

Over the past several months, the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) has been reviewing permitted uses along the Rout 46 Corridor. Major discussions were had as to whether Route 46 east (which is currently in Business Zone B, and Route 46 west (which is currently in office zones OL-1 and OL-2 zone, with a small piece residential) should be converted into one single business zone with uniform permitted uses. The EDAC members did not favor that approach. The belief was that a more detailed examination would need to be conducted of the residential portion of Route 46 west to ensure there are no negative consequences. Another point noted was whether our current setback distances between the Route 46 corridor and residential areas was sufficient if retail uses were allowed in addition to office uses.

The EDAC was subsequently asked by the Planning Board to formalize its recommendations for permitted uses in the Business Zone B, in the form of an updated ordinance. The EDAC reviewed the current zoning map and associated permitted uses with the goal of making recommendations for possible changes to enhance business opportunities (and associated retables) without compromising the quality of life in Mountain Lakes. Indeed, allowing certain uses in the Route 46 corridor which are currently prohibited could actually enhance quality of life in Mountain Lakes by bringing to town businesses that would be considered desirable by the community.

The current zones and permitted uses were developed at a time when it was believed that the general make-up of the east side of Route 46 should be commercial and the west side of Route 46 should be office. The EDAC felt it important to review uses which were restricted at that time on the basis that the general community might view the desirability of these uses differently in 2019.

An expansion of the current existing uses along the Route 46 East Bound corridor was discussed. It was the belief of EDAC that the following restrictive uses should be removed – hotels, gas stations, drive-thru's (current wording is that "drive-ins" are prohibited), and dry cleaning (no longer any reason to restrict). It was noted that environmental topics, traffic safety, and development aesthetics, would be assessed as part of the planning process by properly credentialed professionals.

Allowance of mixed use of retail and residential was discussed. This was considered desirable and flows with the recently approved overlay for affordable housing. It was felt that the Borough Planner could be consulted for the best manner to structure into a revised business zone. The Borough Planner was

While outside the zoning/allowable use discussion, the members present felt it was important to review the current height restriction in our business zone to see if it is realistic and, to determine a more appropriate height limit in the business zone.

It was felt unnecessary to discuss any changes to the Business Zone A (Midvale area) or the OL-2 zone south of Fanny Road at this time.

Next Steps

The next step for EDAC would be to create a small team of volunteer individuals to further review and refine the draft ordinance which would then be brought back to Council for review and possible approval. The team would be made of individuals from the following:

Historic Preservation Advisory Committee
Economic Development Advisory Committee
Environmental Commission
Planning Board
Zoning Board