

VBH BOT FYI Zoning

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Sent: Thursday, August 19, 2010 7:45 AM
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Barrington Hills moves outdoor light law on, with provision By Eric Peterson |
Daily Herald Staff
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Barrington Hills' zoning board Wednesday completed 10 months of grueling work by recommending village board approval of a proposed outdoor lighting ordinance that's proved extremely divisive in the semirural community.

But while future lighting fixtures would have to meet the new guidelines immediately, zoning board members recommended giving current homeowners until Jan. 1, 2031, to bring any excessive lighting into compliance.

"We're not trying to penalize any of our residents who've spent a great deal of money on their landscape lighting," zoning board member Kurt Anderson said.

Before their 4-1 vote to recommend the ordinance, zoning board members made a few last-minute changes.

While the ordinance has long proposed limiting outdoor lighting on residential property to an average of 10,000 lumens per acre, it now allows the acre on which the house actually sits to have up to 15,000 lumens at night.

Residential property in Barrington Hills is zoned to be a minimum of five acres.

While lumens are hard to quantify without measuring equipment, a 75-watt light bulb generates a little more than 1,000 lumens, zoning board Chairman Jonathan Knight said.

Two zoning board members were absent from Wednesday's vote, including George Mullen, one of the ordinance's most vocal critics.

Another member critical of the ordinance, Byron Johnson, cast the lone vote against it.

Johnson said that while the ordinance had been made more reasonable than what was originally proposed last October, he was still sympathetic to the concerns of residents who'd voiced worries about nighttime security.

"What's the point in passing rules that make these residents feel less safe at night?" Johnson asked.

Resident Dede Wamberg, co-founder of the opposition group HALO - Homeowners Against Lighting Ordinances - said the group had not been persuaded of the value of the ordinance by any concession the zoning board had made.

"It's a very subjective infringement on our property rights," she said.

She added that members of HALO would be out in force at the village board's public hearings, just as they were for the zoning board's last fall.

The village board could begin consideration of the ordinance at its Sept. 27 meeting.

Some restrictions in the ordinance that would take effect sooner include a 15-foot height limit on lights and a ban on mercury-vapor lighting. They would both start in only five years.

The ordinance is intended to be used only in situations where two neighbors cannot resolve a dispute over lighting on their own, Knight said.

Residents then found guilty of violating the ordinance would be fined \$50 per

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day, while non-residential property owners including churches would be fined \$150 per day.

Light: Limit increased on part of property

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