

January 29 2024 Bylaw Review Committee Meeting

Item 1 | Call to Order

January 29th Bylaw Review Committee meeting called to order at 7:01pm via Zoom

Members present: Chair Dan Lieber, Kevin York, Tim Lilley, Joseph Pride, Katherine Howitt

Several members of the public also present.

Lucy Fox joined the meeting at 7:04.

Eric Reid joined the meeting at 7:20.

Item 2 | Public Engagement

No public engagement

Item 3 | Minutes from December 18, 2023

This item was deferred to the next meeting because the notes are not yet available.

Item 4 | Review Zoning Bylaws

A. Consolidated Draft of Proposed Updated Zoning Bylaw

Committee walked through Section 1 and part of Section 2 of the first consolidated draft of the proposed updated zoning bylaw. It is expected that there will be several drafts in this iterative process.

Key discussion points on Section 1:

Committee discussed the new “purpose” (proposed section 1.2) and the tension between the desire to add new language that dovetails with the goals expressed in the master plan and “vision 2030” with the value in keeping the purpose of the zoning bylaws concise. Some members expressed concerns with adding a purpose to encourage “racial, cultural generational, and socioeconomic diversity” and wondered whether this is something that can be accomplished in zoning. Committee will return to Attorney Bobrowski to discuss whether this line may need to be refined or edited to more closely mirror language in the existing zoning bylaw.

Committee also discussed the draft’s proposal to remove the fees and the processes for submissions to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Removing the fees gives more flexibility to the ZBA to be able to update the fees without going to Town Meeting. Committee members felt keeping the fees in the bylaw would improve transparency and be consistent with other bylaws (example: dog license fees are listed in applicable bylaw.) Some committee members felt that keeping in the processes for submissions to the ZBA would make those requirements easy to find for potential applicants; other committee members worried that these processes may be antiquated / outdated.

Key discussion points on Section 2:

Discussion focused on the elimination of the assisted living overlay district. Brian McGrail (a member of the public) noted that it will be necessary to carry over the specialized parking requirements from the deleted section about the assisted living overlay district to somewhere else in the zoning bylaw, otherwise senior housing will have no parking requirements.

B. Proposed MBTA Communities Overlay District Bylaw

Committee discussed need to schedule a meeting to review the proposed MBTA Communities Overlay District Bylaw. This meeting will happen sometime the week of February 19th – likely either the 21st or the 22nd. Chair Lieber will check with Attorney Bobrowski on his preference.

Item 5 | Upcoming Dates

A. Next Meeting(s):

Monday, February 5, 7:00 PM. This meeting will be with Attorney Bobrowski.

An evening during the week of February 19, 7:00 PM – 21st or 22nd, TBD.

B. Upcoming Holidays:

Groundhog Day - February 2

Isra and Mi'raj - February 6 (evening)

Lunar New Year - February 10

Lincoln's Birthday - February 12

Mardi Gras - February 13

Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday/Lent - February 14

Presidents Day - February 19

Item 6 | Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Tim and seconded by Lucy.

Vote was taken by roll call, with 6 yeses (Chair Lieber, Katherine, Kevin, Tim, Joe and Lucy) and 1 abstention (Eric).

Meeting was adjourned at 8:25pm.

Approved 2/21/2024