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TO: Plan Commission
DATE: March 25th, 2024
SUBJECT: Public Hearing Comment Review and Recommend to Council – 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.

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.

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](#)

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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.

PUBLIC HEARING COMMENTS:

No comments at the public hearing on March 19th, 2024.

PLAN COMMISSION OPTIONS:

The following are possible options for the Plan Commission:

1. Negative recommendation of the Chapter 550 Text Amendments to Common Council.
2. Positive recommendation of the Chapter 550 Text Amendments to Common Council.
3. Positive recommendation of the Chapter 550 Text Amendments to Common Council, with conditions identified by the Plan Commission.