Mark Corcoran Landscaping and Buffering Comments 12-19-2024

Here are my comments on the Article 42-X document. Once again, they are in no order, and I am happy to be proven wrong at any time.

- I notice this article is much more focused that my comments on the general landscaping document. If this is the intended scope for both documents, please throw away my comments in my last email outside this scope of this document.

- Buffering & Screening (Sec 42-364): Do we want to include any words on maintaining the buffering and screen requirements?

- General Comment: Since this is an update, do we need to say the old article is no longer valid? (I am not a lawyer so just a question.)

- Street Trees (Sec 42-366): I am not sure, but is there a well-accepted definition of what "large scale canopy trees" are? If not, we may want to be more specific. Or is this the same as "Large deciduous trees" defined in Table 6-8? If so, maybe we should use the same term? On the other hand, if there is a well understood standard, never mind…

- Minimum Specification for Plant Materials (Sec 42-367): Is there a date and standard number for "American Association of Nurserymen's Standards"? When I "Googled" it, I came up with ANSI Z60.1 dated 14 April 2014 – is that the standard we want applied?

- Monitoring and Enforcement (Sec 42-370): Section f – What happens if the property owner does not replace (or repair) any landscaping materials, fencing or walls within 30 days when notified by the administrator?

- We talk about trees, fences, buffers, etc. but do not mention the rest of the landscaping space that is not trees, bushes, etc. (i.e., grass). Does this matter and if so, do we want to define the requirement for landscaping outside of trees, etc.? I guess I am asking if there should be a "Minimum Specification for Plant Materials" or similar section?

- Should we explicitly define the "administrator"? The administrator title is listed for the first time as "zoning administrator" and thereafter as administrator. I assume they are the same, but should we look for consistency in the term?

Mark Corcoran 12-17-2024

Here are some comments on the Landscaping & Buffer Standards Memo. Please note, I have no strong objections to anything in the memo and am providing my observations only. And I am always happy to be proven wrong as we go forward… Also, there is no order to these comments, I wrote them down as I thought of them.

- Although not directly a Landscaping & Buffer issue, I believe we should address water and sewar usage in the memo. Just like with the other topics in the memo not directly related to Landscaping (i.e., Dark Sky principals), minimizing additional water consumption, minimizing additional discharge to the town's water treatment plant and minimizing water runoff are topics that we might want to address.

- I would rework the "**Purpose**" paragraph. The current paragraph is kind of bland. And I hate to ask this question again, but who is the audience for this memo? Is it us as a road map for our planning over the next year (or so). Is the town council to tell them what we want to do? Or is it the town where we are announcing our plans and inviting comment? Depending on the audience we may want to "punch" this paragraph up to provide a simple action.

- Paragraphs 7 & 8 are similar. We could probably fold them over into one bullet; for example, "…Encourage and facilitate the installation of technologies and equipment aimed at improving energy efficiency and energy generation. This includes harnessing clean, renewable energy sources including (but not limited to) solar as well as the use of energy efficient technologies for buildings throughout the development process."

- Add a paragraph that address that all new efforts should minimize the visual impacts of all development vice having only in paragraph 7.

- Do we want to address indigenous wildlife and the impact of development? This would be the basic "minimize impact on…" statement. Also, do we want to discuss biodiversity at all? Not advocating here, just asking…

- Paragraph 6 on Dark Sky intrigued me. If this is a plan forward, do we want to add a statement about looking for opportunities to retrofit existing infrastructure that does not meet those guidelines? As I understand the Dark Sky work (and I am clearly not an expert), it is only as good as its weakest link and so if future development meets the standards but existing does not, will we achieve our goals? Also, I read through the Dark Sky website and could not find their principals spelled in simple language, I suspect we need something that either points to or writes down those principals. Also, should we add something about incorporating adaptive lighting into future (this might be part of the Dark Sky Principles, but I did not see it).

- Do we want to look at rewards and penalties for this effort. I am not advocating giving the Chair of the Planning Commission a big stick to whack people with (mostly since no one sits between me and him anymore), but rewards/penalties seem to be part of the process. Rewards can be as simple as looking for either (or both) town or larger resources that can help with the effort. And penalties might simply be, you won't get a permit unless you address these concerns. Or either could be more developed, I just think we want to

ensure people don't think they are on their own or there are no consequences for not adequately addressing these issues.

- I think we should punch up paragraph 3 a bit, as I am confused as to what is "internal open space"?

- Do we want to discuss space for walking, bike riding, etc.? I recognize for most singular developments will not get to this level but for bigger projects, developing infrastructure that fits into the overall town plans for pathways would be beneficial.

- Are there any past efforts (besides 42-X) that we want to include as a starting point? That is, something like the Historical effort we just sent to the Town Council?

- At the end of the day, what do we hope to produce out of this effort? Only an update to 42-X? Something else? I think we should be clear about what success is at the end.