

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Coventry Planning Commission

FROM: Doug McLean, Director of Planning and Development

DATE: February 25, 2025

SUBJECT: Code Updates - First Batch (first Town Council reading on 2/25/25)

This memo provides brief overviews, findings of fact, and staff recommendations for the 12 proposed amendments to the Town of Coventry's Code of Ordinances which will go before the Town Council for a first reading on Tuesday, February 25 (the same date as this memo).

Most of the proposed code changes are intended to bring Coventry's Zoning Code into consistency with state law, given the numerous state legislative actions undertaken within the past 2 years to facilitate housing production. In addition to updating how the community will review and permit housing development going forward, additional changes are proposed to align our local code with best planning and zoning practices already in place among other peer communities elsewhere in the state of Rhode Island.

Although the ultimate authority to amend a municipal Zoning Ordinance resides with that municipality's Town Council, R.I. Gen. Laws § 45-24-51 establishes that the Planning Commission's role in the process begins upon referral of proposed amendments, and describes that role as follows: "...The planning board or commission shall, in turn, notify and seek the advice of the city or town planning department, if any, and report to the city or town council within forty-five (45) days after receipt of the proposal, giving its findings and recommendations as prescribed in § 45-24-52."

Per R.I. Gen. Laws § 45-24-51 ("Adoption – Review by planning board or commission."), the required findings of fact that the Planning Commission must make when forwarding recommendations to the Town Council include:

1. "...a statement on the general consistency of the proposal with the comprehensive plan of the city or town, including the goals and policies statement, the implementation program, and all other applicable elements of the comprehensive plan; and
2. "...Include a demonstration of recognition and consideration of each of the applicable purposes of zoning, as presented in § 45-24-30."

Although the Commission may elect to vote and forward recommendations to the Town Council as a "slate," summaries and findings of fact are broken out on an individual (ordinance-by-ordinance) basis throughout the remaining pages of this memo.

Ordinance No. 2025-01, amending Chapter 18 ("Comprehensive Plan")

Overview

This ordinance is amended to add notice requirements for public hearings regarding the adoption, modification, and amendment of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. This revision will ensure conformance and consistency with Rhode Island General Law (RIGL) § 45-22.2-8, as updated in 2023.

Findings of Fact

Staff has conducted an orderly, thorough, and expeditious review of this proposed ordinance for conformance with required standards set forth in RIGL Section 45-24-52, as well as in the Town of Coventry's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code, and finds as follows:

RIGL § 45-24-52 ("Adoption – Review by planning board or commission.") states that, "Among its findings and recommendation to the city or town council with respect to a proposal for adoption, amendment, or repeal of a zoning ordinance or zoning map, the planning board or commission shall:"

"(1) Include a statement on the general consistency of the proposal with the comprehensive plan of the city or town, including the goals and policies statement, the implementation program, and all other applicable elements of the comprehensive plan; and

1. The proposed ordinance is generally consistent with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan, insofar as it provides for clear processes by which the public will be notified or proposed adoptions/modifications/amendments of the Plan, and public involvement was essential to the Plan's creation. Importantly, this amendment will bring the Town's code into greater conformance with state law as it pertains to this matter.

"(2) Include a demonstration of recognition and consideration of each of the applicable purposes of zoning, as presented in § 45-24-30."

2. Although the proposed ordinance does not amend the Zoning Code, but rather a separate chapter within the Town of Coventry's Code of Ordinances, the proposed ordinance could be viewed as consistent with the applicable purposes of zoning as presented in § 45-24-30 – as an example, § 45-24-30 (a)(14) lists one purpose of zoning as "Providing for efficient review of development proposals, to clarify and expedite the zoning approval process."

Recommendation

Staff finds Proposed Ordinance 2025-01 consistent with the standards for required findings of fact set forth in RIGL Section 45-24-52 as well as with the Town of Coventry's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code. Staff therefore recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the documented findings of fact and forward a **positive** recommendation to the Town Council.

**Ordinance No. 2025-02, amending the following sections of Chapter 15, Article IV ("Planning Commission"):
15.39 - Powers and Duties**

Overview

This ordinance is amended to state that the Planning Commission's ability to adopt, modify, and amend rules and regulations governing the platting and other subdivisions of land shall no longer be subject to the Town Council's approval. RIGL § 45-23-52, adopted in 1992, states that local planning boards have the authority to adopt, repeal, administer, interpret, and enforce land development and subdivision regulations. State law makes no mention of Town Council's role in said process.

