

Thoughts on Town of Ennis

Proposed Zoning Ordinance - Draft from 02/06/2018

I appreciate the hard work that has gone into this first draft but strongly feel that the Commissioners may want to ask themselves if they really want to take on the tasks of Architectural Design, Building Inspections, and be responsible for knowing HUD, State, and County Regulations and Covenants for each area in Ennis. I agree that the Zoning Rules should be reviewed but firmly believe that “Land Use” is where the Town of Ennis should be concerned and not get involved in the rest that is being proposed due to liability and cost.

As written you propose to have a “Zoning Administrator” as well as a “Design Review Committee.” Those members are supposed to be “qualified to analyze and interpret architectural and site planning information”.....including:

- 1.) Architecture
- 2.) Engineering
- 3.) Building Construction
- 4.) Land Use Planning

I am currently working on a set of house plans that would meet the surface criteria you would establish in this draft but, as written, I think you would also be responsible to know and interpret:

- 1.) Is it within a flood plain?
- 2.) Does the deck structural standards required by HUD? Weight limit?
- 3.) It is 2 story – acceptable height for the plan but what about covenants? If the covenants do not allow 2 story are you going to make the decision that the covenants are even legal?
- 4.) Windows are 44” off the floor – do you know if they meet code?
- 5.) Was the rebar in the cement sufficient?
- 6.) In my landscape plan what if one of the bushes is poisonous?

The list could go on and on with my concern reflecting my belief that you cannot legally mandate what you are asking of the public without a qualified inspector to make sure that the public meets your mandates.....but that is a good question for your attorney. What I do believe is that by setting yourselves up to be the “professionals” that are reviewing all of these mandates (“the most “restrictive” of State, Fed regulations, covenants, etc”), you are setting yourself up for great liability and potential of failure.

Next – I called to get copies of documents referenced and many of them are not yet even created or available.

- 1.) Traditional Commercial Development Overlay – page 26
- 2.) Floodplain Management Overlay – page 26

- 3.) Community Signage Overlay – page 26
- 4.) Residential Design Standards – page 70
- 5.) List of Invasive plants
- 6.) Ennis Transportation Standards – page 76
- 7.) Requirements of Madison County Weed Board – page 78
- 8.) Bulk Storage Standards – page 77
- 9.) Sound Meter – page 83

It would be impossible to judge this draft without having the referenced documents.

Cost? Three fold concern:

First, how can the town of Ennis justify hiring a “Zoning Administrator” of the caliber these inspections would require for a couple of building permits per year?

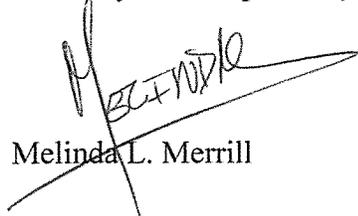
Secondly – cost of enforcement - Who will you hire to check fencing standards, smoke and dust requirements, vibrations, smell, noise, glare/heat, roof standards, major recreational equipment parking, number of dogs or cats kept as pets just to name a few that were on the list?

Third, by adding the mandate of landscaping alone you could easily be increasing the cost of building \$15,000 to \$20,000 per unit. We already struggle in Ennis with affordable housing and this seems counter- productive to finding a solution to this ongoing problem that is a major concern of the citizens in Ennis.

I truly do appreciate all that you as commissioners do, but this seems way over the top for our small town. Could we just concentrate on land use and leave architecture review, engineering, and building construction out of it?

Thank you for listening to my concerns.

Sincerely and Respectfully,



Melinda L. Merrill