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MEMO

To: City of Watertown Common Council

From: Brian Zirbes, Zoning Administrator

Date: September 19th, 2023

RE: Planned Unit Development (PUD) Overlay Zoning District

Recently the city has seen an uptick in the proposals of large-scale developments. As these development projects work their way through the approval process, some may desire to utilize the Planned Unit Development (PUD) Overlay Zoning District as described in §550-38 and §550-152 of the Zoning Code. The purpose of this memo is to provide a brief overview of what a PUD is, what it can and cannot do, and how it has been utilized in the City.

Below is a summary of the Planned Unit Development Overlay Zoning District.

Planned Unit Development (PUD) Overlay Zoning District.

The PUD Overlay Zoning District is intended to provide stimulus for redevelopment in areas of the community which are experiencing a lack of reinvestment, or which require flexible zoning treatment because of factors specific to the site. This district is designed to forward both aesthetic and economic objectives of the city by controlling the site design, land use, appearance, and density or intensity of development. The provisions of a PUD only apply to the specific parcel(s) where the overlay zoning district has been approved.

Development standards are flexible within the PUD Overlay Zoning District. PUDs outline the specific 'flexible development standards' that are available and require that any flexibilities are explicitly listed and compared to the underlying standard zoning district. This provides limits to what can be requested, and these limits are written out in the zoning code. The developer, city, and public have some parameters to work within which makes applying the regulations more transparent and predictable. It also makes it easier to interpret comprehensive plan consistency by choosing the most appropriate underlying zoning district that is consistent with the plan.

All PUD's are required to meet certain procedural requirements applicable only to PUDs, in addition to the general requirements of the zoning ordinance. A public hearing process is required to review a request for a

planned unit development. This process essentially combines the process for a zoning map amendment with that required for a conditional use, with additional requirements.

Furthermore, planned unit developments are designed to forward both the aesthetic and economic development objectives of the City by controlling the site design and the appearance, density or intensity of development in terms of more flexible requirements for land uses, density, intensity, bulk (setbacks, lot sizes, etc.), landscaping, and parking requirements. In exchange for such flexibility, the planned unit development provides a higher level of site design, architectural control, and other aspects of aesthetic and functional performance than normally required for other developments.

The City of Watertown has approved approximately 40 PUDs dating back to the late 1980's. In recent years, PUDs have been used on specific development projects to reduce building and paving setbacks; allow exceptions to maximum building heights; and to adjust density, landscaping, parking, and other similar zoning code requirements.

As the City begins to consider PUD applications, please don't hesitate to reach out to me with any questions that you may have.

Sincerely,
Brian Zirbes

Zoning and Floodplain Administrator
Building, Safety and Zoning