Findings of Fact

Staff has conducted an orderly, thorough, and expeditious review of this proposed ordinance for conformance with required standards set forth in RIGL Section 45-24-52, as well as in the Town of Coventry's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code, and finds as follows:

RIGL § 45-24-52 ("Adoption – Review by planning board or commission.") states that, "Among its findings and recommendation to the city or town council with respect to a proposal for adoption, amendment, or repeal of a zoning ordinance or zoning map, the planning board or commission shall:"

"(1) Include a statement on the general consistency of the proposal with the comprehensive plan of the city or town, including the goals and policies statement, the implementation program, and all other applicable elements of the comprehensive plan; and

1. The proposed ordinance is generally consistent with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan, insofar as it clarifies the process by which amendments to the Subdivision Regulations will be made. Importantly, this amendment will bring the Town's code into greater conformance with state law as it pertains to this matter.

"(2) Include a demonstration of recognition and consideration of each of the applicable purposes of zoning, as presented in § 45-24-30."

2. Although the proposed ordinance does not amend the Zoning Code, but rather a separate chapter within the Town of Coventry's Code of Ordinances, the proposed ordinance could be viewed as consistent with the applicable purposes of zoning as presented in § 45-24-30 – as an example, § 45-24-30 (a)(14) lists one purpose of zoning as "Providing for efficient review of development proposals, to clarify and expedite the zoning approval process."

Recommendation

Staff finds Proposed Ordinance 2025-02 consistent with the standards for required findings of fact set forth in RIGL Section 45-24-52 as well as with the Town of Coventry's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code. Staff therefore recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the documented findings of fact and forward a **positive** recommendation to the Town Council.

Ordinance No. 2025-03, amending the following sections of Chapter 255, Article XVIII ("Adoption and Amendment"): 1820 - Notice and Hearing Requirements

Overview

This zoning ordinance is amended to update notice and hearing requirements for the proposed adoption, repeal, and amendment of zoning ordinances, per recent updates to state law. Per RIGL § 45-24-53, as updated in 2023, written notice must be given to all property owners when a zoning ordinance change will result in a conforming lot of record to become nonconforming by lot area or frontage.

Findings of Fact

RIGL § 45-24-52 ("Adoption – Review by planning board or commission.") states that, "Among its findings and recommendation to the city or town council with respect to a proposal for adoption, amendment, or repeal of a zoning ordinance or zoning map, the planning board or commission shall:"

"(1) Include a statement on the general consistency of the proposal with the comprehensive plan of the city or town, including the goals and policies statement, the implementation program, and all other applicable elements of the comprehensive plan; and

1. The proposed ordinance is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Objective 1.1, "Revise Zoning and Subdivision regulations to reflect the goals that were formulated during the Comprehensive planning process," as it aims to assure an appropriate level of public notice to facilitate public input on proposed development, and public participation was a fundamental element in the creation of the Comprehensive Plan itself.

"(2) Include a demonstration of recognition and consideration of each of the applicable purposes of zoning, as presented in § 45-24-30."

2. The proposed ordinance is consistent with the applicable purposes of zoning as presented in § 45-24-30 – as an example, it is consistent with § 45-24-30 (a)(14), which lists one purpose of zoning as "Providing for efficient review of development proposals, to clarify and expedite the zoning approval process."

Recommendation

Staff finds Proposed Ordinance 2025-03 to be consistent with the standards for required findings of fact set forth in RIGL Section 45-24-52 as well as with the Town of Coventry's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code. Staff therefore recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the documented findings of fact and forward a ***positive*** recommendation to the Town Council.

Ordinance No. 2025-04, amending the following sections of Chapter 255, Article XVIII ("Nonconforming Development"): 870 - Single nonconforming lots of record; and 880 - Adjacent nonconforming lots of record under same ownership

Overview

This ordinance is revised to state that single substandard lots of record shall not be required to seek zoning relief based solely on the failure to meet minimum lot size requirements. Instead, dimensional standards such as frontage, setbacks, width, and coverage shall be determined according to the procedures established by state law and incorporated into this section. Additionally, the merger of lots will no longer be required when the substandard lot of record has an area equal or greater than the area of fifty percent of the lots within two hundred feet of the subject lot. These revisions conform with RIGL § 45-24-38, which was updated in 2024.

