

October 11, 2017

Planning Commission
Northfield Township
8350 Main Street
Whitmore Lake, MI 48189

MEMORANDUM: 2017 ZONING AMENDMENTS AND PROJECT APPROVAL PROCEDURES

Dear Commissioners:

Per direction of the Board and Township Manager we have prepared a list of Zoning Amendments that could help to improve business relationships, resident service, and flexibility with site development. We recommend pursuing amendments that are consistent with the currently adopted Master Plan. We recommend that substantial Zoning procedural or district changes are only pursued following a Master Plan update.

Below we have summarized changes that could be pursued at this time. This memo is for Planning Commission discussion purposes. Following a discussion at Planning Commission we can work to formalize priority projects with Planning Commission and the Township Manager.

Zoning Ordinance Flexibility:

1. Clarify change of use requirements.
 - a. Clarify change of use determination procedures in a matrix or table. Change of use is triggered by substantive changes in site uses that result in parking and loading modifications, access modifications, waste disposal, noise, and other impacts on neighboring properties.
 - b. Make change of use an administrative sign off for properties that conform to current Zoning Ordinance requirements
 - i. Create a checklist that considers site inspection, recently approved site plans, evidence of compliance.
 - c. Adopt minimum development requirements for properties that do not conform to site design, access, and safety standards.
2. Refine Administrative review procedures. Administrative review is already permitted by Zoning Administrator and the Zoning Administrator can waive or require planner, engineering review as needed by site constraints and uses. Potential revisions include:
 - a. Permit a sketch plan for sites that do not require architectural or engineering level details.
 - b. Develop a "required site plan information" check list to permit administration to waive items that are not essential for project review.
3. Planning Commission waivers.
 - a. Establish formalized waivers with standards for Planning Commission to consider alternative development proposals for:
 - i. Parking and loading requirements.
 - ii. Landscaping and screening requirements.
4. Revise non-conforming use and non-conforming site standards to encourage blighted and violating sites owners to take steps toward compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and make needed site improvements.
 - a. Establish Class A and Class B non-conforming use status with standards and procedures.

Zoning Ordinance Amendments from the annual work plan

1. Amendments to encourage more development activity downtown.
 - a. Review the land uses of the WLD and try to include more uses as Permitted Uses.
 - b. Codify and update design guidelines with accompanying graphics based Downtown Strategic Action Plan
 - c. Consider “pop-up” retail and pre-approval provisions for tenant ready spaces.
2. Amendments to encourage more agricultural tourism uses.
 - a. Review these regulations to ensure they are consistent with the Right to Farm Act.
 - b. The Township may want to obtain comment from the Farmland & Natural Areas Preservation Committee.
3. Adopt a land use table to simplify uses and fix discrepancies between similar uses.
 - a. McKenna prepared a Non-Residential District Use Matrix, which is an administrative tool, we recommend adopting a similar table into the Zoning Ordinance that also includes the residential zoning districts.
 - b. Resolve conflicts between similar uses as part of the adoption process of the land use table.
 - c. Clarify definitions of uses to be consistent with the Master Plan and purpose of the Zoning Districts.

Zoning Ordinance Housekeeping Issues:

1. Develop temporary uses and standards in the Zoning Ordinance.
2. Clarify discrepancy in SR-1 and SR-2 districts regarding setbacks for detached accessory structures. Specifically, Section 36-218 and 36-248 footnote (4), and Section 36-98(d)(2)(b).
3. Addition issues as identified.

Non-Zoning Ordinance Procedural Improvements:

1. Create a “7 Steps to Project Approval” brochure for residential, administrative approval, and planning commission approval.
2. Formalize and simplify basic checklists, fees, and requirements to streamline process for Administrative and Planning Commission approval.
3. Update Planning and Building development packets and Township website information to simplify procedures and make the process more user friendly.

This preliminary list of Zoning Amendments and procedural updates is not intended to be all inclusive. We look forward to discussing these ideas with Planning Commission.

McKenna is committed to providing excellence in customer service and personally connecting with residents, business owners, and prospective business owners. We understand that every project is unique.

Respectfully submitted,
McKenna Associates



Paul Lippens
Director of Transportation and Urban Design