



Freeport Economic Development Corporation

MEMORANDUM

TO: Caroline Pelletier, Town Planner
Freeport Planning Board

FROM: Keith A. McBride, FEDC Executive Director

DATE: December 4, 2020

RE: Workshop on Village Districts and Residential Development

The mission statement of FEDC is to partner with the town to promote responsible sustainable economic growth that strengthens and diversifies the economic base and enhances the quality of life and unique character of Freeport. For the past two years, we have been primarily focused on downtown, and our strategy is multi-faceted. As it relates to residential development, we have taken a strong position that new downtown housing would have an economic development benefit for all of Freeport, and we have had extensive conversations internally about supporting and finding opportunities to develop more downtown housing.

Part of our discussion has looked at the current zoning and its compatibility with the housing development and redevelopment we are trying to attract. We have received feedback from developers, some of whom are exploring downtown housing development and some who are not. We would like to share some of that feedback with the board, as it has helped inform our opinion on what small changes could be made to help encourage new housing units downtown.

We would like to take this workshop as an opportunity to engage the planning board in this effort. First, we would like to share with you our findings on the economic impact and value of downtown housing and what it could mean for Freeport at a time when increased vacancies and reduced traffic/business are negatively impacting our village core. Second, we would like to share feedback from the development community on the existing village zoning districts and third we would like to introduce some changes that we feel would make a difference in encouraging new housing development or the redevelopment of existing vacant or underutilized spaces into new housing.

We feel that the board's opinion and feedback, from the perspective of future land use and growth, will help focus our efforts. This discussion is a critical step in deciding whether we want to pursue small zoning changes in the village districts to make a big impact to economic development. We will discuss all of this in greater detail at the workshop. Thank you, and we look forward to this discussion.