

Overview

The Town of Abingdon is updating, modernizing, and restructuring the zoning and subdivision ordinances into one seamless regulatory document. The revised zoning and subdivision ordinance will:

- Provide streamlined and user-friendly regulations;
- Incorporate best planning practices and current state code requirements;
- Address the goals and strategies identified in the Comprehensive Plan; and,
- Consider citizen needs and issues identified through the public engagement process.

This process is being guided by Town staff, the Planning Commission, and Town Council with opportunities for input from stakeholders and citizens. To review the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance Open House draft and to stay updated on the project, visit: <https://abingdon-va.gov/zoning-subdivision-ordinance-update/>.

Agenda

The Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance drafting is complete. The ordinance articles have been compiled as a complete draft and is provided by Abingdon staff for your review. The September 22nd meeting will include a brief overview of the full ordinance with a more detailed focus on the major proposed changes to Article I, In General through Article V, Special and Overlay Districts. The following agenda is provided as an outline for discussion:

1. Schedule & Progress to Date – 5 minutes
2. Review Draft Ordinance – 45 minutes
 - a. Ordinance Structure & Overview
 - b. Major Changes to Articles I- V
3. Zoning Map – 10 minutes
4. Next Steps – 5 minutes

1. Schedule & Progress to Date

Progress to date, in reverse chronological order, includes:

- **Abingdon Staff Review and Worksessions with Planning Commission** – Abingdon staff has conducted two additional worksessions, one in August and one in September, with the Planning Commission to review the full draft document and make edits. At these meetings, the Planning Commission has recommended additional revisions that will be reviewed at tonight's Council worksession.
- **Public Open House** – The Berkley Group held an open house on July 25, 2022. The Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance draft was presented to the public. The event included question and answer time and an exit survey was provided in paper and online for those that wanted to provide comments and suggest edits. No comments were received on the exit survey.
- **Planning Commission Worksessions with Berkley Group** – Between April 2021 and June 2022, the Berkley Group facilitated five drafting worksessions with the Planning Commission to present ordinance revisions and receive feedback and policy direction.

- **Abingdon Staff Review and Worksessions with Planning Commission** – Beginning in January 2022, Abingdon staff conducted a full review of the ordinance and reviewed questions as needed during Planning Commission worksessions/meetings.
- **Public Engagement** – An online public survey was conducted between March 8-April 8. The Berkley Group also held stakeholder interviews and a public workshop on April 1, 2021, to collect feedback on priorities for the ordinance update.
- **Council Kickoff** –The Town Council kickoff was held on March 1, 2021. Town Council provided guidance on important land use and zoning issues as well as suggestions to consider during the public input phase and ordinance drafting.

2. Review Draft Ordinance

A. Ordinance Structure and Overview

As part of the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance update, the ordinance has been holistically restructured for readability. The ordinance has been structured to contain 11 articles with divisions and sections further dividing the article topics. Additionally, one of the greatest structural changes is the incorporation of the Subdivision Ordinance as an article of the Zoning Ordinance. The ordinance is available in its entirety online (<https://abingdon-va.gov/zoning-subdivision-ordinance-update/>) or by contacting Abingdon staff.

B. Major Changes to Articles I-V

A summary memo of the major changes from the existing ordinances to the proposed ordinance is provided in **Attachment A**. This memo is reflective of changes leading to the Open House and does not include changes the Planning Commission (PC) has been discussing in the two subsequent worksessions. The goal of this Council worksession will be to review articles I-V, considering the changes highlighted in the summary memo and major changes recently proposed by the PC, and to come to consensus on these articles for the public hearing draft.

During the August 29th PC worksession, staff and the PC reviewed articles I-V and discussed additional changes. A redline version is being provided by Abingdon staff. Most of the changes clarify text or existing processes and will be incorporated into the public hearing draft. The most substantial changes that the PC is proposing are in Article IV - District Standards, Division 2 – District Dimensional Standards. These changes include:

- **Measuring the front setback from the property line instead of the centerline of the road.** This change was incorporated to ease the applicant process. In addition, the front setback numbers were adjusted to reflect the new measuring location and prevent increasing the front setback.
- **Eliminating lot sizes and frontage/lot width requirements for other permitted uses in residential districts.** This change eliminates minimum requirements for non-residential uses that are permitted in residential districts (for example, churches). Best practice is to include dimensional standards for all uses permitted in a district.



- **Maintaining the lot size for single-family, two-family, and townhouses in the R-3 district.** Previously, the lot sizes were proposed to decrease to create a higher density district and provide greater opportunities for affordable housing. The PC now proposes to return the lot size requirements to those of the existing ordinance.
- **Adding two new zoning districts (R-5 and R-6).** The two new districts provide an option for smaller lot sizes and therefore greater density and opportunity for affordable housing. However, an applicant must apply to rezone their property and be approved or denied through the public hearing process.

A redline version of the PC's proposed changes to the Residential District Standards Table is provided in **Attachment B**. These items will be discussed and consensus reached during the worksession.

3. Zoning Map

Two maps (**Attachment C**) are provided for review. These maps represent the Official Zoning Map of the Town and depicts the location of zoning districts within the Town.

No changes have occurred to the name or location of any of the districts except for the Old and Historic (OH) District. Currently, the OH district is divided into 15 subdistricts. During public engagement and PC worksessions, this was deemed too complex, and a consolidation of subdistricts was proposed. The agreed upon five OH subdistricts are provided on page two of the attachment and will be discussed during the worksession.

4. Next Steps

The Berkley Group will incorporate revisions from this worksession into the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance. Next steps in the process include:

- October 20th Town Council Worksession – The Town Council will review articles VI-XI, including additional suggested revisions from PC's September 15th worksession and provide final edits for the public hearing draft.
- November – Planning Commission Public Hearing and Recommendation.
- December – Town Council Public Hearing and Adoption.