



**Memorandum**

**To:** Planning Commission  
**From:** Thomas Dansie, Director of Community Development  
**Date:** July 31, 2020  
**Re:** August 5, 2020 Planning Commission Work Meeting  
Discussion on Regulation of Interior Lighting

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***Executive Summary***

The Planning Commission expressed a desire to investigate the possibility of regulating light trespass and light nuisance caused by interior lighting. The Commission should use this meeting to begin a discussion on this topic.

The Commission should determine if this type of regulation is desirable, necessary, and appropriate. If so, the Commission should direct staff to begin work on developing potential strategies for regulation of interior lighting.

***Lighting Ordinance Background***

The Town adopted a comprehensive outdoor lighting ordinance in 2009. The ordinance is intended to help reduce light pollution, protect the Town's dark night skies, reduce glare and nuisance lighting, and contribute to better health for people and wildlife.

The 2009 ordinance only regulates outdoor lighting. It does not regulate interior lighting.

The outdoor lighting ordinance regulates the design of light fixtures, the color temperature of light sources, allowable lighting applications, and (for commercial properties) the total lumens allowed on a property. These regulations help accomplish the ordinance goals listed above.

The Commission should review the outdoor lighting ordinance (found [here](#)) prior to the meeting.

Poor interior lighting (which is currently not regulated) can counteract the effectiveness of regulations for outdoor lighting. Interior light that is very bright or a harsh color temperature can escape through large or poorly placed windows and create a lighting nuisance.

Although the outdoor lighting ordinance does not regulate interior lighting, there are a few references in the Town Code that do address this issue:

- Section 10-9A-13(B)(6) requires blinds or shades on windows visible from SR9 for "high visual impact" parcels in the FR zone.
- Section 10-11B-13(E) requires all lighting sources in the VC zone (not specifically limited to outdoor lighting) to be aimed or shielded to prevent light trespass.
- Section 10-16-4(B)(4)(b)(9)(A) states that windows should be designed to "limit light trespass" from interior lighting.

These regulations are either limited in application (for example, only impacting high visual impact lots in FR), or fairly broad (windows should be designed to “limit” light trespass). The Commission could research regulations that have town-wide applicability and are clearer and more specific.

The Commission should be aware that regulation of interior lighting was previously discussed at the time the Town adopted the outdoor lighting ordinance. At that time the Town chose not to regulate interior lighting. Regulating interior lighting can be complex. Some residents have expressed the opinion that regulating interior lighting is an overreach of the Town’s land use authority. The Commission should consider these concerns as you deliberate on the issue.

Staff suggests the option of regulating the impacts of interior lighting, but not necessarily the lighting itself. For example, the Commission could consider a regulation that prohibits light trespass from any light source (interior or exterior) from encroaching onto a neighboring property. Or a requirement that the illumination source (bulb or LED) of any lighting (interior or exterior) not be visible from outside the property boundaries. Each property owner could determine the best way to comply with these standards without the Town setting strict regulations. This approach may be successful in achieving the Town’s dark sky preservation goals, while not unnecessarily interfering with the use of a property owner’s interior space.

***Summary***

The Commission should review the Town’s existing outdoor lighting ordinance, with particular emphasis on the goals and purposes of the ordinance. The Commission should then consider whether or not a regulation on interior lighting is necessary to help accomplish those goals. If so, the Commission should direct staff to start researching options for interior lighting regulation.