City of Fort Atkinson Zoning Ordinance Rewrite February Meeting

Policy Decision Guide

This document is intended to be used in combination with the Policy Decision Guide Presentation PDF and the Draft Fort Atkinson Zoning Ordinance. Together, these documents provide much needed context to assist in answering each of the questions below. All responses will be taken into consideration in the development of the Final Zoning Ordinance.

Please check or indicate your answer to the following set of questions. Space is provided below each question for additional comments. All responses will be reviewed and taken into consideration in the development of the Final Zoning Ordinance.

1. Nonconforming Situations
   In the Draft Zoning Ordinance, nonconforming structures, lots, and sites become fully legal conforming with the adoption of the ordinance. Meaning, they can continue to be reinvested in overtime, but an enlargement, expansion, or extension would trigger compliance with the ordinance. To note, in the Draft Zoning Ordinance, nonconforming uses will not become legal conforming, they will remain nonconforming. If the use discontinues for a year, it loses its right to legal nonconforming.

   Should nonconforming structures, lots, and sites be made fully legal conforming?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Discussion summary:
- Discussed the difference between nonconforming uses and nonconforming structures, lots, and sites.
- The impacts to historic properties and older neighborhoods by making nonconforming structures, lots, and sites legal conforming.

2. Downtown Parking Requirements
   In the Draft Zoning Ordinance, all parking requirements in the Downtown Historic Mixed-Use Zoning District are waived. This is the typical approach in downtowns.

   Should there be parking requirements for residential and/or commercial uses downtown?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Waive all parking requirements</th>
<th>Require residential use parking requirements</th>
<th>Require commercial use parking requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Discussion summary:
- Some concerns about there already being parking issues downtown and this could make them worse.
- If on-site parking is required, it could take up to ½ of the lot making downtown less dense and using valuable land for parking that could be accommodated elsewhere.
- No other community in area requires downtown parking on-site.
- It seemed that the best way to address the existing parking issues downtown is not to require on-site parking, but to limit parking spots by time and increased enforcement.
3. **Commercial Parking Requirements**

In the Draft Zoning Ordinance, the on-site parking requirements for commercial uses have reduced to 1 space per 400 gross square feet (previously 1 space per 300 gross square feet).

What should the on-site parking requirements be for commercial uses?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increased from the existing regulations (more parking is needed)</th>
<th>Kept the same as the existing regulations</th>
<th>Reduced from the existing regulations (less parking is needed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Discussion summary:**
- Many people saw the large sprawling mostly-empty parking lots at big box stores near the Bypass and along Janesville Street as unnecessary and ineffective.
- As retail trends change, reducing parking for these types of stores makes a lot of sense.

4. **Exterior Building Design Requirements**

In the Draft Zoning Ordinance, there are detailed exterior building design requirements for new development and additions/alterations on existing structures for all uses including single-family and two-family.

A. Should there be exterior building design standards for single-family and two-family buildings?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes, for both additions and new development</th>
<th>Yes, but only for new development</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Discussion summary:**
- Some people saw this as a positive and wanted to promote good architecture and building practices for all types of structures in the city.
- Some people thought that this was too restrictive, especially for single-family homes.
- It was argued that many homeowners already go above and beyond the proposed design standards.

B. Should there be exterior building design standards for multi-family, commercial, and industrial buildings?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Discussion summary:**
- Most people echoed the opinion that some kind of design standards make sense for these structures, especially since the city already has many design standards for them and they have worked in the past.
- Some people argued that these new standards should not be too restrictive and need to be reasonable and flexible in nature.

5. **Downtown Design Requirements**

In the Draft Zoning Ordinance, there are detailed exterior building design requirements for structures downtown which requires them to match and meet the look and function of the development in the area (façade, windows, doors, materials, articulation, etc.).
Should there be downtown-specific exterior building design requirements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Discussion summary:
- Nearly everyone was in agreement that downtown design standards make sense and are needed in the new ordinance. Overall, there was very little discussion on this topic.


In the Draft Zoning Ordinance, there are no requirements for landscaping for new (or existing) single-family and two-family uses. All other uses have landscaping requirements.

Should there be landscaping requirements for single-family and two-family lots?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Discussion summary:
- It was argued that many homeowners already go above and beyond the proposed landscaping standards and they aren’t needed.
- Additionally, some people thought that this was too restrictive, especially for single-family homes.
- Overall, this discussion was very similar to question 4.A. above.

7. Signage

In the Draft Zoning Ordinance, there are several new sign types and names. Below are a series of questions related to a few major sign decisions.

A. Should Pylon Signs (up to 18’ in height) be permitted in commercial areas (along Madison Avenue adjacent to the Bypass)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By-Right</th>
<th>Conditional Use</th>
<th>Not Permitted</th>
</tr>
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</table>

Discussion summary:
- Some people wanted to see these signs lowered in height and only allowed in certain areas of the city.
- Many people thought that they were appropriate in the existing commercial corridors at their existing permitted height.
- Electronic message signs were also discussed, and attendees were reassured that they were addressed in the new ordinance.

B. Should Projecting Signs be permitted downtown?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By-Right</th>
<th>Conditional Use</th>
<th>Not Permitted</th>
</tr>
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</table>

Discussion summary:
- There was a reason that these signs are no longer permitted downtown and were removed from the ordinance over a decade ago – issues of uniform height of signs, Main Street looked cluttered, not aesthetically pleasing signs, they ended up blocking other business signs, etc.
- Many people agreed that the large plastic projecting signs were not a great idea for downtown now and should stay prohibited because of the reasons above.
• However, people liked the look of the smaller, more customized, and pedestrian-oriented blade sign. The majority of people liked that option downtown.

C. Should Blade Signs be permitted downtown?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>By-Right</th>
<th>Conditional Use</th>
<th>Not Permitted</th>
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Discussion summary:
• See notes above for 7.B.

D. Should Temporary Feather Signs be permitted anywhere in the City?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By-Right</th>
<th>Conditional Use</th>
<th>Not Permitted</th>
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Discussion summary:
• Most people voiced opinions about how these signs are not an issue in the city, but that they needed to be regulated based on height, size, location, and display duration.

E. How many Yard Signs should be permitted per lot (not including election signs)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>None</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Unlimited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Discussion summary:
• It was explained that the new federal rules changed for signs and it was specifically related to the subject of yard signs (For Sale, Garage Sale, Political, “Slow Down For Kids”, etc.).
• The City had to establish a total number to allow per lot because that was the only way to regulate them now.
• Some people did not think that 1 was enough and explained that they felt that 2 made the most sense to apply city-wide with size limits.

8. Accessory Dwelling Units
In the Draft Zoning Ordinance, Accessory Dwelling Units are a Conditional Accessory Use in the Single-Family and Two-Family Districts.

Should accessory dwelling units be permitted in the single-family and two-family zoning districts?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By-Right</th>
<th>Conditional Use</th>
<th>Not Permitted</th>
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Discussion summary:
• It was explained that there are many different outcomes of choosing to allow or not allow accessory dwelling units and that this is highly-debated subject in many communities.
• People in favor of allowing them wanted to see more housing options in the community, thought that accessory dwelling units would not be a detriment to the neighborhood if property regulated, and wanted to find a way for the City to make this work.
• People against the idea of allowing accessory dwelling units were worried about retaining the character of single-family neighborhoods, the additional parking, paving, and traffic of another unit being allowed on a lot meant for only one house, and the possibility of these being used as Community Living Arrangements.