



MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA

MBTA TASK FORCE • TOWN HALL
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MINUTES OF THE MBTA TASK FORCE

January 11, 2024 6:30 p.m. Hybrid and In-Person Room 5

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chris Olney, Chair, Gar Morse, Sarah Mellish, Ann Harrison, Sue Philbrick, Sandy Bodmer-Turner, Denny Hall, Richard Smith

Members Online: Mike Pratt

MEMBER NOT PRESENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Task Force Administrator, Gail Hunter, Communication Manager, Tiffany Marletta

GUEST: N/A

Call to Order – the meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

- **Acknowledge Receipt of Correspondence:** Emails were received from Ms. Iovanni and Ms. Furse.

- **Updated Schedule**

The updated schedule was forwarded to members of the Task Force. The members present noted two changes to the schedule: Business Owners Meeting delayed a week to 1/18/2024 and the Public Forum rescheduled to 2/3/2024 to be held after school vacation.

- **Innes Analysis**

Ms. Innes stated that following the previous meeting with the Task Force when they met and discussed the maps around the table she has developed two maps. The first is a map of Town Center and the second is the Town as a whole. Areas outlined some areas have a single-family restrictions according to current zoning. Other areas have more density than needed. Ms. Innes stated that the current maps are based on current zoning and can be tweaked.

Ms. Bodmer-Turner noted that there was one zone missing and that zone was the Desmond, Summer, and Brook Street area. Ms. Innes recalled that be discussed and will add that to the map. Ms. Harrison asked about the land owned by Gordon College and after some discussion it was concluded that the land is currently excluded land and that would need to change for the land to be considered.

Ms. Innes clarified the distinction between sensitive land and excluded land. Excluded land is level 1 land and cannot be modeled. Sensitive land is level 2 land and can be modeled, however the Town may decide not to model.

Mr. Morse asked Ms. Innes if she felt the modeling she has done so far if it would be possible for the Town to comply with the Law. Ms. Innes replied that she feels the Town will be able to comply with the Law.

The Task Force discussed mixed use zoning with Ms. Innes. Ms. Innes stated that the Task Force cannot mandate mixed use zoning, however, there is a way to model using mixed use zoning and she would work to model for a mixed-use district.

Ms. Mellish asked Ms. Innes to model using 3 units with 1.5 parking spaces per unit because in the current zoning By-Law 3 units are allowed by right in an existing structure. Ms. Mellish stated that she understood there may be fewer units per area, however, she would like to see what is allowed under current zoning. Ms. Philbrick and Mr. Morse agreed stating that it is important to be able to show residents what is allowed under current zoning and what the change would be to comply with MBTA zoning.

Ms. Philbrick asked Ms. Innes to explain what we have today and what could be built. Ms. Innes stated what you have today is the baseline and what could be built adds to the baseline. She also believes it is important to define excluded and sensitive land.

At this point in the meeting the **meeting became a working session** for the Task Force with members of the Task Force working over the large map, talking and asking questions simultaneously. At the end of the working sessions Ms. Innes stated that areas B1, B2, and B3 are now out of consideration. While an area in the LCD near Kit Glass Drive will be modeled. In the General District Ms. Innes will model existing conditions

and also model the area around Desmond, Brook, and Summer Streets. The General District as a whole will not be modeled, however, parts of the General District will be included with other areas.

Mr. Hall has met with representatives of Gordon College regarding land owned by the Gordon College Foundation. He discussed the possibility of a change in zoning from the LCD to land held in conservation with some of the land being developed for multi-family housing. Mr. Hall believes that the representatives of the College he met with viewed the proposal favorably. He will continue to follow up with the College. Interestingly Mr. Hall indicated that the College had considered developing some of the land for employee housing.

The requirements of the new State law for the Town are:

- Rezone at least 37 acres
- The rezoned acres must average at least 14 units of multi-family housing per acre.
- Allow for at least 559 units in the rezoned area, including existing residences.
- Include at least 40% of the 37 acres (or 15 acres) within a half mile of the MBTA commuter rail station on Summer Street.

- **Authorization to create a Design Guidelines Subcommittee**

Mr. Smith outlined the role of the Design Guidelines Subcommittee stating he had invited local architects to help develop guidelines. He asked members of the Task Force to join if they were interested. Ms. Mellish stated it is outside of her area of expertise but would be willing to help. Ms. Harrison also expressed interest.

Mr. Morse moved to empower the Design Guidelines Subcommittee; Ms. Bodmer-Turner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Report from Outreach Subcommittee**

Ms. Philbrick stated that Mr. Olney had reached out to the Conservation Commission and Open Space Committee to help them get up to speed with the work of the MBTA

Task Force. Mr. Olney pointed out there was no environmental representative to the Task Force, and he felt it was important to keep them engaged.

Ms. Philbrick pointed out the Outreach Subcommittee had met with Downtown Improvement Committee (DIP) to request help in developing a forum for major stakeholders in the downtown area to gauge their interest. Ms. Mellish suggested asking Ms. Innes for help with forums. Ms. Mellish would also like to reach out when the Task Force has more definitive plans noting that given the time the Task Force has been meeting some people are starting to expect more specific information. Ms. Bodmer-Turner indicated that many residents are just beginning to start thinking of the MBTA Law.

Ms. Mellish proposed an article in the *Cricket* updating residents on the progress of the Task Force. Mr. Olney stated that the Outreach Subcommittee had thought that one way to communicate would be to add *MBTA Task Force Question of the Week* as a way to keep the work and progress of the Task Force before residents.

Ms. Philbrick also mentioned engagement with the Planning Board. Mr. Olney proposed a special Community Forum on Zoning with the Planning Board to take place in March on a Saturday. To help residents understand Zoning as a primer for moving onto MBTA Zoning.

- **Annual Report to the Town**

Mr. Olney provided the Task Force with the attached Annual Report to the Town.



Draft MBTA Task
Force Annual Report

Ms. Bodmer-Turner provided comments and Ms. Mellish stated she would provide comments by tomorrow.

Ms. Harrison moved to approve the Annual Report to the Town pending comments provided between now and when the report is due at Town Hall; Mr. Morse seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Approval of Meeting Minutes** – There were no Meeting Minutes to review this evening.

- **Public Comment:**

Sarah Pierce, 9 Friend St. – Ms. Pierce asked how MBTA Zoning solves the housing crisis in Massachusetts. Ms. Innes replied the housing crisis in Massachusetts has many layers and the layer MBTA Zoning is addressing is the moderate-income working residents who rely on housing and transportation. The objective is to provide housing for the workforce.

Rosemary Costello, 12 Bennett St. – Ms. Costello stated she would like to see 40 Beach St. modeled. Mr. Olney replied it is not being modeled now but it is not completely off the table. Ms. Mellish replied that regarding 40 Beach St. there is an issue around the 74 Parking spaces that are allocated to MBTA parking. That issue is unresolved and needs to be clarified.

Sarah Pierce, 9 Friend St. – Ms. Pierce suggested that architects working with the Task Force should be vetted.

- **Any other Administrative Matters not anticipated in advance of the required 48-hour posting.**

Adjourn

Mr. Morse moved to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Philbrick seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.