Findings of Fact

RIGL § 45-24-52 ("Adoption – Review by planning board or commission.") states that, "Among its findings and recommendation to the city or town council with respect to a proposal for adoption, amendment, or repeal of a zoning ordinance or zoning map, the planning board or commission shall:"

"(1) Include a statement on the general consistency of the proposal with the comprehensive plan of the city or town, including the goals and policies statement, the implementation program, and all other applicable elements of the comprehensive plan; and

1. The proposed ordinance is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Objective 1.1, "Revise Zoning and Subdivision regulations to reflect the goals that were formulated during the Comprehensive planning process," as it aims to simplify and clarify the process by which single nonconforming lots of record can be developed. Such amendments are anticipated to facilitate housing production, which the Comprehensive Plan broadly supports.

"(2) Include a demonstration of recognition and consideration of each of the applicable purposes of zoning, as presented in § 45-24-30."

2. The proposed ordinance is consistent with the applicable purposes of zoning as presented in § 45-24-30 – as an example, it is consistent with § 45-24-30 (a)(16), which lists one purpose of zoning as "Providing for procedures for the administration of the zoning ordinance, including, but not limited to, variances, special-use permits, and, where adopted, procedures for modifications."

Recommendation

Staff finds Proposed Ordinance 2025-04 to be consistent with the standards for required findings of fact set forth in RIGL Section 45-24-52 as well as with the Town of Coventry's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code. Staff therefore recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the documented findings of fact and forward a **positive** recommendation to the Town Council.

Ordinance No. 2025-05, amending the following sections of Chapter 255, Article III ("Administration and Enforcement"): 320 - Zoning certificate required; 380 - Vested rights; and 390 - Administrative variances

Overview

This ordinance is amended to state that applications for major land development and subdivision projects shall be deemed substantially complete when all required documents and fees have been received by a designated official and issued a certificate of completeness, thereby moving items to an administrative function. This revision is (1) consistent with state law, as § 45-24-44 allows municipalities to create their own ordinances to govern the minimum requirements for, and the review of, land development applications and (2) similar in nature to ordinances adopted in other municipalities. This ordinance is also revised to authorize the Zoning Enforcement Officer to grant modification permits for modifications or adjustments to dimensional requirements to ensure conformance with RIGL § 45-24-46, which was updated in 2024.

Findings of Fact

RIGL § 45-24-52 ("Adoption – Review by planning board or commission.") states that, "Among its findings and recommendation to the city or town council with respect to a proposal for adoption, amendment, or repeal of a zoning ordinance or zoning map, the planning board or commission shall:"

"(1) Include a statement on the general consistency of the proposal with the comprehensive plan of the city or town, including the goals and policies statement, the implementation program, and all other applicable elements of the comprehensive plan; and

1. The proposed ordinance is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Objective 1.1, "Revise Zoning and Subdivision regulations to reflect the goals that were formulated during the Comprehensive planning process," as it aims to clarify when development rights are vested and to replace the older concept of administrative variances with the newer concept of modifications. Importantly, this amendment will bring the Town's code into greater conformance with state law as it pertains to this matter.

"(2) Include a demonstration of recognition and consideration of each of the applicable purposes of zoning, as presented in § 45-24-30."

2. The proposed ordinance is consistent with the applicable purposes of zoning as presented in § 45-24-30 – as an example, it is consistent with § 45-24-30 (a)(16), which lists one purpose of zoning as "Providing for procedures for the administration of the zoning ordinance, including, but not limited to, variances, special-use permits, and, where adopted, procedures for modifications."

Recommendation

Staff finds Proposed Ordinance 2025-05 to be consistent with the standards for required findings of fact set forth in RIGL Section 45-24-52 as well as with the Town of Coventry's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code. Staff therefore recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the documented findings of fact and forward a **positive** recommendation to the Town Council.

Ordinance No. 2025-06, amending the following sections of Chapter 255, Article V ("Zoning Districts and Zoning District Map"): 500 - Zoning districts

Overview

This ordinance is amended to clarify the definition of a Residential Mobile Home District (RMD) as an unmapped, floating zone whose allowed uses are limited to mobile home parks and other associated uses. Several pre-existing typographical errors in this section are also corrected.

