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ZONING FOR PHILIPPINE COMMUNITIES: A PROPOSAL

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Abstract:

Since 1920, when a directive was given to the Director of the Bureau of Public Works to formulate rudimentary zoning ordinances for adoption by the local government units, there has been a big question on the type of zoning suited to Philippine communities.

After World War II, the defunct National Urban Planning Commission published a model zoning and subdivision ordinance. Based on the models, about half a dozen cities enacted local zoning ordinances. Numerous discrepancies were noted when actual land uses of these cities were compared against the provisions of their zoning. *Sari-sari* store, a use not permitted in their zoning ordinance, was proliferating in the community.

However, it could also be said that the laws were not applicable to local conditions. An examination of the Filipino community based on the family's economic profile, the household buying pattern, the cultural nuances, the tropical community that he has to live in, shows that it is the law that needs changing. Hence, this modest proposal.

A major feature of the Proposal is the COMPATIBILITY concept, whereby similar land uses and those which do not adversely affect their neighbor may be allowed to exist in one zone.

Another feature is the inclusion of provisions for administrative flexibility such as variances, exception, innovative techniques, PLAND and the like, in order to cope with the fast pace of technological development. Even the concept of non-conforming uses was modified to suit local conditions. The Philippines has scarce industrial resources and the proposed zoning type aims to support industrial growth and development while at the same time preserving the quality of the environment. To make the enforcement more meaningful, the offense is made a continuing one in order to serve as a deterrent to those who can afford the minimal two hundred pesos which is the maximum fine that a municipality can impose.

Enforcement is suggested to be at the municipal or district level to bring the law closer to the end user, the people.

With the above features, the author hopes and prays that the model will work in creating attractive, orderly, self-reliant, and self-sustaining communities.