

**TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION**

**BUILDING AND PLANNING  
COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, November 7, 2018  
6:15 PM (Approximately)**

Chairperson: Joshua L. Grimes, Elizabeth Rogan  
Vice Chairperson: George T. Manos, Todd M. Sinai

AGENDA

**1. DPZ PRESENTATION OF DRAFT ZONING CODE**



## **AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION**

ITEM: DPZ PRESENTATION OF DRAFT ZONING CODE

DPZ will make a presentation on the draft Zoning Code.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

To download the Draft Zoning Code and Map go to [www.lowermerion.org/rezoning](http://www.lowermerion.org/rezoning).

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Type
☐ DPZ Agenda	Backup Material
☐ Issue Briefing Memo	Issue Briefing



# Lower Merion Township Zoning Code

## Draft Code Presentation to Building & Planning Committee

### Agenda:

6:15pm

### November 7, 2018

Code Review

B&P Members		LMT Client Team	Consultant Team
Daniel Bernheim	Anna Durbin	Chris Leswing	Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk
Michael F. McKeon	George Manos**	Colleen Hall	Marina Khoury
Joshua Grimes*	V. Scott Zelov	Carissa Hazelton	Jennifer Hurley
Anthony Stevenson	Tiffany O'Neill	Mike Wylie	Phillip Franks
Cheryl Gelber	Todd Sinai**	Marley Bice (MCPC)	
Andrew Gavrin	C. Brian McGuire	Ernie McNeely	
Elizabeth Rogan*	Rick Churchill	Bob Duncan	
*Co-Chairs			
**Vice Chairs			

### 11/07 Presentation to Building & Planning Committee

1. **Brief recap of process and work**
  - Process to date
  - Work to date
  - Tracking progress
  
2. **Draft Code**
  - Review Code: Structure & Content
  - Overview of Articles
  - Key Elements
  
3. **Q&A session**

**TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION**

**Building & Planning Committee**

**Issue Briefing**

**Topic:** Draft Zoning Code

**Prepared By:** Christopher Leswing, Director, Building & Planning Department

**Date:** November 2, 2018

**I. Action To Be Considered By The Board:**

The Board will review the Draft Zoning Code dated October 11, 2018 prepared by DPZ. No action is required by the Board at this time.

**II. Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:**

The Board of Commissioners must approve amendments to the zoning code.

**III. Current Policy Or Practice (If Applicable):**

The recently adopted *Comprehensive Plan for the Preservation, Infill, and Redevelopment of Lower Merion Township* recognized that the current Zoning Code, which was originally adopted in 1927 and amended several times over the past several decades, was not oriented towards effectively addressing the fine grained, lot-by-lot infill development and growth facing Lower Merion. In 2017 DPZ, a nationally recognized planning firm, was retained by Lower Merion to review the existing Zoning Code, and draft new standards reflective of the Community Development Objectives outlined in the Comprehensive Plan.

**IV. Other Relevant Background Information:**

The Draft Zoning Code is a completely new document that maintains just five districts from the existing code. These are geographically specific zoning districts that have received additional and specific attention in urban design plans and regulations over the years. These five “Special Districts” include: SD1 - Medical Center District (MC); SD2 - Bryn Mawr Medical District (BMMD); SD3 - Rock Hill Road District (RHR); SD4 - Bryn Mawr Village District (BMV); and SD5 - City Avenue Districts. The consultant team recognized that any attempt to modify these districts should be carried out with a master plan that takes into account the site specifics of extreme topography, locations of property lines, and adjacent property owners’ concerns, similarly to the process followed for the BMV District.

Key elements of the Draft Zoning Code are noted below:

1. ***Improve predictability and limit nonresidential creep*** – The new code promotes and clarifies that residential uses will be permitted in residential districts. Any nonresidential use will be accessory to the primary residential use and will only be permitted as a historic incentive by conditional use.

Properties split-zoned commercial and residential have been addressed by the new Zoning Map and in nearly every case the property is now either zoned for commercial or residential properties.

2. ***Establish New Institutional Zoning Districts*** - Institutions are currently permitted in Residence Districts by special exception and comprise roughly 13 percent of the Township's land area. The draft Zoning Code removes institutional uses from residential districts. Institutions are reclassified and regulated in a standalone Institutional District. Public schools will still be allowed in residential districts in addition to institutional districts. The public schools will be subject to institutional district standards and regulated similarly to private schools.
3. ***Limit inappropriate residential subdivision*** - An inappropriate subdivision is one that results in unnecessary demolition of historic resources, degradation of natural features and/or disturbance to the established neighborhood pattern. From a planning perspective the neighborhood pattern refers to the established pattern of houses and open spaces.
4. ***Preserve and enhance neighborhood character*** – Ensure compatibility of new construction/modernization of existing housing stock with existing neighborhoods.
  - a. Zoning standards for the Low-Density Districts have been calibrated to reflect the established (on the ground) mass, scale and rhythm of the neighborhood.
  - b. Architectural controls have been included in the draft zoning code. Architectural controls are also proposed for Historic Districts and Neighborhood Conservation Districts.
  - c. Neighborhood Conservation Districts are proposed in three pilot areas to ensure that new construction within these defined areas is compatible with the defining characteristics of the surrounding neighborhood. The three pilot areas include: South Ardmore, South Merion Station, and Cynwyd. The Neighborhood Conservation Districts are outlined on the Zoning Map.
5. ***Enhance vitality of commercial areas*** – The draft Code includes architectural controls and predictable standards. The Mixed-Use Special Transportation (MUST) overlay district has been removed.

## **V. Impact On Township Finances:**

This discussion will have no immediate impact on Township finances.

## **VI. Staff Recommendation:**

Staff recommends the Building & Planning Committee provide feedback to the consultant team on the draft code.