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LC01113/SUB A/2
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2013

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A N A C T

RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES - SUBDIVISION OF LAND - ZONING
ORDINANCES

Introduced By: Senator William A. Walaska

Date Introduced: February 13, 2013

Referred To: Senate Housing & Municipal Government

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 45-23-53 of the General Laws in Chapter 45-23 entitled
2 "Subdivision of Land" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **45-23-53. Local regulations -- Public hearing and notice requirements.** -- (a) No local
4 regulations shall be adopted, repealed, or amended until after a public hearing has been held upon
5 the question before the city or town planning board. The city or town planning board shall first
6 give notice of the public hearing by publication of notice in a newspaper of general circulation
7 within the municipality at least once each week for three (3) successive weeks prior to the date of
8 the hearing, which may include the week in which the hearing is to be held. At this hearing
9 opportunity shall be given to all persons interested on being heard upon the matter of the
10 proposed regulations. Written notice, which may be a copy of the newspaper notice, shall be
11 mailed to the statewide planning program of the Rhode Island department of administration at
12 least two (2) weeks prior to the hearing. The newspaper notice shall be published as a display
13 advertisement, using a type size at least as large as the normal type size used by the newspaper in
14 its news articles, and shall:

15 (1) Specify the place of the hearing and the date and time of its commencement;

16 (2) Indicate that adoption, amendment or repeal of local regulations is under
17 consideration;

18 (3) Contain a statement of the proposed amendments to the regulations that may be

1 printed once in its entirety, or may summarize or describe the matter under consideration [as long](#)
2 [as the intent and effect of the proposed regulation is expressly written in that notice;](#)

3 (4) Advise those interested where and when a copy of the matter under consideration
4 may be obtained or examined and copied; and

5 (5) State that the proposals shown on the notice may be altered or amended prior to the
6 close of the public hearing without further advertising, as a result of further study or because of
7 the views expressed at the public hearing. Any alteration or amendment must be presented for
8 comment in the course of the hearing.

9 (b) Notice of the public hearing shall be sent by first class mail to the city or town
10 planning board of any municipality where there is a public or quasi-public water source, or
11 private water source that is used or is suitable for use as a public water source, located within two
12 thousand feet (2,000') of the municipal boundaries.

13 (c) Notice of a public hearing shall be sent to the governing body of any state or
14 municipal water department or agency, special water district, or private water company that has
15 riparian rights to a surface water resource and/or surface watershed that is used or is suitable for
16 use as a public water source located within either the municipality or two thousand feet (2,000')
17 of the municipal boundaries; provided, that a map survey has been filed with the building
18 inspector as specified in section 45-24-53(e).

19 [\(d\) Notwithstanding any of the requirements set forth in subsections \(a\) through \(c\)](#)
20 [above, each municipality shall establish and maintain a public notice registry allowing any person](#)
21 [or entity to register for electronic notice of any changes to the local regulations. Municipalities](#)
22 [shall annually provide public notice of existence of said registry by a publication of notice in a](#)
23 [newspaper of general circulation within the municipality. In addition, each municipality is hereby](#)
24 [encouraged to provide public notice of the existence of the public notice registry in all of its](#)
25 [current and future communications with the public, including, but not limited to, governmental](#)
26 [websites, electronic newsletters, public bulletins, press releases and all other means the](#)
27 [municipality may use to impart information to the local community.](#)

28 [\(1\) Provided, however, notice pursuant to a public notice registry as per this section, does](#)
29 [not alone qualify a person or entity on the public notice registry as an “aggrieved party” under](#)
30 [subdivision 45-24-31\(4\).](#)

31 ~~(e)~~(e) No defect in the form of any notice under this section renders any regulations
32 invalid, unless the defect is found to be intentional or misleading.

33 ~~(e)~~(f) The requirements in this section are to be construed as minimum requirements.

34 SECTION 2. Section 45-24-53 of the General Laws in Chapter 45-24 entitled "Zoning

1 Ordinances" is hereby amended to read as follows:

2 **45-24-53. Adoption -- Notice and hearing requirements.** -- (a) No zoning ordinance
3 shall be adopted, repealed, or amended until after a public hearing has been held upon the
4 question before the city or town council. The city or town council shall first give notice of the
5 public hearing by publication of notice in a newspaper of general circulation within the city or
6 town at least once each week for three (3) successive weeks prior to the date of the hearing,
7 which may include the week in which the hearing is to be held, at which hearing opportunity shall
8 be given to all persons interested to be heard upon the matter of the proposed ordinance. Written
9 notice, which may be a copy of the newspaper notice, shall be mailed to the statewide planning
10 program of the department of administration, and, where applicable, to the parties specified in
11 subsections (b), (c), (d), and (e) of this section, at least two (2) weeks prior to the hearing. The
12 newspaper notice shall be published as a display advertisement, using a type size at least as large
13 as the normal type size used by the newspaper in its news articles, and shall:

14 (1) Specify the place of the hearing and the date and time of its commencement;

15 (2) Indicate that adoption, amendment, or repeal of a zoning ordinance is under
16 consideration;

17 (3) Contain a statement of the proposed amendments to the ordinance that may be
18 printed once in its entirety, or summarize and describe the matter under consideration as long as
19 the intent and effect of the proposed ordinance is expressly written in that notice;

20 (4) Advise those interested where and when a copy of the matter under consideration
21 may be obtained or examined and copied; and

22 (5) State that the proposals shown on the ordinance may be altered or amended prior to
23 the close of the public hearing without further advertising, as a result of further study or because
24 of the views expressed at the public hearing. Any alteration or amendment must be presented for
25 comment in the course of the hearing.

