

Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

February 12, 2020

Present: Arthur Frontczak, Chair, Jonathan Hurwitz, Brian Beachkofski, Michael Hough, Susan Klein, Kristen Balash, David Lutes, Jacki Katz and Susan Jacobson.

Walter Byron, Rich McCarthy, Ed Haddad, Erin Hunt, Chad Beck, Josh Fiala.

Chris and Martha Henry.

Susan Klein indicated that the B1 Town Center Zoning Group will be making a presentation. Walter Byron introduced Josh Fiala, Principal Planner, MAPC Regional Planning. Josh worked with the B1 Working Group and the Planning Board to prepare this presentation.

Josh indicated that the purpose of the planning exercise was to remove impediments to mixed use developments.

The Norfolk Planning Board conducted a survey that indicated that 79% of respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. There has been some great progress with roads, commuter rail, waste water treatment plant. This has not resulted in the desired developments. 18 Union St. is the best example of the type of development that would be supported. If parcels remained the same, you could expect additional buildings like 18 Union Street but many of the parcels are larger. Many respondents to the survey indicated they would like more commercial components to the town center.

The work that MAPC did, along with the B1 Working Group focused on four main areas: Building Scale and density, Building height, Parking, and Types of Use.

MAPC identified some zoning requirements that are impeding compact development. They have tried to balance this with some of the language changes, for instances, removing residential bedroom restriction, allowing for increased height from 3 stories to 3 ½ stories, and decreasing parking requirements.

Josh indicated that they had used the Town of Dedham as a comparison. Dedham had a number of goals including diversifying housing stock, supporting business development in the town center, building up and providing uses that benefitted surrounding communities as well. He acknowledged that Dedham had recently voted to put a moratorium on commercial mixed use due to some development that had occurred in parts of town outside the downtown zone.

Walter said that the recommendations that came out of this effort by the B1 Committee and MAPC were placed on Norfolk's Town meeting warrant for Fall 2019 Town Meeting, but were postponed. Norfolk has received a Mass Housing grant to continue working through these recommendations, to try to build confidence in the recommendations, to get feedback and have conversations with town boards and

residents regarding the proposed changes. The intention was to have them come before either Fall 2020 Town Meeting or Spring Town Meeting of 2021.

Jackie Katz asked if Dedham had met their 10% affordable Housing base. Josh said that they had.

Susan Klein said that Dedham was not a town to compare to Norfolk. She does not feel that they are comparable at all.

Susan said that decreasing the zoning for parking will leave her said we will have an issue with parking because we do not have adequate parking. Mansfield is having a difficult time having commercial use because of parking. Businesses require parking for them to be successful. Susan said Mansfield has the exact problem the Committee was concerned.

Susan said you need to make zoning changes that work for the town and have them pass because you may not get another bite at the apple. She would like to see those changes made before it is brought back to the voters. She would vote no if those changes were not made. Traffic was not an issue in Dedham because they have a four-lane highway (RTE 1) for traffic. We do not have the infrastructure to support that.

She said that there are currently 60 apartments proposed that will bring traffic. The building next door to that proposal has eight units with commercial below it. People just want developers to bring what works. Residents are ok with townhomes and apartments if there is commercial property on the bottom. She believes that there are developers that will not put commercial properties on the bottom. They imply that they will but then do not. Jon asked what happened to the other 75% of the commercial space if only 25% is used for commercial use in Dedham. They built 16 units in Dedham but only 25% of it is commercial. If that is the success story we should expect the same as well. Josh said he has not done an analysis on what is on each floor.

Arthur said people have repeatedly expressed concern that the commercial properties are not rented.

Jackie asked if this would change the way we look at 40B's. Jackie asked if they are expecting the people who live in the downtown units would not have cars. Dave Lutes asked if the residential in Dedham are rental units. Josh said they are 100% rental units.

Martha Henry asked if the survey results would be in the full report. Josh said they do not have it as part of the report but he can provide Rich with the answers so they can see the specific responses.

Martha continued and asked Josh to define what market based development privately owned properties that is what a market based development. How many 40,000 square foot or more lots are they? How many property owners are there? Rich said that there are five lots with three owners. Martha asked if the changes were just for the larger lots or the whole B1 zone Josh said they can consider that and do a tiering on large lot vs. small lot.

Chris Henry said if the survey was focused on a walkable downtown, he asked walk to what? Josh said a lot of this was focused on the reality of 40B. Dedham is at 10% so they have protection and we do not have that protection.

