

New zoning discussion spotlights sections of Narragansett Avenue

By Michaela Kennedy

The new Zoning Ordinance amendments will attempt to regulate a better flow from commercial to residential zones utilizing transect zones (T zones), according to a discussion at the Planning Commission's July 3 meeting. Town Planner Lisa Bryer fielded questions about the differences between the current and proposed zoning designations.

In its continued review of downtown zoning, the commission took a closer look at the downtown block between Clinton and Howland Avenues. Handouts listed comparisons between the currently designated downtown commercial block and its proposed replacements. The T-4 district is similar to the current Commercial Limited (CL) district and T-5 has similarities to the current Commercial Downtown (CD) district.

Part of the goal of the zoning regulation update is to look at areas where commercial meets residential and to better transition these areas by use and dimensional regulation. "The problems we've had in the past have always been in the fringe areas," Bryer explained.

Board members considered expanding the block area to a more intense T5 zone, which would allow for a larger building size. "Building lot coverage for T4 is the same for commercial downtown CD," Bryer explained. "If you make it T5, you increase the allowable building size from Clinton to Howland," Bryer said. "Several large buildings are already in that block."

Early on in the planning discussion, Nick Robertson of Carr Lane challenged the commission's procedure in the zoning ordinance update. "If you're going over certain

areas, you should be sending notices to all property owners. They should be in at the ground level."

Bryer responded that individual notices did not go out for general zoning updates, adding that public notices and articles appear regularly in the Press.

Planning Commission Chairman Gary Girard showed surprise that not more audience participants showed up for the board's July 3 meeting. He encouraged all residents to check the paper for information about the update process and become involved.

Jack Brittain, owner of Jack's Electric on Clinton Avenue, voiced concern that he may be looking at a devaluation of his property if it is taken out of a commercial downtown designation. "It's not just setbacks, but also use," he said. "I think some of this is trying to maintain the business district. I'm concerned about losing the benefits of a property."

The town planner reminded the board about setting standards, saying, "There are a lot of standards that are not addressed on the hand-out sheet you have that we should address at the next meeting."

Lot coverage would be regulated the same for T4 as the present commercial downtown zone, with a minimal front setback of 12 feet and a maximum of 24 feet, Bryer added. Current zoning regulates no maximum setback.

The discussion swayed toward trees. Bryer said, according to the downtown study, areas of the street that are very pleasurable to walk by are the ones that have the trees. "I don't want to lose that element," Bryer said. "If they (the property owners) aren't required to plant trees, they won't."

Planning Commissioner Mike Swistak suggested having guidelines for types of street trees that would be desirable. "The Tree Committee has suggested street trees that we should utilize," he said.

Commissioner Alexandra Nickol spoke up toward the end of the evening with a concern about taxes. She suggested communication with the tax assessor's office, "in case zoning changes caused friction with property values."

Commissioner Nancy Bennett tried to convince the commission that using the old names alongside the new T series zoning designations would be an easier way to learn the new tags. Other board members threw the idea out, arguing that the T4 and T5 titles would make a cleaner zoning map.

Bryer reported that she received a copy of a drafted pattern book from Donald Powers Architects. The book contains design guidelines that may be used for the downtown district. As soon as a digital copy of the working document is obtained, copies will be made for the commissioners, she said.

In correspondence, Girard encouraged the commissioners to look at the "rather extensive list" of notices from the Coastal Resources Management Council. Three cease and desist orders were sent to:

- Mark Bard for clearing vegetation within a coastal zone on Clarke's Village Road.
- Jen-Guy Schilling for installation of a float to a dock on East Shore Road, without benefit of an assent.
- Eastward Vista for attaching a float to a dock on East Shore Road, without benefit of an

Read books to win PawSox tickets

Children who complete their reading requirements and keep a journal of their reading are encouraged to enter a contest to win four free tickets to the PawSox game on Tuesday, Aug. 19, at 7:05 p.m. at McCoy Stadium.

The ticket giveaway is just one part of the Summer Reading Program "Catch the Reading Bug!" at the Jamestown Philomenian Library.

One child from each library in Rhode Island will win the pack of tickets.

In order to enter, children must be Rhode Island residents between the ages of 6 and 12 years of age, and be participating in their library's summer reading program. Children should come into the library to pick up an All-Star Reading Team application, fill it in and answer the question: "What was your favorite book this summer and why?" All-Star Reading Team applications must be turned in to the library no later than 2 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 14.

Teen group to host yard sale

The Jamestown Teen Center's "Invisible Children" Team will host a yard sale on Saturday, July 12, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Recreation Center.

To donate items for the event, bring them to the Recreation Center on Friday, July 11, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.



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"Social observers say a common hallmark of African-Americans who have achieved the greatest success... is that they do not convey a sense of black grievance."
- Marcus Mabry, in the *International Herald Tribune* of June 9, 2008
.....
A descendent of the 18th century DeWolfe family of Bristol has made a great documentary depicting that family's participation in the slave trade. It is an insightful examination of the forces at play in the creation of African-American grievance, the enormity of that grievance, and the manner in which our society has dealt with it.
.....
Or not dealt with it, to put it more accurately.
.....
But, going back to Mr. Mabry's observation in the first item above, dealing with one's grievances, quietly and internally, and remaining positive in one's approach to life is usually the most productive approach for the aggrieved person. The alternative is an overwhelming sense of anger and frustration, which, however justified, is destructive and crippling.
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