



CITY OF HARRISONBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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To: Eric Campbell, City Manager
From: Thanh Dang, Assistant Director of Community Development
Date: August 25, 2020 (Regular Meeting)
Re: Introduction to the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances Update Project

Summary:

Presentation to introduce the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances Update Project.

Background:

Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances affect how our City looks and works, now and in the future. The Zoning Ordinance regulates the development of buildings, activities, and land uses. Zoning determines what use you can have on a property such as a house or business. It determines how high a building can be or how far away from the street it should be. The Subdivision Ordinance regulates the division of land, which includes everything from splitting one lot to create two lots to subdividing a large piece of land to create a new neighborhood. Among other things, subdivision regulations establish rules for the creating of lots, blocks, and streets, and provide for the establishments of easements and public rights-of-way.

The existing Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances were last thoroughly evaluated and comprehensively re-written in 1997 and 1996, respectively. In the ensuing time, many changes, both major and minor, have been made to the text of the ordinances, including the addition of districts and overlays to the Zoning Ordinance. The results include ordinances containing outdated requirements, internal inconsistencies, and ordinances that can be difficult for community members to comprehend. In recent years, it has become apparent that a significant overhaul of the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances is needed. Additionally, new ways of thinking about planning and zoning combined with new techniques and principles for implementing adopted plans offer ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of City planning and zoning. The adoption of the new Comprehensive Plan in November 2018 also affords the opportunity for taking a holistic approach to developing a new Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance.

In July 2020, the City contracted with Kendig Keast Collaborative to partner with city staff to update the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances.

Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances Update Project webpage: <http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/zoning-subdivision-ordinances-update>.

Key Issues:

In the coming months, Kendig Keast Collaborative and City staff will host a series of virtual stakeholder interviews. These meetings will provide an opportunity to talk with and hear from a cross-section of the community’s public and private leadership early in this planning process. Through these informal sessions, the consultant team will gain valuable insights into current issues, opportunities, needs, and priorities of our community as they relate to the regulations that govern the City’s physical and economic development.

Planned are eight small stakeholder group interviews, each lasting approximately 50 minutes. Generally, these groups are organized to include:

- Landowners and Developers,
- Business Owners, Merchants, and Commercial Property Managers,
- Brokers & Realtors,
- Design Professionals (engineers, architects, etc.),
- Downtown, Historic Preservation, and Redevelopment Advocates,
- Neighborhood Associations/Advocates, and
- Other groups of stakeholders as needed.

Staff seeks City Council’s recommendations of community members who could participate in the stakeholder group interviews. Please submit your recommendations to Thanh Dang by email (Thanh.Dang@harrisonburgva.gov) or by calling Ms. Dang at 540-432-7700 by September 1, 2020.

Additionally, an Ordinance Advisory Committee (OAC) will be formed to include 10-12 community members, who have policy and technical background working with zoning and subdivision ordinances. The Ordinance Advisory Committee will meet six times during the project between Fall 2020 and December 2021. Staff will present a list of suggested OAC members at City Council’s September 8, 2020 regular meeting for consideration and approval.

Environmental Impact:

N/A

Fiscal Impact:

N/A

Prior Actions:

N/A

Alternatives:

N/A

Community Engagement:

N/A

Recommendation:

N/A

Attachments:

N/A

Review:

N/A