



City of Auburn, Maine

Office of Planning & Permitting

Eric Cousens, Director

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To: Auburn Planning Board
From: Eric Cousens, Planning and Permitting Director
Re: Findings and Reasons for the recommendation to the Council on a Proposed Amendment to the Low-Density Country Residential and Rural Residential Strips abutting the Agriculture/Resource Protection Zone to expand from a Width of 450 feet to a Width of 750 feet from the centerline of the roadways.
Date: December 14, 2021

- I. PROPOSAL:** Forward reasons and findings to the Council for the negative recommendation provided at the November meeting.
- II. BACKGROUND:** The Planning Board forwarded a negative recommendation to the Council on this proposal at the November 9th, 2021 Planning Board meeting. Providing reasons for the recommendation was discussed by the Board but was not included in the final motion. This was pointed out to the Council and the City Manager as a requirement of the process for Planning Board Recommendations (See attached memo from the City Manager). The Council voted Monday December 6th to table the item indefinitely, effectively ending the discussion if there is no future action by the Council to reopen the discussion. Staff and the Planning Board Chair discussed that there may be value in providing reasons and documenting as required even if the item did not pass at the Council level. The following reasons and options were discussed at the November Planning Board Meeting in no order:
- School capacity should be considered by district as development happens and changes are made.
 - The proposal provides Opportunity to care for aging family members at someone's existing home
 - The 2020 Comp Plan recommended by the Board provides a plan that is clear for desired growth in the City and this would conflict with the plan. 2020 Comp Plan draft does suggest looking into case-by-case flexibility on home location.
 - Conflicts with Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map currently being considered and increases density in the Lake Auburn watershed in conflict with the Lake Auburn Watershed Study recommendations.
 - Proposed plan provides opportunity for residential uses and does so responsibly, in part, but some current information has not been considered from the Lake Auburn Watershed Study. In order to be responsible we could recommend modifying the plan to exempt the Lake Auburn Watershed from the change and could require LID Standards in both Taylor Pond and the Lake Auburn Watershed. Extending residential area and potential uses into the Ag zoned areas is a concern. We could add restriction of private ways to no deeper than 750' to limit AG and back land impacts.
 - If homeowner has 20 acres of swamp it is not fair to increase tax on that land. Public is not accepting the proposal.
 - Combined impact of this proposal and the Comp Plan FLU Map doubling density possibilities in some areas may change the character of neighborhoods and we have a responsibility as a Board to consider whether that change is what Auburn wants.
 - If the goal of the Board is to maintain the character of the neighborhoods that would be given consideration in the same process as this if zoning changes are considered as a result of the FLU Map implementation.

Below is a recommended set of findings and reasons for the recommendation based on summarizing the Board's discussion at the November meeting. Although the Council voted to end the discussion it still may be worth the effort to explain the Boards reason for the recommendation and meet the ordinance requirements.

III. PLANNING BOARD ACTION/ SUGGESTED FINDINGS AND REASONS:

The Planning Board should adopt and/or amend a set of findings for the recommendation.

The Planning Board forwarded a negative recommendation based on the following findings and reasons:

1. The proposed expansion of residential strips conflicts with recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan and expands development outside the core of the City and into Agriculturally zoned areas.
2. Members of the Public, with substantial ownership of the land, has largely opposed the proposal for reasons discussed by the Board and included in these findings/reasons.
3. The proposal would increase taxes on existing homes/land in areas that may or may not even be developable or desirable.
4. The proposal would allow for increased development in the Lake Auburn and Taylor Pond Watersheds, without consideration of the recently released Lake Auburn Watershed Study recommendations, including Low Impact Development Standards.
5. The combined impact of this proposal and the Comp Plan FLU Map doubling density possibilities in some areas may change the character of neighborhoods and we have a responsibility as a Board to consider whether that change is what Auburn wants.