Findings of Fact

RIGL § 45-24-52 ("Adoption – Review by planning board or commission.") states that, "Among its findings and recommendation to the city or town council with respect to a proposal for adoption, amendment, or repeal of a zoning ordinance or zoning map, the planning board or commission shall:"

"(1) Include a statement on the general consistency of the proposal with the comprehensive plan of the city or town, including the goals and policies statement, the implementation program, and all other applicable elements of the comprehensive plan; and

1. The proposed ordinance is consistent with one of the stated intents underpinning the Comprehensive Plan's Visions, Goals, and Objectives section, namely to "Provide affordable housing opportunities for residents of Coventry through appropriate new housing development and neighborhood revitalization."

"(2) Include a demonstration of recognition and consideration of each of the applicable purposes of zoning, as presented in § 45-24-30."

2. The proposed ordinance is consistent with the applicable purposes of zoning as presented in § 45-24-30 – as an example, it is consistent with § 45-24-30 (a)(8), which lists one purpose of zoning as "Promoting a balance of housing choices, for all income levels and groups, to assure the health, safety, and welfare of all citizens and their rights to affordable, accessible, safe, and sanitary housing."

Recommendation

Staff finds Proposed Ordinance 2025-06 to be consistent with the standards for required findings of fact set forth in RIGL Section 45-24-52 as well as with the Town of Coventry's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code. Staff therefore recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the documented findings of fact and forward a **positive** recommendation to the Town Council.

Ordinance No. 2025-07, amending Chapter 255, Article XI ("Residential Mobile Home Districts (RMD)")

Overview

This ordinance is amended to establish clearer procedures for the creation and review of Residential Mobile Home Districts (RMD), inclusive of an explicit acknowledgment that RMDs are unmapped, floating zones. This revision is similar in nature to other municipalities and will result in greater clarity and consistency in regulating RMDs moving forward.

Findings of Fact

RIGL § 45-24-52 ("Adoption – Review by planning board or commission.") states that, "Among its findings and recommendation to the city or town council with respect to a proposal for adoption, amendment, or repeal of a zoning ordinance or zoning map, the planning board or commission shall:"

"(1) Include a statement on the general consistency of the proposal with the comprehensive plan of the city or town, including the goals and policies statement, the implementation program, and all other applicable elements of the comprehensive plan; and

1. The proposed ordinance is consistent with one of the stated intents underpinning the Comprehensive Plan's Visions, Goals, and Objectives section, namely to "Provide affordable housing opportunities for residents of Coventry through appropriate new housing development and neighborhood revitalization."

"(2) Include a demonstration of recognition and consideration of each of the applicable purposes of zoning, as presented in § 45-24-30."

2. The proposed ordinance is consistent with the applicable purposes of zoning as presented in § 45-24-30 – as an example, it is consistent with § 45-24-30 (a)(8), which lists one purpose of zoning as "Promoting a balance of housing choices, for all income levels and groups, to assure the health, safety, and welfare of all citizens and their rights to affordable, accessible, safe, and sanitary housing."

Recommendation

Staff finds Proposed Ordinance 2025-07 to be consistent with the standards for required findings of fact set forth in RIGL Section 45-24-52 as well as with the Town of Coventry's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code. Staff therefore recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the documented findings of fact and forward a **positive** recommendation to the Town Council.

Ordinance No. 2025-08, amending the following sections of Chapter 255, Article XIV ("Land Development Projects"): 1430 - Procedure

Overview

This ordinance is amended to include reference to Residential Mobile Home Districts as a form of zone change which an applicant could pursue when seeking to propose a land development project whose use is not permitted in the underlying zoning district.

Findings of Fact

RIGL § 45-24-52 ("Adoption – Review by planning board or commission.") states that, "Among its findings and recommendation to the city or town council with respect to a proposal for adoption, amendment, or repeal of a zoning ordinance or zoning map, the planning board or commission shall:"

"(1) Include a statement on the general consistency of the proposal with the comprehensive plan of the city or town, including the goals and policies statement, the implementation program, and all other applicable elements of the comprehensive plan; and

1. The proposed ordinance is consistent with one of the stated intents underpinning the Comprehensive Plan's Visions, Goals, and Objectives section, namely to "Provide affordable housing opportunities for residents of Coventry through appropriate new housing development and neighborhood revitalization."

"(2) Include a demonstration of recognition and consideration of each of the applicable purposes of zoning, as presented in § 45-24-30."

