

Town of Henrietta, NY

Multiple Dwelling Zoning Analysis

Notes of AC Meeting
February 16, 2017

Attendees

Margaret Churnetski, AC Member, Resident
Karen Martin, AC Member, Resident
Rick Martin, AC Member, Resident
Jack Moore, AC Member, Town Supervisor
Peter Minotti, AC Member, Planning Board Chair
Chris Martin, AC Member, Director Engineering and Planning
Janet Zinck, Town Board, Councilwoman
Kenneth Breese, Town Board, Councilman
Rick Page, Town Board, Councilman
Scott Adair, Town Board, Councilman
Mark Stevens, Ashley Group
Howard Konar, Konar Properties
Members of the Citizens Action Group for the Southwest Quadrant
Jane Rice, EDR, Project Consultant
Walt Kalina, EDR, Project Consultant

Meeting Summary

1. The meeting began with general introductions of AC members and other stakeholders in attendance. The purpose of this meeting was to hear from two local developers invited to participate in the meeting because of their experience with multiple dwelling projects in Monroe County and a working knowledge of the real estate market in the Town of Henrietta for this type of development.
2. There was a brief review of the last meeting held on January 26, 2017 that included a presentation of three GIS maps created by EDR. These maps included existing land use, existing zoning, and the locations of multiple dwelling projects that exist within the Town. The maps are being used to determine where multiple dwelling projects exist and the zoning districts within the Town where they are permitted. As discussed in previous meetings it was noted that multiple dwellings are permitted in the Industrial Districts, as well as in the Business (B2) and Residential (R2) districts.



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3. The current upward trend and interest in multiple dwelling unit construction can be traced back to the economic downturn in 2008 and the trend is continuing. Many residents moving into new multiple dwelling units are seniors, empty nesters, single parents, young professionals and students. There is a weak single-family home market. Since 2008 getting a mortgage and buying a single-family home has become much more difficult than in the years before 2008 and this market is being filled by multiple dwelling projects.
4. The market right now for multiple dwelling projects in Henrietta and surrounding towns like Chili is “hot” and likely to remain so. Occupancy rate percentages for units in multiple dwelling complexes are running in the high 90s. Typically, under more normal market conditions the percentage may be more around 90 percent or low 90s. This translates to very low vacancy rates between 0 (full occupancy) and 1 percent at many complexes. This is occurring despite little if any growth in population as is the case throughout much of Upstate NY. The existing population is just shifting around.
5. There also appears to be a strong market for patio homes (1 story houses) for the 55+ age group. As one developer noted people who are moving to Henrietta are looking for space.
6. There was some discussion about the potential for mixed-use development in Henrietta. The Committee was provided several recent articles that discussed the conversion of vacant and underutilized sites, such as suburban strip malls, as prime candidates for mixed-use redevelopment. General questions were raised to determine if this type of redevelopment might be appropriate for Henrietta. It was noted that this form of redevelopment is more likely to be happening outside of New York State.
7. The Town of Henrietta does not have the density of population that is needed for many successful types of the more traditional types of mixed-use development. The traditional mixed-use (lower floor retail and upper floor residential) is typically found in more urban (less suburban) areas where people want to live in walkable neighborhoods to get to shopping, restaurants, services, etc. It is not certain this type of mixed-use could work in Henrietta since many areas are not considered truly walkable and most amenities need to be accessed by car.
8. Mixed-use is demand driven and you need the infrastructure to support it. The cost of doing mixed-use development is a definite factor considered by developers in determining if it is locally feasible. To reduce financial risk, it may require public/private partnerships to make it more feasible where the public sector provides infrastructure, property, density bonuses and other incentives.
9. There was considerable discussion about local examples of strip shopping centers that may have some redevelopment potential. At previous meetings, it was discussed that encouraging development and redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties north of the Thruway could take some of the strain off areas south of the Thruway that is seeing increased development pressure.

10. Redevelopment is cost driven and depends on financial feasibility. Redevelopment often requires a private/public partnership to make redevelopment feasible. This may include assistance from the public sector in contributing land, parking areas or other types of incentives such as a PILOT agreement. It could generally take 3-5 years for foreclosure to occur so time is also a consideration that affects feasibility. Often if there is a risk for a financial loss, the property/site owners or lenders are not willing to accept that kind of a financial risk, making redevelopment less likely to occur.
11. New construction in the market area is about \$1.10 per square foot. The cost for mixed-use development or redevelopment is more, especially where older buildings need to be renovated to market expectations for space and services.
12. There may be an opportunity for horizontal mixed use within the Town, perhaps more potential than traditional vertical mixed-use buildings typically seen in urban areas. For multiple dwellings, there may be some potential to horizontally mix multiple dwelling uses with industrial, retail and services.
13. It was noted that the concept of mixed-use and encouraging it as a land use in Henrietta dates back at least to the Town's 2003 Comprehensive Plan and the Town's Strategic Plan update in 2011. Although there are a couple of local examples of a form of mixed-use in Henrietta, it is not the type of development considered typical where you have lower floor retail or office uses and upper floor residential use.
14. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for March 9, 2017. At that meeting an industrial developer may be invited to discuss with the advisory committee various issues associated with meeting the needs for industrial development in Henrietta. The focus of that meeting will also include a discussion about a future land use plan and further recommendations about multiple dwellings, future land use and zoning districts. An attorney experienced in zoning may be invited to the following meeting (after the March 9th 2017 meeting) as the committee discusses recommendations being considered resulting from the multiple dwelling zoning analysis.