

Project Description Narrative

Our proposed project involves a Planned Unit Development (PUD) at 167 West Main Street with the primary goal of replacing a dilapidated garage with a new larger garage with an apartment on the second floor. Section 5.12.2 a) of the zoning regulations states that a PUD is required for developments in which multiple primary structures are proposed on a single lot. We are seeking approval for a PUD that does just that: creating a second primary structure (garage with apartment). We do not intend to divide the property into two parcels. Note: we cannot achieve this with an accessory dwelling unit over the garage as our primary structure includes an ADU (167a and 167b).

We are aware that PUDs need to follow guidelines as prescribed in the zoning regulations. In particular, PUDs need to have a density consistent with the zoning district they are in. This property is within the Village Residential Neighborhood North district that has a maximum density of 8,712 ft² per dwelling. This property is approximately 19,000 ft² (Figure 1), providing enough area for the two dwellings proposed. PUDs also need to be consistent with the Town Plan. One of the strong themes running through the Town Plan is the goal of 'smart growth': concentrating growth in the village area and developing affordable housing. This project is in line with these goals. While acknowledging that the Town Plan is a vision distinct from zoning regulations, it is worth noting that the need for housing region-wide has only increased in the 8 years since the Town Plan was written.

As part of the PUD proposal we are requesting a modification to the setback requirements, as permitted in a PUD (section 5.12: Purpose). The current garage is on the property line with our western neighbor. Setback requirements would necessitate building the new structure 10 feet from the property line. This creates several challenges on our relatively narrow lot: 1) The new structure would interfere with the sewer line (illustrated in figure 2) that runs from the current primary residence. 2) The new structure, in conjunction with a 30-40 foot tall evergreen (illustrated in figure 2), would block access to the back yard. This would necessitate removing the tree. 3) This large evergreen is adjacent to a retaining wall on our eastern property line. It is reasonable to suspect that the tree and its roots are helping to stabilize this property line slope/wall. We are, thus, very anxious about removing it. In addition to these concerns we are sensitive to concerns about changing the character of our neighborhood. Many structures within our neighborhood are on property lines. We feel it would be more out of character with the neighborhood to site this structure 10 feet from the property line and remove a prominent tree than it would be to site the building on the property line. Finally, the neighbors whose property line this building would grace have acknowledged, verbally, that they have no complaint with the new structure remaining on the property line. Our proposal is to build the new primary structure on the property line with our western neighbor (approximate location illustrated in Figure 1).

We are engaging in the Sketch Plan Review process seeking feedback related to this PUD and, in particular, the request to modify setback requirements. We are hoping to pave the way for a smooth process moving forward.

Included in this application are a few sketches of rough ideas for the building. Please note that a local architect has been hired to design a structure consistent with the neighborhood and inspired by the property's original barn as seen in historical photos.