2. The proposed ordinance is consistent with the applicable purposes of zoning as presented in § 45-24-30 – as an example, it is consistent with § 45-24-30 (a)(8), which lists one purpose of zoning as "Promoting a balance of housing choices, for all income levels and groups, to assure the health, safety, and welfare of all citizens and their rights to affordable, accessible, safe, and sanitary housing."

Recommendation

Staff finds Proposed Ordinance 2025-08 to be consistent with the standards for required findings of fact set forth in RIGL Section 45-24-52 as well as with the Town of Coventry's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code. Staff therefore recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the documented findings of fact and forward a **positive** recommendation to the Town Council.

Ordinance No. 2025-09, amending Chapter 255, Article IV ("Zoning Board of Review")

Overview

This ordinance is amended to streamline the Zoning Board of Review (ZBR) application process to move items to an administrative review where guided by new state law, and to implement policies and procedures to streamline the application process before the ZBR. The revised ordinance reduces the amount of days for (1) public notice requirements of special use permits, appeals, and variances, (2) the ZBR to render a decision on special use permits and variances; and (3) for staff to report their findings and recommendations to the ZBR. These changes will ensure consistency with the following state statutes: RIGL § 45-24-42, § 45-24-41, § 45-24-66, § 45-23-69, and § 45-24-61, as updated over the course of the last two years.

It should be noted that this ordinance also proposes changes the notice radii for specific ZBR applications. For Dimensional Variances and Special Use Permits, staff recommends that the Town modify the current abutter notification requirements to a standard 500 feet for all zoning districts (except for the R-20 zoning district, which would remain at 200 feet). For use variance applications, staff recommends maintaining the existing notice radii, in recognition of the fact that this type of application is typically more intensive. Additional detail on this matter follows below.

The Coventry Zoning Ordinance contains the following notice requirements for Special Use Permits under Section 255-420:

Notice Radius Measured from Property Boundary (feet)	Zone
200	R-20
500	VRC, VMC, GB, BP, I1, I2
1,000	RR-2, RR-3
2,000	RR-5

The current approach is to assign the notice distance by zoning district. The notice distance should be related to who is directly impacted by the development proposal. A very large lot will provide additional buffering between the use and abutters, while a very small lot will provide significantly less buffer due to the smaller land area dedicated to the proposed use, resulting in more abutters being proximate to the subject use. Increasing the notice area by zoning district and making it very large for areas of town with larger lot sizes does not correlate to notifying potentially impacted individuals. Impact, in this case, is mitigated by noticing those in close proximity.

Notice requirements should generally not be a function of the zoning district because wide variations in lot sizes will create an imbalanced notification method whereby those in zones that require larger lots that are relatively unimpacted by the proposed use will receive direct notification and those in zones that require smaller lot sizes that are potentially impacted will not receive any direct notification.

In a review of zoning ordinances across the state, we have found the most common method of notification is to set a standard distance (typically 200 feet) and allow that to apply universally. There are some

circumstances where a specific type of use or development pattern requires a different notice distance. The table below provides the findings of that review for your consideration.

Comparison of Notice Requirements		
Municipality	Required Notice Distance (feet)	Comments
Warwick	200	Notice increases to 400 feet in the A-40 district, or when more than 50% of the parcels which are residentially zoned within 200 feet are zoned A-40
North Kingstown	200	Requires 500 feet for planned unit developments
Smithfield	200	
Cranston	400	Not explicitly stated in the ordinance. Found on city website.
Hopkinton	200	Notice increases to 500 feet for applications made for solar installations on contaminated sites.
Richmond	200	
Exeter	200	
North Smithfield	200	
Burrillville	200	
Glocester	200	
South Kingstown	200	
Tiverton	200	
Middletown	200	
Newport	200	

For dimensional variance and special use permit applications, Planning staff recommends modifying the current abutter notification requirements to a standard 500 feet for all zoning districts, except for the R-20 zoning district which shall remain at 200 feet. For Special Use Permit applications, this modification represents a net reduction in notice radii for the RR-2, RR-3, and RR-5 zoning districts, and status quo for all other districts. For Variance applications, this represents a net increase in notice radii for all zones except the R-20 zoning district, which is held at status quo.

For use variance applications, Planning staff recommend maintaining the existing notice radii currently in effect for special use permits so that notice coverage will be appropriately-scaled in instances when non-residential uses are proposed for lots in the RR-2, RR-3, and RR-5 zoning districts. Note that the Town retains the right to set larger notification distances for any land uses it deems to be of particular concern.

