



TOWN OF FREEPORT, MAINE
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TO: FREEPORT PLANNING BOARD
FROM: CECILIA SMITH, ASSISTANT TOWN PLANNER
RE: PUBLIC HEARING – PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO SECTION 413. VILLAGE COMMERCIAL 1 (VC-1), SECTION 414. VILLAGE COMMERCIAL 2 (VC-2), AND SECTION 514. OFF STREET PARKING AND LOADING OF THE FREEPORT ZONING ORDINANCE
DATE: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1th, 2023

Background: This will be a public hearing to discuss potential amendments to add “parking lots” as a permitted use, subject to site plan review, in the Village Commercial 1 (VC-1) Zoning District (Section 413). Other related proposed amendments are minor changes to clarify language regarding setbacks in Section 413. Village Commercial District 1 (VC-1), correcting a cross-referencing error in Section 414. Village Commercial District 2 (VC-2), and amending Section 514. Off-Street Parking and Loading to clarify conflicts that were identified in this process.

The Planning Board was asked to consider amending the standards in the Village Commercial 1 District (VC-1) to make standalone parking lots a permitted use, subject to site plan review. Standalone (surface) parking lots are not currently permitted in the Village Commercial 1 (VC-1) district with the unique exception of standalone parking lots serving buildings classified as A or B per the Design Review Ordinance that are located in the Village Commercial 2 (VC-2) district. Currently, there are several properties consisting of standalone parking lots in the VC-1 district. Because such use is not allowed, these properties fall into the category of non-conforming. The Planning Board was asked to consider allowing standalone parking lots in this district because, in specific situations, it may be difficult to redevelop properties consisting of standalone parking lots given this non-conforming status.

While it may seem counterintuitive, staff hopes that by allowing parking lots as a permitted use, these sites can potentially be redeveloped to accommodate other uses that better align with the priorities identified in the Freeport Downtown Vision Plan. Alternatively, if the Planning Board finds that there is potential that these amendments may instead lead to the creation of additional surface parking lots downtown, the Planning Board may choose to table this amendment.

Please note that additional proposed amendments include clean up of ordinance language that was identified throughout this process. The clean up involves:

- A clarification to setbacks standards in Section 413.D.4;
- Correcting a cross reference in Section 414. Village Commercial 2 (VC-2); and
- Additional amendments to Section 514. Off-Street Parking and Loading to clarify ordinance language conflicts.

Process: The Planning Board previous discussed this item in 01/10/23. A public hearing is scheduled for this meeting. Notice was circulated to abutters as required per the Planning Board's notification policy. Approximately 220 property owners were notified. Legal ads ran in the Times Record on 2/16/23 and 2/21/23.