**PROPOSED ZONING AMENDMENT**

**CREATE NEW SECTION 5.7**

**Reasons:** The Business Zones Subcommittee of the Planning & Zoning Commission has been evaluating potential zoning changes that will improve and enhance Ridgefield’s business zoning districts, in light of the ways business, particularly brick and mortar establishments have changed during the pandemic. One suggested zoning revision from the Subcommittee is to allow residential units on the first floor and basement levels of buildings in a newly created Downtown Residential Overlay Zone. This new overlay zone encompasses parts of the Central Business District (CBD) that are on the periphery of the zone (portions of Bailey Avenue, Prospect Street, Governor Street and Grove Street) and may not be able to draw the same level of foot traffic and customer base as commercial businesses on Main Street.

As a result, the Subcommittee had recommended allowing these properties within the new overlay zone to have the flexibility to choose to utilize first floor and basement level residential where it is otherwise not permitted in the CBD. The Commission believes this option gives property owners a choice in how to best utilize their building space based on shifting market demands, will pretend extended vacancies that take away from the vibrancy of downtown and allow more residents to live in the walkable downtown, where they will add to the customer base and patronize local businesses.

**Consistency with POCD:** The 2020 Plan of Conservation and Development addresses strategies for maintaining the vibrancy of downtown through a mix of uses. The Commission believes that the creation of this overlay zone will enhance downtown by creating more daily activity and ensuring that first-floor spaces do not remain empty when they can easily be converted from commercial to residential, particularly in light of changing demands resulting from COVID-19.

Unless otherwise indicated:

**Xxxxx** – Bold, underlined, means language to be added.

[xxxx] – Strikethrough in brackets, means language to be deleted.

## 5.7 Downtown Residential Overlay Zone

### PURPOSE

**The Downtown Residential Overlay Zone allow additional residential opportunities within portions of the Central Business District in order to foster a population that can promote an active, livable and walkable downtown environment for supporting downtown Ridgefield businesses and services.**

**B. ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW REQUIRED**

**Unless otherwise authorized by the Commission, all site plans and landscaping plans for new construction, and architectural plans for buildings, exterior renovations and modifications to existing structures shall be reviewed by the Architectural Advisory Committee, per Section 9.3.G of these Regulations and shall be subject to the minimum standards of the following:**

1. **The applicant shall demonstrate how the proposed development enhances the character and streetscape.**
2. **Architectural focal points and repeating architectural details shall be incorporated into the design to increase visual interest.**
3. **Elements and materials that reflect the New England Classical and New England Village character are encouraged.**
4. **Buildings shall be situated close to the front yard setback line.**
5. **Parking shall be located underneath or at the side or rear of the building.**
6. **Larger buildings should be broken up using different materials, rooflines, and massing.**
7. **Lighting shall be designed in conformance with Sec. 7.8 in the zoning regulations, with uniformity of design throughout the site.**
8. **ELIGIBILITY**

**The Downtown Residential Overlay Zone applies to portions of the Central Business District (CBD) as indicated on the Zoning Map.**

1. **PERMITTED USES**

**Multi-family dwellings including first floor or basement residential units when served by public water and sewer in addition to any uses permitted in Section 5.1**

**E. PARKING REQUIREMENTS**

**Residential units on the first floor or basement level shall be required to follow the parking requirements of Section 7.3.B.**

**E. AFFORDABLE UNITS REQUIREMENT**

1. **Any multi-unit dwelling located within this overlay district that contains residential units on the first floor or basement and contains five (5) or more total units:**
   1. **shall contain twenty percent (20%) of the total number of units deed-restricted as affordable housing according to the criteria for affordability set up in CGS 8-30g (6) for tenants with incomes less than eighty percent (80%) of the State Median Income (SMI);**
   2. **calculation of permitted density may be rounded down to the nearest whole number when fractions are less than 0.5 and shall be rounded up when fractions are 0.5 or greater.**

**F. ADDITIONAL STANDARDS**

1. **Unless otherwise authorized by the Commission, the following minimum design standards shall apply:**
2. **Dwelling units shall not be less than 500 square feet in gross floor living area.**
3. **The location of any sidewalks shall provide continuity with existing sidewalks on neighboring properties, and/or shall be planned for appropriate connection to future sidewalks, considering topography and other physical restraints.**
4. **Parking lots shall be arranged to allow interconnection with adjoining residential or commercial properties to the extent possible, to reduce curb cuts and to allow mutual and reciprocal use parking spaces.**
5. **Service yards and refuse storage areas shall be screened to preserve the streetscape and shall include trees, shrubs, lawns, ornamental fencing, walls, and gravel where appropriate.**
6. **Landscaping plans for new development projects shall be prepared by a licensed landscape architect, and plant materials shall be selected to enhance the building setting and the pedestrian environment.**
7. **See Section 7.0 of these Regulations for additional provisions related to parking, loading, landscaping, signage, and other standards.**