Finally, please note that one numbering error was discovered upon initial review of the version of the proposed ordinance that was forwarded to the Planning Commission by the Town Clerk on behalf of the Town Council. Proposed Section 500 (“Appeals to the Rhode Island Superior Court”) will be renumbered as Proposed Section 4200, as it would otherwise conflict with the existing Section 500 (“Zoning Districts”) that currently resides under Article V of the Zoning Code.

Findings of Fact

RIGL § 45-24-52 (“Adoption – Review by planning board or commission.”) states that, “Among its findings and recommendation to the city or town council with respect to a proposal for adoption, amendment, or repeal of a zoning ordinance or zoning map, the planning board or commission shall:”

“(1) Include a statement on the general consistency of the proposal with the comprehensive plan of the city or town, including the goals and policies statement, the implementation program, and all other applicable elements of the comprehensive plan; and

1. The proposed ordinance is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan’s Land Use Objective 1.1, “Revise Zoning and Subdivision regulations to reflect the goals that were formulated during the Comprehensive planning process,” as it aims to simply, reorganize, and update language concerning the Zoning Board of Review itself and the types of applications within its purview to review (including variances and special use permits), and these amendments will facilitate the review process for applicants and municipal staff to promote orderly development in the community. Importantly, this amendment will bring the Town’s code into greater conformance with state law as it pertains to this matter.

“(2) Include a demonstration of recognition and consideration of each of the applicable purposes of zoning, as presented in § 45-24-30.”

2. The proposed ordinance is consistent with the applicable purposes of zoning as presented in § 45-24-30 – as an example, it is consistent with § 45-24-30 (a)(16), which lists one purpose of zoning as “Providing for procedures for the administration of the zoning ordinance, including, but not limited to, variances, special-use permits, and, where adopted, procedures for modifications.”

Recommendation

Staff finds Proposed Ordinance 2025-09 to be consistent with the standards for required findings of fact set forth in RIGL Section 45-24-52 as well as with the Town of Coventry’s Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code. Staff therefore recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the documented findings of fact and forward a **positive** recommendation to the Town Council.

Ordinance No. 2025-10, amending the following sections of Chapter 255, Article VI ("Zoning District Use and Dimensional Regulations"): 600 - Schedule of Zoning District Use Regulations

Inclusive of Attachment 10a (Table 6-1, "Town of Coventry Schedule of District Use Regulations")

Overview

This ordinance proposes a minor textual change to improve and clarify the existing reference to Table 6-1, which contains the Schedule of District Use Regulations.

A revised Table 6-1 is provided as Attachment 10a to this proposed ordinance. This table was last amended on January 1, 2024 to change the designations of 363 uses formerly permitted by special use permit (marked as "S" in the table) to be prohibited ("N"). Under the proposed revision to Table 6-1 contemplated within this ordinance update, 52 of the aforementioned prohibited uses would be brought back as lawfully permitted ("P"); three (3) uses that were formerly permitted ("P") would become prohibited ("N"); two (2) uses that are currently permitted through special use permit ("S") would become prohibited ("N"); and seven (8) additional uses that are being otherwise modified, and may be further amended through this Zoning Code revision process. Finally, staff is recommending adding one new use to Table 6-1, "Pet Grooming," which would be lawfully permitted in all commercial and industrial zones.

Findings of Fact

RIGL § 45-24-52 ("Adoption – Review by planning board or commission.") states that, "Among its findings and recommendation to the city or town council with respect to a proposal for adoption, amendment, or repeal of a zoning ordinance or zoning map, the planning board or commission shall:"

"(1) Include a statement on the general consistency of the proposal with the comprehensive plan of the city or town, including the goals and policies statement, the implementation program, and all other applicable elements of the comprehensive plan; and

1. The proposed ordinance is consistent with one of the stated intents underpinning the Comprehensive Plan's Visions, Goals, and Objectives section, namely to "Encourage economic growth to balance the tax burden and create job opportunities for Coventry residents and the region, without degrading the natural and man-made environment."

"(2) Include a demonstration of recognition and consideration of each of the applicable purposes of zoning, as presented in § 45-24-30."

2. The proposed ordinance is consistent with the applicable purposes of zoning as presented in § 45-24-30 – as an example, it is consistent with § 45-24-30 (a)(2), which lists one purpose of zoning as "Providing for a range of uses and intensities of use appropriate to the character of the city or town and reflecting current and expected future needs."

