

Nathan Giacalone

From: Marc C. Laredo
Sent: Monday, June 1, 2020 10:06 PM
To: Nathan Giacalone
Cc: Deborah J. Crossley
Subject: Email to Mr. Lemel

From: Marc C. Laredo <mlaredo@newtonma.gov>
Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2020 5:39 PM
To: Zachery LeMel <zlemel@newtonma.gov>
Subject: Re: Garage doors and driveways

Zack,

Thank you again for taking the time to talk today - much appreciated. As we discussed, I think that a few key things will be helpful going forward:

1. Let's work through the details of a particular section of the code before moving on to another area. For example, with driveways and garages, let's work through our rules now and then go on to the next topic rather than do multiple overviews and then be presented with a draft code to work through for the entire residential ordinance. I think there are multiple advantages to this approach including (a) finishing a topic while our discussion on it is fresh in our minds; (b) completing work on something rather than leaving it for later; (c) allowing the public to better follow our work; (d) building consensus as we move along in the process; and (e) using our lessons learned on one topic to inform our discussion of other topics. Of course, when we are done with each individual topic we will have to read the entire residential ordinance (and then the entire code) together to make sure it is internally consistent.

2. Please provide us with the sources of your recommendations and the reasons for them. The width of a driveway entrance is a good example. You stated that according to the design professionals, it needs to be at least ten feet wide. That is an important point of information that we need to know. You then took that data and used it to create a recommended maximum width. Until your email and our conversation today, I did not know how you arrived at that number and I suspect that the Council did not either. We need to know how you get to a number and then why you choose it (here, you explained it was because you felt this was consistent with our goals on climate action and safety).

3. Please provide us with cost estimates for proposals. If a measure that we are going to adopt is going to be more expensive for our constituents, we need to understand and be able to explain that additional expense. The cost of paving driveways with asphalt versus impervious surface is a good example. According to your numbers, it could be anywhere from double to 20 times the cost to build a permeable driveway versus asphalt paving. Likewise, when you talk about the cost of maintenance, I don't think you can say that a permeable driveway will be less costly to maintain. I presume both have the same life span (and, if not, that would be good to know) and it clearly costs more to maintain. Again, we may decide to require this but we need to do so knowingly, armed with all available information.

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4. Please identify the individual professionals with whom you discuss these issues. We probably know many of them and then can (a) suggest others with whom you might want to speak and (b) speak with them ourselves if we so choose.

5. Please consider and tell us about the perhaps unintended consequences of your recommendations. With driveways for example, your recommendations would make the vast majority of lots non-conforming. Since creating much greater conformity is one of the main goals of this effort, we need to evaluate and decide whether less conformity is better in this instance and what are the consequences of that lack of conformity are.

6. Please look to the existing, as built nature of our city when making suggestions. Again, driveways are a good example. Few are ten feet wide or less at the entrance. Has that been a problem in our residential neighborhoods? Are there benefits to such surfaces (use for playing basketball, small children riding tricycles, etc.) that we also need to consider? Are we now saying that what the vast majority of single family homes have now is inappropriate? Should someone who is doing a significant addition to their house be prohibited from having what everyone else on the street has? The point is that we should not be looking at this in a vacuum.

Again thank you for all of your effort on this project and I look forward to continued conversations.

Marc