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TO: Plan Commission
DATE: February 26th, 2023
SUBJECT: Initial Review and Schedule Public Hearing – Text Amendments to Chapter 550 Zoning

A request for text amendments to the City of Watertown Zoning Code - Chapter 550.

BACKGROUND DESCRIPTION:

Amendment #1:

Current zoning code requires a minimum of 50 feet for both lot width and street frontage when developing Twin Homes. This text amendment reduces the minimum lot width and street frontage for Twin Homes to 42.5 ft. This text amendment also changes the Maximum Gross Density (MGD) to 8 dwelling units per acre for Twin Homes. This change will allow an existing duplex on an 85 ft wide lot (minimum lot with is 85 ft) to be divided into Twin Homes on separate lots and for new Twin Home developments to be developed with these standards. This change applies only to Twin Home development.

Amendment #2:

Current zoning code does not allow for 'Outdoor Commercial Entertainment Incidental to Indoor Commercial Entertainment' as an accessory use in the General Business (GB) Zoning District or the Planned Business (PB) Zoning District. 'Outdoor Commercial Entertainment Incidental to Indoor Commercial Entertainment' includes uses such as outdoor dining spaces. This text amendment allows 'Outdoor Commercial Entertainment Incidental to Indoor Commercial Entertainment' in both the General Business (GB) Zoning District and the Planned Business (PB) Zoning District. This change would only allow 'Outdoor Commercial Entertainment' as an accessory use in locations where 'Indoor Commercial Entertainment' is a principle use.

Amendment #3:

Current zoning code does not define a 'Street Side Yard'. A 'Street Side Yard' applies to corner lots with two sides having frontage on a street. On a corner lot a 'Street Side Yard' is the yard with street frontage not designated as the front yard. This designation has importance for maintaining proper vision clearance at intersections. Current zoning code language is often confusing for property owners regarding the storage of items such as firewood in these areas. This text amendment adds a definition for 'Street Side Yard' and adds a reference to 'Street Side Yard' within the firewood storage standards to clarify that firewood storage is not permitted in these areas.

Amendment #4:

Current zoning code allows 'Commercial Apartments' above the ground floor of a commercial building but not below the ground floor. This text change would allow the potential to establish 'Commercial Apartments' in lower levels (basement) of commercial buildings where appropriate. Establishment of 'Commercial Apartments' in a lower level would need to meet all relevant building and fire codes.

Amendment #5:

Current zoning code sets requirements for exterior storage in nonresidential districts. The existing language in this section is inconsistent with permitted uses that allow for outdoor storage in the Industrial Zoning Districts. This text amendment corrects this inconsistency and rewords the language of this section to add clarity.

PROPOSED TEXT AMENDMENT LANGUAGE:

Amendment #1 - § 550-25F(1)(a)[2], § 550-25F(2)(b), and § 550-25F(2)(c)

§ 550-25F(1)(a)[2] Two-Family Residential-6 (TR-6) District

[2] Maximum gross density (MGD): 6.00 du/acre. [Except Twin Homes: Maximum gross density \(MGD\): 8.00 du/acre.](#)

§ 550-25F(2)(b) Two-Family Residential-6 (TR-6) District

(b) Minimum lot width: 85 feet ~~unless Principal Land Use is a Twin Home. Twin Home Minimum Lot width: 50 feet.~~
[Except Twin Homes - Minimum lot width: 42.5ft.](#)

§ 550-25F(2)(c) Two-Family Residential-6 (TR-6) District

(c) Minimum street frontage: 50 feet. [Except Twin Homes - Minimum Street frontage: 42.5ft.](#)

Amendment #2 - § 550-32C(2) and § 550-33C(2)

§ 550-32C(2) Planned Business (PB) District

(2) Accessory land uses permitted by right:

- (a) Commercial apartment.
- (b) Company-provided on-site recreation.
- (c) Outdoor display incidental.
- (d) In-vehicle sales and service.
- (e) Light industrial incidental to indoor sales.
- (f) [Outdoor commercial entertainment incidental to indoor commercial entertainment.](#)

§ 550-33C(2) General Business (GB) District

(2) Accessory land uses permitted by right:

- (a) Commercial apartment.
- (b) Company-provided on-site recreation.
- (c) Outdoor display incidental.
- (d) In-vehicle sales and service.
- (e) Light industrial incidental to indoor sales.
- (f) [Outdoor commercial entertainment incidental to indoor commercial entertainment.](#)

Amendment #3 - § 550-15 and § 550-126A

§ 550-15 [YARD, STREET SIDE](#)

[A yard extending along the full width of the street side lot line between the front yard and the rear lot line having a width as specified in the yard regulations for the district in which such lot is located.](#)

§ 550-126A Outdoor storage of firewood standards.

- A. No person shall store firewood in the front yard [or street side yard](#) on residentially zoned property, except that firewood may be temporarily stored in the front yard [or street side yard](#) for a period of 30 days from the date of its delivery.

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Opportunity Runs Through It

Amendment #4 - § 550-56A

§ 550-56A

- A. Commercial apartment. Description: Commercial apartments are dwelling units which are generally located above or below the ground floor of a building used for a commercial land use (as designated in § 550-52 above), most typically an office or retail establishment. The primary advantage of commercial apartments is that they are able to share required parking spaces with nonresidential uses.

(1) Regulations.

- (a) All commercial apartments shall be located above or below the first floor.

Amendment #5 - § 550-109D

§ 550-109D

- D. **Requirements for exterior storage in nonresidential districts.** ~~In all office, commercial and industrial~~ In all office and commercial zoning districts (see § 550-17 for a listing of these districts), all materials, equipment, and trailers shall be stored within a completely enclosed building, except as specified in § 550-109D(1). ~~In all industrial zoning districts, outdoor storage shall conform to the regulations of the zoning district, except as specified in § 550-109D(1). except for the following, which shall not be located within any front yard or required street yard (except for vehicles and/or trailers in designated parking spaces) and shall be stored a minimum of five feet from any and all property lines: screened refuse containers; construction materials; landscape materials and related equipment associated with on-site construction; and off-street parking. Such exterior storage shall require a conditional use permit per § 550-142.~~

- (1) In all office, commercial, and industrial zoning districts the following outside storage is subject to a conditional use permit approval per § 550-142:

- Screened refuse containers not part of an approved site plan.
- Construction materials, landscape materials, and related equipment associated with on-site construction intended to be on premise longer than 30 days.
- Off-street parking not part of an approved site plan.

The items listed above shall not be located within any front yard or street side yard (except for vehicles and/or trailers in designated parking spaces) and shall be stored a minimum of five feet from all property lines, (except in the Central Business (CB) Zoning District).

PLAN COMMISSION OPTIONS:

The following are possible options for the Plan Commission:

1. Set the public hearing date for March 19th, 2024.
2. Postpone public hearing to a later date or indefinitely.