Planning Commission
Regular Meeting
Agenda Item 4.b.

Agenda Item: **ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT – ZOTA #26-05 to amend Chapter 78 (ZONING), Article VI (Overlay Districts), as deemed necessary and appropriate to clarify existing language providing the Historic District Review Board's (HDRB) ability to grant setback reductions to certain properties within the HDO, allowing the HDRB to grant greater setback reductions than what is currently permitted when appropriate with certain standards within the HDO, and clarifying that the setback reduction process is separate and exempt from the Certificate of Appropriateness requirement**

Meeting Date: October 19, 2026

Category: Public Hearings

Prepared by: Angelina Jones, Lead Planner / Design and Development

Description:
Currently, the Historic District Review Board (HDRB) may grant front setback reductions within the Historic District Overlay (HDO) as appropriate for detached single-family residential properties to a lesser distance than required for the underlying zoning district but not less than 20 feet. This Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment (ZOTA) would clarify and improve the existing language that allows the HDRB to grant front setback reductions within the HDO. Furthermore, this ZOTA will provide the HDRB with the ability to grant greater setback reduction than what is currently permitted, if the setback reduction will result in greater compatibility with the adjacent dwellings and historic fabric of the district.

Background/Timing Impact:
The HDRB passed a resolution in support of this proposed ZOTA at its October 15, 2025, public hearing. In their resolution, the board expressed their support for increasing the board's ability to grant setback reductions within the HDO as provided for in Sec. 78-60.3(e) of the Zoning Ordinance (HDRB adopted resolution attached). The Board found that this change would allow additional flexibility in the design and construction of new residential properties in the Historic District and allow for improvements with enhanced compatibility to nearby contributing structures. Additionally, this change will simplify the setback reduction process for residential property owners within the HDO. Furthermore, as a housekeeping measure, staff is proposing to amend Sec. 78-60.3(g)(2) of the Zoning Ordinance to clarify that the setback reduction process is separate and exempt from the Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA) requirement.

Work Session Discussion:
The following is a summary of changes made to the proposed ZOTA language based on comments received during the Planning Commission's October 5, 2026, work session:
Sec. 78-60.3(e):
- Lines 11-13: Updated the order of the activities eligible for HDRB setback reduction approval for clarity.
- Line 12: Updated to include reconstructed accessory buildings in the list of eligible activities.
- Lines 16-17: Added "...is consistent with historic district design guidelines, and will not cause an adverse impact to adjoining properties" in response to comments from the Planning Commission. The *Historic District Overlay Design Guidelines* are explicit as to where accessory buildings should be sited in relation to principal buildings, which addresses an inquiry from the Planning Commission as to how the proposed language relates differently to setbacks for principal versus accessory buildings.
- Line 20: Added "The HDRB will grant such a setback reduction through a resolution" to further clarify that the setback reduction is exempt from the CoA process.

This ZOTA was initiated by Town Council at its August 25, 2026, meeting. Following the Planning Commission recommendation, this ordinance amendment will be considered by the Town Council for adoption.

Fiscal Impact:
N/A

Legal Impact:
If adopted by the Town Council, this amendment will be effective on and after its date of adoption.

Staff Recommendation/Next Steps:
Recommend approval of ZOTA #26-05 to the Town Council.

Attachments:
1. ZOTA #26-05 DRAFT ORDINANCE
2. Supporting Document HDRB Adopted Resolution
3. Legal Ad
4. Presentation