

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY, HOME OCCUPATION, LIGHT MANUFACTURING, REZONING, ETC

To: PC Members:
From: Zoning Admin.

The mayor and council passed a resolution asking the PC to take up the subject of enhancing small scale economic opportunities to attract and keep families in Boulder. In addition, the General Plan draft you're discussing states on page 18:

Goal 1: To promote the development of small, locally-owned businesses, agriculture, businesses that provide goods and services to residents, and cottage-type businesses that have minimal impact on town services or activities (e.g. traffic, noise, parking, etc).

This is just a quick pass to open the discussion. Without engaging in a wide ranging discussion of the policies and possibilities, I wouldn't really know where to begin in terms of amending the ordinances.

1. Rezoning – the most obvious approach to business and land use is the commercial zone. It however is fraught with difficulty in the town the size of Boulder.
 - a. Where to you start? Whose property is rezoned commercial?
 - b. Almost all, maybe all, of the commercial properties in Boulder were so designated because they were already hosting a business when the zoning map was implemented.
 - i. Since that time, the town has not undertaken a serious attempt at rezoning.
 - ii. And since a lot of folks might have a real interest in whose property is rezoned as what, were the town to undertake a wholesale rezoning, it would be in a position of picking winners and losers, so I think it might be too heavy a lift.
 - c. The other argument about rezoning is that often the compromise position becomes just rezone everything along the highway as commercial and call it good. At least there's a rationale for it, but . . .
 - i. Then you get strip development along the highway, which ultimately changes the character of a town.
2. Spot zoning – this can work, maybe a little better, because it is an application by a property owner to do a particular thing based upon the location, the merits of the business concept, size of the property, the impacts on neighbors, etc, etc.
3. Developing criteria in the existing GMU and residential zones -- for small business opportunities. Some of the most obvious criteria, and you will no doubt think of more, might be:
 - a. Where is the business located
 - i. What is the lot size? The nature of the neighborhood?
 - b. What is the business activity
 - i. How much noise, smoke, light, smell, etc, will it generate?
 - ii. Will it generate more noise, etc, than agriculture (the existing sacred cow :-)?
 - iii. Or will it be less, but just something new to adapt to.
 - iv. Size matters, so a business for example on 1 acre is different than a business on 40 acres, 100 acres, or even 5 acres, etc,.
 - v. Will there be employees besides the residents of the lot?
 1. How many? On a per acre basis?
 2. A larger ranch property can handle several employees coming and going, as is currently the case, and no one really notices.

- vi. Will there be patrons or customer coming to the lot or location?
 - 1. One at a time? Or more, how many?
 - c. What is the community benefit?
 - i. Does auto repair need to be on Hg 12?
 - ii. How about appliance repair?
 - iii. What about a contractor who needs a shop and has a couple of employees? A backhoe and a big truck, etc.
 - iv. Do these have to be in commercial or can they be dispersed in other zones?
4. Home occupation is already permitted in all 5 zones.
- a. **Home Occupation, Minor:** An activity carried out for gain by a resident and conducted entirely within the resident's home and/or a separate building of no more than 750 square feet and is clearly incidental and accessory to the residential use of the dwelling or property and provided that the home occupation does not change the residential character of the residence and does not result in noise, vibration, light, odor, dust, smoke, or other air pollution noticeable at or beyond the property line, does not include any outside storage of goods, materials, or equipment, has no signage, complies with all required Federal and State licensing requirements, complies with all required Local licensing requirements.
 - b. But it is quite restrictive and does not account for lot size, etc, etc.
5. Light Manufacturing is already allowed as a CUP but only in Commercial zone.
- a. **Light Manufacturing:** The assembly, fabrication or processing of goods and materials using processes that ordinarily do not create noise, smoke, fumes, odors, glare, or health or safety hazards outside of the building or lot where such assembly, fabrication or processing takes place, where such processes are housed entirely within a building, or where the area occupied by outdoor storage of goods and materials used in such processes does not exceed twenty- five percent of the floor area of all buildings on the property. Light manufacturing generally includes processing and fabrication of finished products, predominantly from previously prepared materials, and includes processes that do not require extensive floor areas or land areas.
 - b. This definition also does not take into account a lot of factors:
 - i. There is no available Commercial property not already in operation, so where can it go? Requires a rezone or expanded on the Table of Uses as to where it is allowed.
 - ii. What if someone wants to have one employee and open a welding shop to mfg fireplace screens and other metal sculptures? Does that really need to be Commercial zone?
 - 1. And once a property is zoned commercial, it allows all those other uses listed as commercial, unless you keep them as CUPs and not just permitted uses.
 - iii. What if Sugar Loaf Farms wants a cabinet shop, or mfg tiny homes, etc etc. Who would be disturbed? Would the town have to rezone the entire 400+ acres as Commercial?
 - iv. Once again, size and location matter a great deal.
6. Anyway, this is just the beginning of this conversation, there may be other ways to approach this or other ZO provisions to address, or new ones to add.