Erin Hunt said the value in the commercial use is the tax revenue. This does increase the tax base. We do not have a residential rate. Blythe said that most towns keep a single tax rate. Kristen said we are not adding residents. Commercial property is more valuable without adding the burden of residents. Susan said all agree we would like to see commercial. We are trying to narrow it to a small group of developers so if they can find a way to get through this. She said that we have examples of this in Norfolk where there is residential on upper stories that never brought commercial into the building. She wants to see language to protect us from this.

Susan said that there is no reason to pass this if it is only to scare away from 40B's.

Josh said that he wanted to clarify that the report is a reflection of material from last November. This plan isn't yet speaking to the types of recommendations that they have heard from and others. His goal is to continue to mold and craft the recommendations so they get the zoning right so it can be supported.

Brian Beachkofski asked for clarification on when Dedham put the moratorium in place; Josh said there were some developments on the horizon that were in the 200 to 250-unit developments that Dedham was concerned with. Rich wanted to point out that the comparison Dedham is not perfect because Dedham has municipal sewer. Rich said that allows for greater density and larger buildouts. Anything proposed for Norfolk on a large scale would require wastewater treatment plant. To finance and make that happen is not an issue for Dedham.

Jonathan said that if Dedham is putting a moratorium, we should look at this at a scale. We should be concerned about developments 1/3rd the size these parcels and the density is still proportional. Rich said the proposed recommendation is 16 units per acre. Susan asked with a special permit what could you get to. The project that Dedham is concerned about is around Legacy Place. The amount of acreage in the town of Dedham is much greater and does not have density caps on it. Dedham also has the wastewater and water infrastructure to accommodate larger developments and the market that would support it.

Josh said that from a planning perspective he looked at Dedham because they do have mixed use planning and what the outcomes were. He does not think we should be thinking of stopping it all together.

Dave said in the fall there was discussion that the motivation for the changes came from the large open parcels, however, the new 40B project is knocking down a strip mall and replacing it with housing. Rich indicated that the developer of the 40B as well as the owner of the Norfolk Food Mart building would like to consider missed use if it is available.

Kristen Balish said that the Advisory Committee had a question in the fall about what is considered a primary building and what is a secondary building.

Josh said that primary is defined thinking about the larger sites a development that would come forward with more than one unit on the property. There is difference between a primary and secondary mixed use on the street frontage and the benefit of the financial feasibility perspective with residential behind it. Kristin asked how we prevent this from being a loophole.

Erin Hunt said there are only two parcels that would allow multiple buildings on their site.

Michael Hough said one of the prime drivers of this is additional housing choices. He does not believe that we need to do that. We want a vibrant downtown but not additional housing choices being a big part of that.

Josh said the residential units are not as preferred from the community; the residential piece is a requirement of financial feasibility for these parcels. He believes the residential units have a benefit to the town. Jonathan Hurwitz said that he does not want to speak for all but all the data points they have is that the commercial is 25% and are we willing to take that many more kids and other drains on services for a small commercial aspect. He believes that is all the data we have received and none of the commercial pitches are working for towns that have tried these. Each example that has been presented to us is showing an extremely low uptake penetration of commercial aspects. The schools are already stressed with the projection of residential growth with 40B's and he does not believe it is worth it and does not see the net gain being worth the pay off.

Chad Beck of the Planning Board that the building next to us (Norfolk Credit Union) was a big success. The first floor rented out in a heartbeat. There are still rental units vacant. He cannot guarantee that they will come. Change is coming and we are growing and we need to control it as best we can.

Brian asked what are the barriers to market rate developments if there is not enough residential built in. Which of the zoning changes respond to market rate development and what are the other changes we want to see take place?

Martha asked what is the real time line for the changes coming back to town meeting - is it May 2021 or is it in the fall of 2020. Josh said they need to work with the Committee and the Town to discuss a timeline and once that is defined, they need to figure out how to get the zoning in alignment so the conversations are less contentious. Chris Henry asked if they had a timeline at all. Josh said they need to figure out the timeline. Erin Hunt said we have a rough working timeline that they would like present to the public after the Planning Board meets. They have a committee meeting following this meeting. They will be discussing goals and how to get to the end result.

Brian thinks we need the commercial rate/developers. There was one question last time and he thinks we need more data.

Jackie thinks that when the presentation is redone, we need a slide we need a slide that says what cannot happen, even with the changes. She believes there needs to be parameters set that indicate what is not going to happen.

Martha said that Mom and Pop stores they may not be doing the same analysis. The national and mid-level chains will do the analysis to see were they locate. Do people want mid- level chains. Property owners may benefit from this but the town may not.

