

Minutes of the MBTA Task Force Subcommittee on Communication and Outreach

May 6, 2024

May 6, 2024 10:00 a.m. Hybrid and In-Person, Room 7, Town Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sandy Bodmer-Turner, Chris Olney, Susan Philbrick

MEMBERS ABSENT: Gar Morse

PLANNING BOARD: Sarah Creighton, Chris Olney, Susan Philbrick

STAFF PRESENT: Tiffany Marletta, Communications Director; Marc Resnick, Director of Land Management; Gail Hunter, Administrative Assistant

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m.

Review of MBTA Zoning Public Forum.

Ms. Marletta led a discussion regarding reasons for light attendance. Fall will be the time when most residents will focus on MBTA zoning.

Ms. Bodmer-Turner and Ms. Creighton summarized the questions and concerns raised: parking, height of potential residences, density in the Sea Street/Tappan area, confusion about square footage.

Mr. Olney thought that the presentation by Ms. Innes was excellent. Everyone appreciated the “guess the density” segment highlighting existing multifamily residences in Town. In the future, Mr. Olney thought that a chart should appear after each district’s map.

Ms. Creighton repeated the positive comments heard from residents regarding the professionalism and quality of the Task Force’s work to date. She recommended shortening the presentation. Suggested adding a slide depicting “how things get developed?” List out stakeholders and requirements: property owner, developer, funding source, contractor, labor, building inspector, site plan review etc.

Communication challenges discussed: MBTA zoning law is no different from other State zoning laws; and balancing “we need more housing” with “no more housing.” The chart should also include affordability: units, percentages.

Ms. Bodmer-Turner suggested that the Task Force delineate all of the ways additional multifamily housing will benefit the Town.

Ms. Creighton discussed creating a chart checking off how each MBTA overlay district satisfies the goals of the guiding principles.

The next Forum will be hybrid on May 23rd – joint between the Task Force and the Planning Board. Mr. Resnick will briefly run through the districts for the benefit of new participants. He hopes that Ms. Innes will have a draft of the zoning by-law changes by then.

Ms. Hunter emphasized that when online participation is offered, there are many more residents tuning in than the number who attend the in-person events.

Ms. Marletta suggested that the introduction of MBTA zoning basics provided by Ms. Innes could be deleted.

Mr. Olney suggested one slide of bullet points for what is required and then one map for each district.

Mr. Resnick suggested: here are the parameters, then the chart, then the zoning by-law, and finally, the design review. The subcommittee could create a video of each district and post on the Town's MBTA page.

Ms. Philbrick suggested offering educational events and perhaps a walk of each district sometime during the Summer.

Ms. Marletta, Mr. Olney and Mr. Resnick will adjust the slides to accurately reflect the borders and then post them over the Summer.

Ms. Marletta would like a video presentation of the districts by Mr. Resnick lasting 10-15 minutes.

Ms. Bodmer-Turner wants to confirm that the districts depicted on the website are the most current.

Mr. Resnick has made adjustments to the districts on Powderhouse and Pine Street, so the maps will be adjusted and forwarded to Ms. Marletta.

Ms. Marletta will publicize June 3rd as the date the Select Board and the Planning Board will vote on the package to be sent to HLC and the AG's Municipal Law Unit for preadoption review.

Ms. Marletta will also submit a piece for the Cricket to explain an overlay district. That will be drawn from FAQs 26 and 27.

Mr. Resnick will submit an article to the Cricket by Mr. Federspiel once the package is submitted for preadoption review.

The next taxpayer newsletter submission will be due to Ms. Marletta before June 7th. That should be a review of what was submitted to HLC with the accompanying timeline.

Next meeting: May 16, 10:15 a.m. to finalize plans for May 23rd.

Public Comment: none.

Adjourn: Ms. Bodmer-Turner moved to adjourn, and Mr. Olney seconded. Unanimous.