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NOTE TO BELFAST PLANNING BOARD

SEPTEMBER 5th, 2024

**UPCOMING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT WORKSHOP AND PUBLIC HEARING ON
MANUFACTURED HOUSING COMMUNITY STANDARDS AND
INTOWN DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE
FROM BUB FOURNIER, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND CODES DEPARTMENT**

Manufactured Housing Community Standards

Manufactured Housing Communities, known as mobile home parks by the State of Maine, are defined as a parcel of land under unified ownership approved by the municipality for the placement of 3 or more manufactured homes. In Belfast, the City has adopted Supplementary District Regulations located in Article VIII, Division IV of the Chapter 102 Zoning ordinance to provide standards for development of these communities. These standards supersede some of the dimensional requirements in Chapter 102 Zoning, Technical Standards in Chapter 98, and even some of the standards in Chapter 94 Subdivision that would otherwise regulate these developments. This can allow Manufactured Housing Communities to be more densely developed than other types of subdivisions, adding to the financial feasibility of such developments.

Beginning at a joint housing workshop between the Belfast City Council and Planning Board on January 31, 2023, the City has been looking at increasing opportunities for development of Manufactured Housing Communities. At that meeting, the City's adopted standards for constructing roads in mobile home parks was identified as out of sync with the State minimum standards for mobile home parks. At the time, City Council members encouraged Planning and Codes staff to work with the Planning Board on potential ordinance amendments to bring the City's Code in line with State minimum road construction standards. On September 27, 2024 the Planning Board held a workshop that included the topic in more detail, outlining potential benefits and pitfalls for an ordinance amendment. The Board asked staff to amend the density allowed for Manufactured Housing communities in regard to public sewer, shared septic systems and individual septic systems. Following that meeting, the City's Housing and Property

Development Committee discussed the subject and generated a letter of recommendation to the Planning Board to consider amending the City ordinance as well.

At an ordinance amendment workshop on April 10th, 2024, staff presented draft language that would accomplish the goals discussed at the previous meetings. Accompanying the draft language was a letter from the City Engineer providing further guidance on the subject. In summary, the City Engineer stated that such a change in standards could result in some potential construction cost savings for developers, although they may not be without added costs in maintenance. The City Engineer also offered some thoughts regarding emergency vehicle access on narrow one-way 12' wide streets and the potential for paving to facilitate narrower road construction. The City Engineer did not raise any red flags for the potential amendment. After discussion, the Board asked staff to incorporate more streamlined language regarding density standards that mirror the State requirements and prepare for a public hearing.

Intown Design Review Committee

The draft language for consideration by the Planning Board concerns minimal restructuring of the Intown Design Review Committee to come into alignment with the other City Committees regarding membership, terms, and operational structure. Planning and Codes Department staff have discussed these proposed changes at meetings with the Intown Design Review Committee and the City Council and City Manager.

The Intown Design Review Committee is one of sixteen committees within the City of Belfast and is the largest of the established committees. This Committee is unique from others, except the Planning Board, in that it issues permits constituting land use regulations.

The proposed amendments would bring the total number of members to 9, which happens to be the current number of members. The proposal also includes three-year staggered terms so that only a third of the Committee would ever need to be reappointed or complete their term in any given year. Also, the proposal includes the adoption of an acting chair at the beginning of each meeting and sets a quorum of three members. Finally, the proposal includes requiring a vote of the majority of members at any given meeting to carry any motion. The current Chapter 80 Intown Review Committee section of the Code does not contain any details regarding these housekeeping items, typically found in other Committees' and Boards' policies or the City Ordinance.

Staff would like to present the draft language at your upcoming meeting followed by a duly noticed public hearing. Following the public hearing on each proposal, Board discussion and possible action to recommend adoption by the City Council should be considered. Only the city Council can adopt Ordinance Amendments, and that process involves additional duly noticed public hearings as well.