

Chip, as we discussed at Tuesday's RCA Board Meeting the City is again attempting to adopt a new zoning ordinance. Since the county has opted out it will no longer be a joint ordinance, (UZO) but a City of Savannah ordinance to be known as NEWZO. Our commercial brokers represent many diverse property owners and developers. There is no organization that represents these folks like the Homebuilders Association. It is important that our members get the word out to their clients and friends that the proposed ordinance will have an impact on their property rights and the future use of the property they own or wish to acquire. Some will be affected more than others. Each property owner must check for himself. This e-mail is an attempt to give a blueprint as to how that might be done. Please distribute it to our members.

The proposed ordinance can be found at [www.newzo.org](http://www.newzo.org).

The first sheet of the attached is an outline of the necessary steps. The initial determination is to use the map tool to find the proposed zoning classification for the property (you can also determine what the zoning is under the existing zoning ordinance).

Once you find the proposed zone the owner must review the list of uses allowed in that zone. The use table is at Article 5.4 One sheet is attached as an example. Within Article 5 are basic Development Standards, General Site Standards (more about those in a moment), Natural Resource Standards, and Additional Requirements for groups of zoning classifications. I have attached those which apply to Business and Industrial Uses.

You will notice on the sheet of Uses that some uses are allowed as a matter of right (a check), some are special uses which will require additional approvals, and some are listed as "L", limited. A limited use has additional standards that must be met. For example, in the B-C zone a Self-service storage facility shows an "L", making it a limited use. The far right column indicates the can be found at Article 8.4.30. I have attached those use standards (they are at 8.4.29, not 8.4.30, an example of how many technical errors exist in the ordinance draft) which require additional compliance.

Before we get to Article 9, General Site Standards, the property owner needs to make sure her property is not in one of the multiple Overlay Districts found in Article 7. If the property is in an overlay district, more restrictions will need to be dealt with.

Going back to Article 5, Base Zoning Districts, please review the attached page 5-65. Development in a Business Zone must meet a number of General site Standards and Natural Resource Standards which are listed on the tables shown on that page. The property owner will find Article 9, General site Standards, to be a lot to deal with whether he owns a property already developed or is planning on future development. With property already developed many aspects of the site, not just a use, may become nonconforming. A thorough reading and understanding of Article 11, Nonconformities, is necessary. There are problems associated with allowing a property to become nonconforming.

The most troublesome Article, based on prior drafts, is Article 3, Administration. It gives the rules on approvals, permits, variances, zoning, etc. That Article is being reworked and has not been released.

The intent is to adopt NEWZO this year. Please see the attached schedule. It is imperative that any property owner that is dissatisfied with any aspect of the new ordinance, whether it is the use restriction or some development standard, expresses his or her objection. Those who remain silent will not be listened to.

Each individual property owner must handle their objections to use restrictions. Regarding standards, if there is a standard that not only impacts that owner's property she should let his objection be known but if the issue could also be problematic in its application on a broader scale please send your comments back to the RCA board in order to give the board the opportunity to make the case that the issue is of broad application and must be addressed.

Comments should be sent to Bridget Lidy at [blidy@Savannahga.Gov](mailto:blidy@Savannahga.Gov). and the new MPC director at [wilsonm@thempc.org](mailto:wilsonm@thempc.org).

Let me know if you have any questions.

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