

such as water, sewer, or septic system? If served by an existing septic system, what is its condition?

- ⇒ Are there any plans to widen the roads or streets by or near your property? If yes, what impact will the road improvements have on your property and future land use patterns in the area?
- ⇒ Does your property adjoin commercial use or zoning? Are there any plans to build new businesses or expand? What are the hours of operation and the typical lighting, traffic, and noise levels? Are there private covenants, deed restrictions, homeowners associations, etc. that may be imposed on your property?
- ⇒ What permits are required if I want to build, add onto, alter, or demolish a building or structure?
- ⇒ Is your property within a designated flood plain, and if so, can you build in the flood plain?
- ⇒ Is your property located within the Bardstown historic district?
- ⇒ If your property is located within a rural area, are the

- ⇒ sights, smells, and sounds of agricultural activities acceptable?
- ⇒ Will zoning and subdivision regulations allow the subdividing of your property?

This list is not all-inclusive and not all of the questions will apply to your particular situation. But hopefully this list will provide you with a starting point.

The Planning Commission and other local agencies are tremendous resources. Don't be afraid to ask questions and request information. While it may take some homework for the staff to research your request or you may be referred to another office, the inquiries may help you avoid problems and disappointments later. Neighborhoods and communities change. You should know as much as possible about potential changes before buying or developing your land.

For more information, please contact:

Joint City-County Planning Commission
of Nelson County
P.O. Box 402
Bardstown, Kentucky 40004
Telephone: (502) 348-1805
Fax: (502) 348-1818
Email: ncpz@bardstowncable.net

Red Tape Tips



Avoiding Zoning Surprises Along the Way

by
Janet Johnston-Crowe, AICP
Director
Joint City-County
Planning Commission of
Nelson County

Zoning is the single-most important tool communities use to achieve the goals and objectives of its long-range plan, to shape the pattern of development, and to protect people and their property. Of the decisions that the Planning Commission makes, there are few that equal zoning in terms of the day-to-day impact on the health, safety, and welfare of ordinary people. However, most individuals are unaware of zoning regulations, and the impact of these regulations can seem all too real to the unwary buyer and owner.

Zoning is a tool to avoid or minimize disruptive land use patterns involving incompatible land uses. Zoning recognizes that some uses are not compatible and that certain uses may be appropriate next to or even unsafe near other activities. One example is a heavy industrial use with obnoxious or detrimental impacts is not an appropriate use adjacent to a residential development.

Zoning also provides landowners and the marketplace with predictability and certainty. Being familiar with the current zoning and future land use plans will eliminate future surprises. Informed buyers and owners will have an indication of what may be developed on their property and next door to them. For example, the adjoining property may be used for pasture land now but it may already be zoned or

have the potential to be rezoned for commercial or industrial development in the future. Another example is a family finds the property of their dreams but never checks the current zoning and future land use plans for adjoining property. The family buys the property but later finds out that they can't build their dream home or operate their family business on the property due to zoning restrictions.

While these are obvious examples, they are not always the most important in the mind of a buyer or owner. Buyers and owners should do their homework and become educated to avoid future surprises and potential zoning horrors. Whether you are buying property for residential or commercial use or for personal or investment purposes, the following is a list of key questions you should ask.

- ⇒ What are the community's future land use plans for adjacent properties and immediate area? Are the future land use plans compatible with your goals?
- ⇒ Where are the community facilities, such as schools, hospitals, parks and recreational facilities, etc., in relation to your property? Are there any plans to relocate or construct facilities?
- ⇒ What is the current zoning of your property? Will the current zoning allow the activities you have planned (for example, building a house, setting up a home-based

business, building a storage shed or garage, renting a portion of your home as an apartment)? Will the house or building fit on the lot given the zoning restrictions? Can the zoning be changed and what are the procedures for the zone change?

- ⇒ What are adjoining properties currently zoned and are there any plans to change the zoning? Are there plans for nearby open space, such as farmland or vacant property? Are the zoning and future land use plans compatible with your goals, and if the vacant field next door is developed, will you have the same view from your home?
- ⇒ Is the property you are buying in fact the property you are being shown? Do you have a copy of the current deed or plat and are you familiar with the property's boundaries, shape, and sitting and location of driveways, existing structures, etc.?
- ⇒ If the property has existing structures, do they meet current zoning regulations? Was there a zoning compliance permit issued for the existing building or structure?
- ⇒ Does the property have any drainage, access, utility or other easements that would restrict its use?
- ⇒ Is the property served by adequate public or private services,