

G'land zoning panel drafts changes

Group outlines rules regarding home business and mixed-use buildings

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The Zoning Review Committee in Guilderland has recently completed

work on a draft of a local law to be considered by the Town Board that, according to Chairman Ken Brownell, "brings the town into the 21st century" and provides more flexibility with mixed-use development and home businesses.

Brownell said the first part of the draft would allow for a residence to be located above a retail location, similar to what was proposed in the Glassworks Village development that went before the Planning Board in December.

"Right now you can't put residential with commercial," said Brownell.

The second part of

the proposal deals with home occupations, which are small-scale, owner-occupied businesses located within residential or rural areas. The proposed law creates three levels of home occupation: permitted home occupation, in which a special use permit would not be required, and home occupation I and II, which would be permitted by special use permit.

Each category of home occupation has specific requirements, with a permitted home occupation having the least effect on the surrounding community, and home occupation II having the most effect

on the surrounding community. The proposed law also includes a number of prohibited home occupations.

"These improvements, if adopted by the Town Board, will make the permit process for businesses much more efficient for residents, business owners, and the town," said Kathy Burbank, executive director of the Guilderland Chamber of Commerce, and member of the Zoning Review Committee.

The proposed law is the culmination of the committee's work since it first met in August. In January, when Brownell was made chairman, he described the mission of the committee "to review

the Town of Guilderland zoning law and come up with some recommendations, and bring it into the 21st century."

Since its inception, the committee has worked on the law and reviewing the 25 pages of definitions in the town's zoning code.

"As somebody with a lot of real estate experience, I think there's a lot of credibility to the changes we made," said Brownell.

Ultimately, the proposed law is subject to the review and approval of the Town Board. The Zoning Review Committee will hold a public meeting concerning the proposed law at Guilderland Town Hall on Wednesday, March 31, at 7 p.m.

Index

Editorial Pages.....	6-7
Sports.....	35-36
Milestones.....	33
Library events.....	25-26
Entertainment.....	20
Classified.....	28-29
Crossword.....	21
Legals.....	31-33
Real Estate.....	29
At Your Service.....	30

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