Recommendation

Staff finds Proposed Ordinance 2025-10 to be consistent with the standards for required findings of fact set forth in RIGL Section 45-24-52 as well as with the Town of Coventry's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code. Staff therefore recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the documented findings of fact and forward a **positive** recommendation to the Town Council.

Ordinance No. 2025-11, amending Chapter 255, Article II ("Definitions")

Overview

This ordinance is amended to establish definitions for the new terms "Accessory Dwelling Unit," "Accessory Structure," "Modification," and "Residential Mobile Home District," and updates and/or removes outdated terms to be consistent with state law. This ordinance also makes slight amendments to existing definitions for "Building Height" and "Yard, Front" to be consistent with state law and other local regulations on these topics.

Findings of Fact

RIGL § 45-24-52 ("Adoption – Review by planning board or commission.") states that, "Among its findings and recommendation to the city or town council with respect to a proposal for adoption, amendment, or repeal of a zoning ordinance or zoning map, the planning board or commission shall:"

"(1) Include a statement on the general consistency of the proposal with the comprehensive plan of the city or town, including the goals and policies statement, the implementation program, and all other applicable elements of the comprehensive plan; and

1. The proposed ordinance is generally consistent with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan, insofar as it clarifies and updates definitions to bring the Town's Zoning Code and state law into greater accord, which in turn will simplify the development review process for applicants as well as municipal staff and thereby facilitate orderly development as intended by the Plan. Importantly, this amendment will bring the Town's code into greater conformance with state law as it pertains to this matter.

"(2) Include a demonstration of recognition and consideration of each of the applicable purposes of zoning, as presented in § 45-24-30."

2. The proposed ordinance is consistent with the applicable purposes of zoning as presented in § 45-24-30 – as an example, it is consistent with § 45-24-30 (a)(14), which lists one purpose of zoning as "Providing for efficient review of development proposals, to clarify and expedite the zoning approval process."

Recommendation

Staff finds Proposed Ordinance 2025-11 to be consistent with the standards for required findings of fact set forth in RIGL Section 45-24-52 as well as with the Town of Coventry's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code. Staff therefore recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the documented findings of fact and forward a **positive** recommendation to the Town Council.

Ordinance No. 2025-12, amending the following sections of Chapter 255, Article IX ("Supplementary Regulations"): 910 - Exceptions to dimensional requirements; 920 - General development regulations; 930 - Supplemental regulations for specific land uses; and 940 - Leased land/seasonal housing

Overview

This ordinance is amending standards related to Accessory Dwelling Structures consistent with new state law per RIGL § 45-23-73, as well as amending the dimensional regulations for both detached and attached accessory structures. The above two code topics closely relate and shall be addressed in coordinated fashion. Additionally, this ordinance removes outdated language regarding water bodies, motels and hotels, and leased land/seasonal housing.

Findings of Fact

RIGL § 45-24-52 ("Adoption – Review by planning board or commission.") states that, "Among its findings and recommendation to the city or town council with respect to a proposal for adoption, amendment, or repeal of a zoning ordinance or zoning map, the planning board or commission shall:"

"(1) Include a statement on the general consistency of the proposal with the comprehensive plan of the city or town, including the goals and policies statement, the implementation program, and all other applicable elements of the comprehensive plan; and

1. The proposed ordinance is consistent with one of the stated intents underpinning the Comprehensive Plan's Visions, Goals, and Objectives section, namely to "Provide affordable housing opportunities for residents of Coventry through appropriate new housing development and neighborhood revitalization."

"(2) Include a demonstration of recognition and consideration of each of the applicable purposes of zoning, as presented in § 45-24-30."

2. The proposed ordinance is consistent with the applicable purposes of zoning as presented in § 45-24-30 – as an example, it is consistent with § 45-24-30 (a)(8), which lists one purpose of zoning as "Promoting a balance of housing choices, for all income levels and groups, to assure the health, safety, and welfare of all citizens and their rights to affordable, accessible, safe, and sanitary housing."

Recommendation

Staff finds Proposed Ordinance 2025-12 to be consistent with the standards for required findings of fact set forth in RIGL Section 45-24-52 as well as with the Town of Coventry's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code. Staff therefore recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the documented findings of fact and forward a **positive** recommendation to the Town Council.