



Albemarle County

Legislation Text

File #: 17-543, **Version:** 2

AGENDA DATE: 10/11/2017

TITLE:

ZTA 2017-07 Housekeeping II/Term Updates and Clarifications

SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Public Hearing on Zoning Text Amendment

ITEM TYPE: Regular Action Item

STAFF CONTACT(S): Walker, Kamptner, Blair, Graham, McCulley, Brumfield

PRESENTER (S): Leah Brumfield

LEGAL REVIEW: Yes

REVIEWED BY: Douglas C. Walker

BACKGROUND: On June 20, 2017, the Planning Commission adopted a resolution of intent to amend the Zoning Ordinance. This amendment is intended to better implement existing regulations. It is not intended to enact substantive changes that alter policy or create new requirements. The proposed amendment:

- updates the terms “nursing home,” “rest home,” “convalescent home,” and “orphanage”, and updates the terms “assisted living facility, skilled nursing facility,” and “children’s residential facility” to reflect current usage - these terms were removed from the first housekeeping amendment to allow time to confirm each term’s appropriate use with the Department of Social Services and the Virginia Code;
- codifies the current practice relating to final inspections for zoning permits for farm buildings and small sheds and other structures that are exempt from the Building Code;
- clarifies the applicability of outdoor lighting regulations to LED lighting, to reflect the development of LED usage; and
- resolves a contradiction between streetscapes and setbacks envisioned in the Albemarle County Comprehensive Plan, and the industrial zone undisturbed “buffer” requirements as written in the Zoning Ordinance.

At its meeting on August 22, 2017, the Commission unanimously voted to recommend adoption of ZTA 2017-07, with the exception of Section 26.5, regarding the Minimum Yards Undisturbed “buffer” zone. Subsequently, the ZTA title was revised to “Term Updates and Clarifications” to clarify the purpose of the ZTA.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Quality Government Operations: Ensure County government’s capacity to provide high quality service that achieves community priorities

DISCUSSION: At its August 22 public hearing, the Planning Commission raised questions about the industrial undisturbed “buffer” zone amendment to Section 26.5. A commissioner later through email clarifications on distinctions between “buffers,” “landscaping,” “setbacks,” and “screening.” Attachment B provides diagrams and definitions to clarify undisturbed buffer zones.

The Albemarle County Comprehensive Plan encourages streetscapes in accordance with the Neighborhood Model Principles, pulling structures closer to the street, and creating street-level interest through attractive landscaping. To fulfill this expectation, street trees are required and setbacks for all industrial zoning are reduced to 10 feet on street frontages.

The undisturbed “buffer” zones as described in Section 26.5 were intended to create separations between development on property zoned industrial and property zoned rural areas (RA) or residential along the backs and sides of parcels. Within the 30 foot undisturbed “buffer,” the landscape regulations require screening materials, usually a fence or a double row of evergreen trees. When the “buffer” is applied to industrial property **across the road** from residential or RA zoning, this visual separation is counter to the Comprehensive Plan goals of creating a streetscape.

When an industrial parcel and a RA or residential parcel are located on opposite sides of a road, the ordinance, as written, measures that 30 foot “buffer” from the centerline of the right of way. On a narrow right of way, this may require a depth up to 15 feet of an undisturbed “buffer” that runs across the property frontage. This “buffer” serves to increase the setback so it may not be possible to achieve the 10-foot setback for buildings to establish a street presence. Note that this amendment does not reduce or eliminate requirements along the property frontage for landscaping such as street trees and screening. Instead of increasing visual impacts, this amendment allows for attractive landscaping and street trees to improve the attractiveness of neighborhoods as envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, the Board approved the text amendment of eliminating the undisturbed “buffer” for commercial properties on August 9, 2017; approval of the industrial “buffer” zone amendment within ZTA 2017-07 will create consistency within the Zoning Ordinance.

BUDGET IMPACT: There is no budget impact associated with adopting the proposed ZTA.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff and the Planning Commission recommend that the Board adopt the attached Zoning Text Amendment (Attachment A).

ATTACHMENTS:

- A - Proposed Zoning Text Amendment
- B - Undisturbed Buffer Zone Diagrams and Definitions
- C - Planning Commission Staff Report
- D - Planning Commission Action Memo
- E - Planning Commission Minutes