

City of Hopewell Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance Update
Worksession #1 - Meeting Summary
February 27, 2025



Berkley Group (BG) met with City of Hopewell staff, Planning Commission, and City Council on Thursday, February 27, 2025, to discuss the findings of community engagement and introduce the proposed structure of the updated Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance. A summary of the worksession discussion is included below.

Topic	Discussion Summary
Project Purpose	BG presented the overall purpose and intent of the Zoning and Subdivision update. <i>No questions or discussion.</i>
Diagnostic Refresh	BG provided a brief overview of the Diagnostic that was completed in January 2024. <i>No questions or discussion.</i>
Project Overview and Schedule	BG provided an overview of this Ordinance update and the associated schedule. <i>No questions or discussion.</i>
Community Engagement: <i>6 Key Engagement Themes</i>	BG provided an overview of the six predominant themes that were identified from community engagement. <i>No questions or discussion.</i>
Community Engagement: <i>Overview</i>	Hopewell’s population is approximately 20,000 and there are clearly not many responses. Planning Commissioner asked if that was typical. BG explained that Zoning is a hard topic to get feedback on. We try to reach the community as best we can, but it is typical to see this type of turnout in other communities as well.
Community Engagement: <i>Pop Ups</i>	Planning Commissioner asked about the median age of engagement participants. City staff explained that it was a good mix of age groups in the pop-up events. BG stated that the workshop and focus group participants were mostly older, and the survey did not ask demographic questions, so we are unaware of the median age of participants in that form of engagement.
Community Engagement: <i>Public Workshops</i>	BG provided a brief overview of the public workshop conducted, and its key themes. <i>No questions or discussion.</i>

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Community Engagement: <i>Focus Groups</i>	BG provided an overview of the focus groups conducted, feedback received, and a general overview about the participants. <i>No questions or discussion.</i>
Community Engagement: <i>Community-Wide Survey</i>	<p>Question from Commissioner: Hopewell’s existing Comprehensive Plan says a high percentage of people were dissatisfied with commercial opportunities available (they work here but don’t live, eat, or shop here) - is the survey reinforcing this? Berkley Group explained that we heard a lot about not having enough hospitality uses, such as stores and restaurants, in Hopewell. This theme was fairly prevalent in the Survey.</p> <p>Council and Commission want to make sure they understand what the people want; feels like they may have very specific developments in mind. Tiny homes are becoming more affordable than traditional housing, and residents are wanting to see more of those options. This was expressed through Questions 4 and 5 in the Community Survey.</p> <p>The tiny home movement is getting a lot of attention; there are different types of manufacturers. The purpose of tiny homes on wheels is to make it affordable. This trend is also growing in popularity with the older generation too because it's cheaper and requires less maintenance than a traditional home.</p> <p>To prevent the abuse of recreational vehicles (RVs), the Ordinance needs to clearly define tiny homes/cottage communities versus RVs.</p> <p>Need to be sure that decisions about these “trends” will be substantial for the City long-term. Berkely Group explained that community engagement provides a snapshot in time of what the community desires, but as we draft, we can determine <i>if</i> the community’s desires are appropriate for the City, and <i>how</i> the Ordinance can be used to guide that development properly.</p>
Elements of a Strong Ordinance	BG informed the Commission and Council of the primary elements of a strong Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance. <i>No questions or discussion.</i>
Proposed Ordinance Structure	BG gave a brief overview of Hopewell’s proposed ZO+SO structure. <i>No questions or discussion.</i>
General Comments/Questions	If the Planning Commission considered a small area plan, how does that integrate with the Ordinance’s development standards? BG explained that this would be best applied through creating new

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	<p>overlay districts; these can correspond to the small area plan and codify additional standards for development.</p> <p><u>City Staff Question for Council/Commission:</u></p> <p>New single-family dwellings on nonconforming lot - is there any appetite for this to be codified in the Ordinance to allow nonconforming lots to be built on, or do you like process as is? General consensus was support for this process.</p> <p>The group noted they did not take issue with things like eaves, driveway, etc., but still want to see houses come through for review.</p> <p>Commissioner expressed that some undersized lots need to be combined with adjacent lots. Automatic approval process for undersize lots is dangerous.</p> <p>City Staff mentioned that another option is to allow BZA to review nonconformities through the Variance process. Colonial Heights allows some by-right development, but only after some complicated calculations.</p> <p>BG also noted that current development standards are not lining up with historic development patterns on the ground (e.g., City Point area) so when we assess the zoning districts, we will look at minimum lot size and setbacks, which could improve the nonconforming process as well.</p>

Next Steps

Task	Responsible Party	Date
Planning Commission Drafting Worksession #1 of 4	City Staff Berkley Group	Thursday, March 6, 2025