



CITY OF BELFAST, MAINE 04915

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CODE & PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNERS

PUBLIC HEARING - APPROACH TO ALLOW MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING IN THE INSIDE THE BYPASS AREA

CITY OF BELFAST PLANNING BOARD HEARING WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 6:00 PM

September 5, 2018

To Property Owner:

The City of Belfast Planning Board, at its meeting of Wednesday, September 19, 2018, beginning at 6:00 pm in the cafeteria of the Troy Howard Middle School that is located at 173 Lincolnville Avenue, will conduct a public hearing regarding proposed amendments to the City Code of Ordinances, Chapter 102, Zoning, that would apply to the Residential 1, Residential 2 and Residential 3 zoning districts. All of the amendments propose to allow multi-family housing in areas that may now prohibit this type of use.

The Planning Board and City Council are considering the proposed amendments in an effort to increase the amount of housing in Belfast, particularly housing that would be available for rent. Members of both the Planning Board and City Council have expressed initial support of this proposal and have worked with Code and Planning Department staff to identify provisions included in the amendments. All of the Residential 1 and Residential 3 zoning districts are located in the Inside the Bypass area, and most of the Residential 2 zone similarly is located in this area; reference enclosed map for boundaries of the respective zoning districts. Following is an outline of some of the main elements of the proposed amendments.

- 1) Many properties that are occupied by a single family or two family residence may be permitted to convert the house to a multi-family residence. A multi-family residence is a house (structure) in which there are 3 or more dwelling units. Current City Ordinances allow both single family and two-family residences in these 3 zoning districts, but multi-family housing, particularly conversions, is typically a prohibited use. That said, not all single family or two family residences could convert to a multi-family residence. Potential reasons they would not be allowed to convert may include but are not necessarily limited to: the house is in a Shoreland Zoning district, the lot is too small, the house is too close to the neighboring property or there is no opportunity to provide adequate on-site parking.

- 2) Properties that are now used for a multi-family residence, a type of use that often is not now permitted in the Residential 1, 2 and 3 zoning districts (existing multi-family uses are considered a legally established nonconforming use), may be allowed to increase the number of housing units in an existing building. However, similar to some single family or two family residential properties that could not do a conversion, there may be factors that prohibit an existing multi-family residence from increasing the number of existing dwelling units.
- 3) A property that wants to convert to a multi-family residence or add more units to an existing multi-family residence would need to satisfy certain standards identified by the City to allow the conversion or expansion. The proposed standards would consider issues such as but not limited to: the amount and location of on-site parking, the amount of building setback from an adjacent/neighborhood lot line, the amount of lot coverage, and how the design and orientation of the building would blend into the character of the surrounding neighborhood.
- 4) The current proposal does not include any specific maximum limits regarding the number of dwelling units that could be established in a specific residential building; the intent is to consider this issue based on the characteristics of each property and building. With respect to this issue, the Code and Planning Department notes that a number of current or prospective property owners have asked the Department about the possibility of establishing one or two more units in an existing building. In short, there is current interest in this proposal.

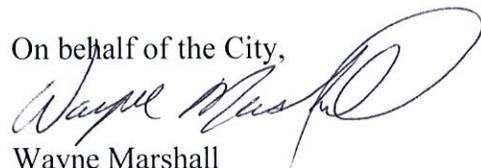
The purpose of the September 19 public hearing by the Planning Board is to obtain public comment on this proposal. Public comment can be provided in one of three ways, including:

- 1) Attend the September 19 public hearing and offer verbal comment to the Board;
- 2) Submit a letter to the Department by the date of the hearing - Letter to Wayne Marshall, Director, Code & Planning Dept, 131 Church St, Belfast, ME, 04915; or
- 3) Submit comment via email by the date of the hearing to public@cityofbelfast.org.

The role of the Planning Board is to solicit and consider public comment on this proposal and to offer a recommendation to the City Council. The City Council, at a future date that has not yet been determined, will similarly conduct at least one public hearing on the proposal as part of the formal process associated with potential adoption of the amendments.

The outline of this Ordinance proposal will be posted on the City website, cityofbelfast.org, by Thursday, September 6, under Code and Planning Department, reference September 19 Hearing, Housing. Copies of the proposed Ordinance amendments also can be inspected at the Code and Planning Department offices in City Hall, Monday - Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Questions regarding the proposal can be directed to Wayne Marshall, Director, Code & Planning at wmarshall@cityofbelfast.org, or at 338-1417, ext 125.

On behalf of the City,



Wayne Marshall
Director, Code & Planning

ZONING DISTRICTS for INSIDE the BYPASS AREA - ADOPTED OCTOBER 7, 2014