26 (b) Where a proposed general amendment to an existing zoning ordinance includes
27 changes in an existing zoning map, public notice shall be given as required by subsection (a) of
28 this section.

29 (c) Where a proposed amendment to an existing ordinance includes a specific change in a
30 zoning district map but does not affect districts generally, public notice shall be given as required
31 by subsection (a) of this section, with the additional requirements that:

32 (1) Notice shall include a map showing the existing and proposed boundaries, zoning
33 district boundaries, and existing streets and roads and their names, and city and town boundaries
34 where appropriate; and

1 (2) Written notice of the date, time, and place of the public hearing and the nature and
2 purpose of the hearing shall be sent to all owners of real property whose property is located in or
3 within not less than two hundred feet (200') of the perimeter of the area proposed for change,
4 whether within the city or town or within an adjacent city or town. Notice shall also be sent to any
5 individual or entity holding a recorded conservation or preservation restriction on the property
6 that is the subject of the amendment. The notice shall be sent by registered or certified mail to the
7 last known address of the owners, as shown on the current real estate tax assessment records of
8 the city or town in which the property is located.

9 (d) Notice of a public hearing shall be sent by first class mail to the city or town council
10 of any city or town to which one or more of the following pertain:

11 (1) Which is located in or within not less than two hundred feet (200') of the boundary of
12 the area proposed for change; or

13 (2) Where there is a public or quasi-public water source, or private water source that is
14 used or is suitable for use as a public water source, within two thousand feet (2,000') of any real
15 property that is the subject of a proposed zoning change, regardless of municipal boundaries.

16 (e) Notice of a public hearing shall be sent to the governing body of any state or
17 municipal water department or agency, special water district, or private water company that has
18 riparian rights to a surface water resource and/or surface watershed that is used or is suitable for
19 use as a public water source and that is within two thousand feet (2,000') of any real property
20 which is the subject of a proposed zoning change; provided, that the governing body of any state
21 or municipal water department or agency, special water district, or private water company has
22 filed with the building inspector in the city or town a map survey, which shall be kept as a public
23 record, showing areas of surface water resources and/or watersheds and parcels of land within
24 two thousand feet (2,000') thereof.

25 (f) Notwithstanding any of the requirements set forth in subsections (a) through (e)
26 above, each municipality shall establish and maintain a public notice registry allowing any person
27 or entity to register for electronic notice of any changes to the zoning ordinance. The city or town
28 shall provide public notice annually of the existence of the electronic registry by publication of
29 notice in a newspaper of general circulation within the city or town. In addition, each
30 municipality is hereby encouraged to provide public notice of the existence of the public notice
31 registry in all of its current and future communications with the public, including, but not limited
32 to, governmental websites, electronic newsletters, public bulletins, press releases and all other
33 means the municipality may use to impart information to the local community.

34 (1) Provided, however, notice pursuant to a public notice registry as per this section, does

1 [not alone qualify a person or entity on the public notice registry as an “aggrieved party” under](#)
2 [subdivision 45-24-31\(4\).](#)

3 ~~(g)~~ No defect in the form of any notice under this section shall render any ordinance or
4 amendment invalid, unless the defect is found to be intentional or misleading.

5 ~~(h)~~ Costs of any notice required under this section shall be borne by the applicant.

6 ~~(i)~~ In granting a zoning ordinance amendment, notwithstanding the provisions of
7 section 45-24-37, the town or city council may limit the change to one of the permitted uses in the
8 zone to which the subject land is rezoned, and impose limitations, conditions, and restrictions,
9 including, without limitation: (1) requiring the petitioner to obtain a permit or approval from any
10 and all state or local governmental agencies or instrumentalities having jurisdiction over the land
11 and use which are the subject of the zoning change; (2) those relating to the effectiveness or
12 continued effectiveness of the zoning change; and/or (3) those relating to the use of the land; as it
13 deems necessary. The responsible town or city official shall cause the limitations and conditions
14 so imposed to be clearly noted on the zoning map and recorded in the land evidence records;
15 provided, that in the case of a conditional zone change, the limitations, restrictions, and
16 conditions shall not be noted on the zoning map until the zone change has become effective. If the
17 permitted use for which the land has been rezoned is abandoned or if the land is not used for the
18 requested purpose for a period of two (2) years or more after the zone change becomes effective,
19 the town or city council may, after a public hearing, change the land to its original zoning use
20 before the petition was filed. If any limitation, condition, or restriction in an ordinance is held to
21 be invalid by a court in any action, that holding shall not cause the remainder of the ordinance to
22 be invalid.

23 ~~(j)~~ The above requirements are to be construed as minimum requirements.

24 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES - SUBDIVISION OF LAND - ZONING
ORDINANCES

- 1 This act would require municipalities to establish and maintain a public notice registry
- 2 allowing any person or entity to register for electronic notice of any changes to local regulations.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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