



City of Beacon, New York

Office of the Mayor
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 6, 2020

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BEACON CITY COUNCIL ADOPTS ZONING CHANGES TO FURTHER LIMIT FOURTH FLOORS ON MAIN STREET

Beacon, NY: On Monday evening, the Beacon City Council enacted changes to the City's Central Main Street zone, to limit fourth floors on Main Street to projects that provide specific public benefits.

The original Main Street CMS zone was a recommendation of the City's community-driven Comprehensive Plan, with the goal of ensuring Main Street's long-term vitality by encouraging nearby residential density. The initial CMS zoning allowed for fourth floors as a matter of right, and some fifth floors. After the first new structures on Main Street, the City Council eliminated fifth floors and imposed restrictions on fourth floors, including that any fourth floor "step back" at least fifteen feet away from streets and adjacent homes, and fit in with adjacent historic structures.

Last night, the City Council went further, and eliminated fourth floors as a matter of right, and instead gave to the City Council or Planning Board the discretion to approve a fourth floor only where there is a specific public benefit. Such public benefits could include providing public green space, job-creating commercial space on upper floors, affordable housing, public parking, and green building features.

Said Mayor Lee Kyriacou, "Tonight the City Council unanimously took another major step to better manage development on Main Street. By eliminating fourth floors as a matter of right, and instead requiring a public benefit in return, the new zoning should both limit fourth floors and generate public improvements on Main Street."

Mayor Kyriacou added, "While COVID-19 is far and away the most pressing challenge facing us right now, the City has continued to advance our planning for the future, and in particular for better managing development while addressing its repercussions. These zoning changes should both limit excessive height and lay a path for public benefit improvements on Main Street."

The City Council continues to advance its discussions on a series of zoning changes to better direct development, including:

- The creation of a "transition" zone of modest density on either side of Main Street, which would allow a mix of compatible commercial, residential and parking uses;
- A Comprehensive rewrite of uses permitted in each residential and commercial zone, as well as the dimensional and setback requirements in each zone;
- Increasing commercial space requirements in the area between Main Street and the train station, to encourage job-creating commercial businesses; and
- Reconnecting Main Street to the Hudson River.

The City Council has been engaged in discussions to amend zoning since last year, but took additional time to receive public input, by way of community forums earlier this year on the topic of development and its impacts. An immediate outcome was the Mayor's creation of a committee to improve Main

Street parking and access, which like the rest of the City's boards, currently meets remotely to ensure everyone's health.

Separately on Monday night, the City Council also accepted ownership of a new public walkway connecting Beekman Street to Route 9D by way of two new developments. Funded by developers, the walkway, with its energy-efficient LED lighting, will be one of three public walkways between the train station and Main Street.

About the City of Beacon:

Beacon, New York is located on the eastern shore of the Hudson River 60 miles north of New York City, with a population of 15,000. Originally a Native American settlement, the area was purchased from the Wappinger Tribe in 1683 and settled by Dutch and other Europeans, leading to the riverfront community of Fishkill Landing on the Hudson, and the mill community of Matteawan on Fishkill Creek. The two communities were incorporated together as the City of Beacon in 1913, named for the Revolutionary War signal fires on Mount Beacon. Beacon thrived as a 19th and 20th Century factory city, but as factories closed after WWII and the local economy declined, the city went through a period of hard times. Today, Beacon has successfully reinvented itself as a 21st Century river community centered around tourism, the arts and access to the scenic Hudson River heritage area. A diverse and thriving small city, it is now home to DIA:Beacon (one of the largest exhibition spaces in the country for modern and contemporary art), a network of Hudson River parks connecting to Fishkill Creek and Mount Beacon trails, and a vibrant historic Main Street of art galleries, shops, cultural venues and restaurants.

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