Press release
March 2, 2011

Johnston reduces pavement

Johnston Town Council has approved an important zoning amendment that will make the town more competitive for economic development, reduce stormwater impacts in the Pocasset, Woonasquatucket, and Scituate Reservoir watersheds, and facilitate sustainable development.

At the February 17, 2011 Town Council meeting the board adopted revisions to the parking standards in the zoning code. Both minimum and maximum parking requirements have been established for office, retail and service business, dramatically reducing the potential for the large parking “fields” that have dominated retail construction in past decades. The required parking for a 25,000 sf retail development now ranges from 75 to 100 spaces, including ADA-accessible spaces. With the prior code, the minimum required parking was 143 with required ADA-accessible spaces. This new requirement is similar to parking requirements in North Kingstown and Middletown.

As a further incentive to sustainable development, the parking code now requires that any new office or retail business employing one hundred or more employees on any single shift provide one electric charging station for every one hundred employees on said shift. This may encourage future development to be LEED certified. Recent LEED construction in Johnston includes FM Global and the TD Bank on Atwood Avenue (both constructed prior to the new parking code).

The town has reduced the parking requirement for multifamily housing that is accessible to transit. To encourage bus ridership and reduce dependence on foreign fuels, the zoning code has been amended to reduce the parking requirement for structures with four or more dwellings to 1.5 spaces per unit if located within 1,000 feet of a RIPTA bus stop. In recognition that many multifamily apartments require less than two spaces per unit regardless of distance to transit, the parking requirement has been reduced from 2.0 to 1.75 spaces per unit. This will further reduce pervious pavement.

Please contact Pamela Sherrill, AICP, Johnston town planner, for further details on the new parking code at 401-231-4021.

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