Mayor’s Committee on Building Code Changes

Presentation of Proposals
September 2016
Process

- Tonight’s meeting is solely to present proposed changes to the Building Code.

- **No decisions will be made at tonight’s meeting**

- Comments and suggestions are welcome at the end of the presentation.

- To insure that comments and suggestions are documented, please also email them to Karen Altman, Village Clerk at kaltman@gardencityny.net by Sept 15th.
Background

- Mayor’s Committee on Building Code Changes created mid-2015 to address concerns expressed by residents regarding new construction or additions to houses that appeared to be too large for property (aka ‘McMansions.’)
  
  - Problem is not unique to Garden City--many communities nationwide have implemented various solutions.
Background

- Committee includes ADRB and ZBA chairs
  - Hugh Lacy--Estates POA rep and ADRB chair--and Bob Cunningham--who have a combined total of 55 years experience on boards plus representatives from ZBA and POA’s.
  - Other Committee Members
    - Richard Vallely
    - Brian Paradine
    - John Ardito
    - Michael Schroeder
    - Charles DeBenedittis
Background

- Committee researched solutions implemented in various communities nationwide.

- Analyzed 393 VGC building permits filed since 2011 (most recent building code changes).

- Identified houses in Village that appeared to have issues even though all complied with code.
  - Issues appear to be concentrated in smaller size properties in Village (R-6 & R-8 zones)
  - R6 & R8 zones (6,000 sq ft & 8,000 sq ft properties) represent 81% of houses in Village.
Background

- Various potential solutions explored over past 9 months and vetted with Trustees, ADRB, ZBA, Mayor’s Committee, Village attorney, Building Superintendent, POA’s and at open committee meeting.

- Proposals approved by Building Superintendent (Huertas) and chairs of ADRB (Lacy) and ZBA (Cunningham)

- Issue has been well publicized in Garden City News.

- Issue is complex balancing act between size of house, aesthetics and homeowners’ needs, wants and rights.
Background

- Proposed changes
  - **Do not impact the ability to build house up to the existing maximum limits** on property or change height to which house can be built, which affects height of interior rooms.
  
  - Architectural drawings illustrating proposed changes are attached to this document.
  
  - Provisions made for smaller plots (<6000 sq ft and corner lots).
Issues Considered and Addressed by Committee

- ‘Large House Issue.’ Some new houses, additions or alterations, predominantly on smaller plots (R-6 and R-8), appear to be larger than the surrounding houses, altering the character and streetscape of adjoining houses and the neighborhood, creating ‘canyons’ on the sides of houses and diminishing the amount of light and air reaching neighboring houses and reducing privacy.
  - 81% (5,292) houses in the Village are on R-6 or R-8 plots (6,000 or 8,000 sq ft).
Issues Considered and Addressed by Committee

- ADRB currently is not required to review addition or exterior alteration to the front half of the property if it increases the existing floor area of the house by 30% or less.
Issues Considered and Addressed by Committee

- There is no requirement unless a variance is required that neighbors be made aware of the plans for, impacts on or construction of new houses, additions or alterations adjacent to their property.

- Developers, investors and homeowners new to the Village who may or may not know their neighbors are and will be increasingly buying homes, demolishing them and building or adding extensions.
Issues Considered and Addressed by Committee

- A house can be totally or partially demolished without any representation to the Village of what will replace it.
- There is no requirement to landscape and maintain the property if it is left vacant.
Illustrative Examples
Vacant Properties
Documents

- Proposed changes to Village of Garden City Code
  - Chapter 200 entitled ‘Zoning’
    - LL re Setbacks.docx
  - Chapter 57 entitled ‘Architectural Review.’
    - LL re ADRB.docx
- Architectural drawings illustrating side setback changes.