greatly limits how the property could be redeveloped
 - Single-family home in the MDR, near VC, interested in a small-scale commercial office
 - Legally non-conforming commercial office in MDR that wishes to add one dwelling unit but cannot due to lot size being too small
- Past Projects
 - VC expansion - 2020 (Alpenglow)
 - VC expansion - 2017 (Forest Ave)
 - VC expansion - 2012 (6 Myrtle)

Supporting Similar Goals

- Lowering minimum lot sizes, reducing parking minimums, creating higher density, and allowing mixed-uses all aim to create a more sustainable community by promoting:
 - Easier walkability and public transportation use
 - Less vehicular traffic
 - More economic opportunities
 - More available housing
 - Affordable housing
 - Better conditions for development
 - Growing closer to existing services

Conclusion

- There are currently numerous potential zoning changes that all impact the Downtown and surrounding area
- Both the Comprehensive Plan and interest from property owners support the need for these zoning changes
- Grouping these individual changes together under the umbrella of a more general, larger-scale zoning change could prove to be a more efficient use of time and help in jump-starting a number of projects