Arthur thanked Josh, the Working Group and the Planning Board and concluded that portion of the meeting.

A motion was made by Dave Lutes to approve the following meeting minutes with edits. Several of the meeting minutes are from prior Advisory Committee members. Sue Jacobson has confirmed with the Assistant Town Clerk that this board can move to approve them. Those minutes will have an * for identification purposes. He moved to accept the following minutes:

2020

1/8/20

2019

11/19/2019, 11/04/2019, 10/30/2019, 10/23/2019, 10/16/2019, 10/8/2019, 8/20/2019, 06/26/2019, 04/17/2019, 04/10/2019, 04/13/2019, 3/8/2019, 3/13/2019, 3/16/2019, 3/20/2019 3/27/2019

2018

3/28/2018, 04/04/2018, 4/18/2018, 4/25/2018, 6/25/2018, 10/24/2018, 11/17/2018

2017

10/4/2017, 10/11/2017

2016

3/20/2016, 3/16/2016, 3/23/2016, 5/10/2016, 6/29/2016, 10/12/2016, 11/27/2016 see list.

Dave made motion to move meeting minutes. It was seconded by Susan and so voted. All were in favor.

Susan requested questions from the Advisory Committee be forwarded to the B1 Working Committee what is the language that the Committee would like to see as Warrant Articles. Erin said that one of the goals of the B1 Committee is to gather the support of Committees in town. Whatever they need to do to gain their support if they need to return to get the support of the Town Meeting. They are open to suggestions. Kristen said we need to make progress rather than just discuss the philosophical. Jon does not want to say if we build it they will come. We have not seen any actual projections to see what will really happen. If we build mixed use what can we reasonably expect. We have not seen any such data. What will the residents get in return for the density?

Jackie believes that data points that will stop uncontrollable development.

Susan said that Erin said we have commercial space in town that is not occupied right now. Don't consider the Boardman and Main street property because he does not want to rent it. She would like to know what commercial space is un-rented. She would like that data.

Brian said that there were questions around Assisted Living he would like clarification on that. What is the goal of development and how the proposed changes tie into those goals?

Arthur believes people spend more time trying to protect the town. We did not suggest this because of this reason. How has this been crafted to only look at the upside.

Martha Henry asked if there was data available that indicated how property values are affected.

Walter said that Graham Sterling passed away today and he was a long time Advisory Committee member.

Susan said she would like individuals to submit questions to her if there are any. Michael said that in today's economy, properties values require mixed use. You only need mixed use right now or the truth is residential is so hot. The developers are not the property owners. The developers are thrilled and it drives up the lot price.

Arthur asked how the Saturday budget meeting went Blythe said the Select board requested that every department at the town side present budgets. A budget book was put together to help people be more informed. Blythe hopes that this helps the public; the Select board did not feel that the budget was as available as the public wanted.

Michael said what they heard was not an approved budget. Susan said most presented at 0% and 3%. Michael said that the Select board has not approved. Michael said if the Fire Department goes through at 3%, he feels that the board will still tweak the budget. By March 3rd they will have a good idea of where the schools are this is the proposals they will submit.

Arthur said that the Select board meets on March 3rd they have the option of going for the 3% or for the 0% budget or somewhere in between. He believes that they will definitely reduce in certain areas. If they do that then we may not have enough time to ask questions of impacted departments. He would like the Select board to make their recommendations and then the Committee can meet and figure out if they have questions.

The King Philip Budget may be done by on March 2nd and then the Selectmen will meet.

Arthur said that we can go first and propose the budget. Arthur wants to be prepared. Dave said we have to be sure that the revenues are there as we cannot overspend.

The Advisory Committee will have a meeting on March 11th and each Wednesday after until April 15th. Please pay special attention

The 11th will be a long meeting. Blythe and Todd on the 11th. Wednesday's should be left available. Arthur said we will try to understand each department.

Department Head Schedules:

Police: Not set

Fire: Not set

DPW: Not set

Facilities: Not set

A motion to adjourn was made by Dave Lutes. Seconded by Susan Klein. All were in favor.

Meeting adjourned 9:38PM

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Jacobson, Administrative Assistant

David Lutes, Clerk

****THESE MEETING MINUTES WERE APPROVED ON APRIL 8, 2020 VIA A ZOOM MEETING. THESE MINUTES CANNOT BE SIGNED UNTIL WE RESUME REGULAR BUSINESS MEETINGS AND HOURS****

