



AS WE SEE IT

When a local historian took a census of the city's listed historic buildings several years ago and discovered that over half of those structures originally listed were gone, it was a wake-up call that preservation measures were needed.

The Planning Department responded by recommending text amendments to zoning regulations within the multiple Zones where our two National Register of Historic Places districts are located ([ZT-8-22](#)). The expected result of their passage would be retaining the current size and overall scale of the NRHP districts.

We invited our 3,000 subscribing members and Facebook followers to participate in a survey following the [January 9 Planning and Zoning](#) 4-1 decision. Our survey asked participants to indicate whether they supported the protective text amendment and agreed with the Planning & Zoning Board's decision. They were also invited to comment.

477 participated (16% of our audience) in the week following the survey. Only 23 (less than 5%) of the 477 respondents told us they disagreed with the Board's decision. 7 of the 23 commented. Comments stated that regulation of building size and scale was not necessary in our historic districts and that the proposed restrictions were too restrictive and unlawful. 94 of the 454 respondents commented; almost all urged preservation of the building size and scale currently found in our national historic districts.

In addition to ZT-8-22 another ordinance is needed. Tax relief for owners of properties within our NRHP districts is provided in our city's Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 50, and is also set forth in [Florida Statute 196.1997](#). Concurrent with the passage of ZT-8-22 must be the passage of an ordinance guaranteeing our NRHP districts' property owners the property tax relief to which they are entitled.

No one questions the favorable impact both our commercial and residential NRHP districts have on our community. They are exclusive to New Smyrna Beach and are a draw for tourists and second homeowners and add to the quality of life for permanent residents.

It is hoped, therefore, that the discussion of historic preservation that ZT-8-22 has created will result in a win for owners of properties within the NRHP districts as well as a win for one of our city's economic drivers.