

CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP

Form Based Codes

December 16, 2019 at 6:00pm

Councilors Pepin, Vincent, Dumont, Austin, Michaud, Witham, Sprague, Cameron and Levasseur were all present.

Mayor Hilliard opened the workshop at 6:00pm by welcoming Steven Whitman of Resilience Planning & Design for his presentation on Form Based Codes in the City of Somersworth.

The presentation is on file. Following the presentation, Council had the following questions.

Councilor Witham asked about the handouts for each area.
There was a brief recess while the handouts were distributed.
Mayor Hilliard called the meeting to order.

Councilor Witham said he likes the idea of 5 zones. He asked about the height of the buildings.
Mr. Whitman said all zones have a 2 story minimum. And no maximum. The cost of construction and code would dictate the height.
Director Saunders said there is no maximum height in the business district.

Councilor Levasseur asked about the results of the survey.
Mr. Whitman said the options for each photo in the survey was Like, Neutral, and Dislike. They spent a lot of time analyzing the results and there was a general consistency.

Councilor Witham said he is interested in seeing the results of the survey. He went on to ask about the Historic Overlay District, and if we will have a couple overlays in some areas. Does the Form Based Codes conflict with the Historic District?
Director Saunders said this is more of the bigger picture the building and how the building fits into the district. The HDC looks more at esthetics like windows, siding, etc.

Councilor Sprague stated in Area 4, he asked that SF and MF be spelled out: single floor and multi floor.
And for the new developments, he would like it to say residential on upper stories only.
Area 2 has residential on upper stories only
In Area 3, it is not conducive to have residential on the first floor because of parking.

Councilor Levasseur asked about the Business/Residential Area 4.
Mr. Whitman stated that there will be new, high density units; office and residential.

Councilor Sprague asked about grandfathering. What if a business closes, and the same type of business opens up in there? They would have to jump through hoops to get the same business running.
Mr. Whitman said that the Form Based Codes does not currently have its own grandfathering.
Director Saunders said the form will be there, the function will change.

Councilor Witham stated that the table of uses needs to be examined closely.
Mr. Whitman said the first place people will look is at the overlay. They can look at Zoning for other uses.
In the long run, Form Based Codes could replace the underlying Zoning.

With no further questions or comments from Council, the Workshop adjourned at 6:35pm

Respectfully submitted,

Trish Harris, City Clerk