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Portsmouth, NH 03801

To the Editor:

As many in the community know, earlier this year the Portsmouth Planning Board began the 18-month plus process of translating the goals and policies outlined in the City's recently adopted Master Plan into changes to the City's zoning ordinance and land use regulations. After soliciting and reviewing proposals from qualified consultants, Taintor & Associates, the firm that developed the City's Master Plan, was hired to assist the City in carrying out these changes.

I would like to take this opportunity to update residents and other local stakeholders on the status of what will be the rather lengthy process of revising the City's current land use regulations, which include the Zoning Ordinance as well as Site Review and Subdivision Regulations. The relatively long time frame for the regulatory revision process is driven, in large part, by the City's desire to insure many opportunities for public input and review.

The Planning Board has focused first on reviewing and discussing potential Zoning Ordinance changes. To assist them in this effort, the Board directed Taintor and Associates to prepare a Zoning Ordinance Audit Report. The Audit Report, completed in September and recently provided to the Planning Board, is now available at the Portsmouth Public Library, Planning Department and on line at [www.cityofportsmouth.com](http://www.cityofportsmouth.com). The Report contains preliminary findings and recommendations for discussion and consideration by the Planning Board and is intended to be used by the Board as a starting point as we develop our recommended revisions to the Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Board's role with regard to the Zoning Ordinance is advisory; the Board will ultimately make recommendations to the City Council, with the Council being the local body that has authority to revise the Zoning Ordinance.

The Planning Board began its initial review of the Zoning Ordinance Audit Report late last month and there is much remaining work to be done by the Board before the Audit Report's preliminary findings and recommendations are translated into recommended changes to the Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Board will hold its second work session on the Audit Report on Thursday October 19<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. prior to their regular monthly meeting. The work session will be televised on Channel 22 and, although the public is welcome to attend the work session, this particular meeting is not a public hearing. Once the Planning Board develops its recommended revisions to the Zoning Ordinance, the City will hold a series of public hearings to gather input from the community regarding the proposed revisions and, ultimately, the City Council will determine the revisions they wish to make to the Ordinance.

I hope that this information is helpful to residents, businesses, local officials and other stakeholders. Similar to the Master Plan development process, the Planning Board and City Council will welcome input from the community. Notice of upcoming public hearings will be posted on the City website, Channel 22 and via the City's electronic newsletter, and the hearings will be televised on Channel 22. I hope many in the community will be able to attend these future public hearings and share their thoughts with board members once the Planning Board develops proposed revisions to the Zoning Ordinance.

Sincerely,



John Ricci

Chairman, Portsmouth Planning Board