

## Blight Ordinance Status Report

- **March 3, 2021** – An Email sent to Planning Commission outlining Residents concerns and requesting the Blight Ordinance be put on the agenda for the March 9th meeting with the following requests
  1. That the meeting notes from the Redding Planning Commission meeting held on January 26th and approved at the subsequent Redding Planning Commission meeting on February 23rd be withdrawn from the record and amended to accurately reflect the robust discussion around Blight that was had in the meeting of January 26th. The recording of the meeting of January 26th is posted and available to draw from for a more accurate record in the posted meeting notes.
  2. In the meeting on January 26th, it was indicated that the chairman would draft language for a potential Blight Ordinance that addressed some of the concerns that you and the planning commission raised. We would like to be updated on the progress in doing so in the upcoming Redding Planning Commission scheduled for Tuesday March 9th. We also respectfully request that the Blight Ordinance be added to the agenda for the meeting on March 9th and note that this letter provides ample time to post this agenda item publicly.
  3. That at the upcoming meeting on March 9th that this letter be read in full, including attachments so it is part of the public record.
  4. That the Redding Planning Commission formally adopt the practice of providing time for Public comment at all of their meetings. While this has been the custom, at the meeting held on February 23rd no public comment was allowed or provided for and hence we were not able to present our concerns as outlined in this letter.

Attached to the email was the following

Attachment A: ERF's letter to the Redding Planning Commission following the January 26<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Attachment B: Chairman's email response the letter referenced in Attachment "A"

Attachment C: The petition in favor of a blight ordinance currently signed by 30 Redding citizens.

Attachment D: The timeline of the last 6 plus months of the research and discussion with Town officials on Blight .

- **February 23, 2021** – Planning Commission meeting – no public comments were permitted.

Minutes of meeting related to the Blight Ordinance

T. Welles briefly addressed an email that he had received from Roger Van Ausdal on behalf of the group Enhancing Redding's Future (ERF), although he noted that his comments must be brief as the correspondence was not sent to the Land Use Office and was, therefore, not on the agenda. He noted the decision that had been made at the last Planning Commission meeting to defer discussion of a Blight Ordinance until it could be done in person due to concerns about disenfranchising individuals without access to Zoom meetings. He also reviewed the duties of a Planning Commission and noted Planning's role as advisory to the Board of Selectmen.

A. Pardee stated that she had reviewed statutes regarding a Zoning Citation Ordinance; she said that such an ordinance would not be part of the Zoning Regulations but would need to be adopted by the Selectmen in the same manner as a Blight Ordinance. She also clarified that the enforcement options in Section 8-12 of the Connecticut General Statutes are imposed only by the courts via litigation and at considerable expense to the town. Hearing no further discussion or comments, D. Barrett moved to adjourn the meeting.

- **February 5, 2021** – Letter sent to Planning Commission with a copy to the BOS with a copy of the petition. We requested to be on the agenda for the next Planning Commission meeting in February.
- **Feb 2, 2021** – ERF note sent to Planning Commission and First Selectwoman confirming submission of Blight Ordinance to Land Use and a supporting petition with 30 signatures.
- **Jan 29, 2021** – ERF submitted a revised Blight Ordinance to the Land Use office.
- **Jan 26, 2021** – The Blight Ordinance was discussed at the Planning Commission meeting with the First Selectwoman and Town Land Use Director present. It was indicated that the ordinance should have been submitted to Land Use (**Note** – change to advice given Dec 8th meeting). It was mentioned that the town attorney had reviewed the ordinance and felt that the enforcement procedures could be simplified. The appeals process was discussed; the BOS would be the appeals board. (**Note** - this differs from the Ridgefield ordinance, which has a separate appeals board). The planning commission focused on the specificity of Redding's Zoning Ordinance and contrasted it with the intentional flexibility built into the proposed Blight

Ordinance. There was discussion on the compassionate enforcement used in zoning. The use of a citation mechanism along with modifications to the zoning ordinance was discussed in lieu of a separate Blight Ordinance. It was also suggested that any adoption of a new ordinance should happen when a public hearing, with voters present, could take place. (**Note** - Dec 8th meeting it was confirmed a video vote was acceptable by the First Selectwoman)

- **January 19th, 2021** – ERF sent a revised Blight Ordinance to the Planning Commission, with a copy to the First Selectwoman, with guidance on how the Planning Commission might address concerns raised at the previous meeting. ERF indicated they were happy to provide an advisory role as necessary.
- **Jan 12th, 2021** - The Blight Ordinance was discussed at the Planning Commission meeting with the First Selectwoman present. Initial concerns on the part of commission members related to hardship situations, and concern for dealing with aesthetics. Composition of the Blight Prevention Board was discussed, and it was suggested that religious leaders might be involved. It was stated that the ordinance had been reviewed by town council and suggested that the commission and ERF work on modifying the current document.
- **Dec 21, 2020** - The Blight Ordinance proposal was discussed at the BOS meeting. A vote was taken to refer the ordinance to the Planning Commission not the Zoning Commission.
- **Dec 8, 2020** – The Blight Ordinance proposal was introduced at the Planning Commission with the First Selectwoman present. The commission was informed that in discussion with the Land Use Director the ordinance should be reviewed by the Planning Commission not the Zoning Commission. The First Selectwoman also informed the meeting that a public vote could be completed via Zoom video.
- **Dec 7, 2020** – ERF sent a copy of the draft ordinance plus a position paper to all members of the Planning Commission plus a copy to the First Selectwoman.
- **Nov 16th, 2020** – Blight Ordinance proposal was discussed. It was determined that it had to go to the Zoning Commission for review.
- **Oct 19th, 2020** – Blight Ordinance proposal was discussed at the BOS meeting. There was no specific action coming out of the meeting.
- **Sept 10th, 2020** - ERF submitted by email the Blight Ordinance proposal to the Board of Selectmen requesting a hearing at the Sept 24th BOS meeting for consideration and discussion.

- **July – Sept, 2020** – ERF researched existing blight ordinances on a state and local level. It was noted, in researching 10 local districts, that all neighboring towns to Redding had implemented a blight ordinance except Weston that had a junk ordinance. ERF consolidated the research into a presentation and created a proposed sample Redding blight ordinance based on the successful Ridgefield ordinance.