



TOWN OF BELLINGHAM

10 MECHANIC STREET BELLINGHAM, MASSACHUSETTS 02019

Thursday, January 25, 2024 **MBTA (Section 3A) Subcommittee** **Meeting Minutes**

Subcommittee Members Present:

Sahan Sahin, William F. O'Connell, Elizabeth Berthelette, and Jeffrey Scornavacca

Not Present:

Robert Lussier, subcommittee member

Also Present:

Amy Sutherland, Assistant Town Planner
Tim Aicardi, Director of Planning, Zoning and Conservation
Beth Cornell-Smith, Human Resources Director
Michael Hennessey, Resident, Selectboard member

Present on Zoom:

Denis Fraine, Interim Town Administrator
Amy E. Kwesell, Town Counsel

The meeting for the MBTA (Section 3A) was opened at 6:00 pm.

Organization of the Subcommittee:

Each of the members provided background about themselves.
The organization of the subcommittee will take place at the next meeting when there is a full compliment of the Subcommittee. Mr. O'Connell will run the meeting until the organization takes place. The members are in receipt of a binder which includes the current action plan, compliance requirements, letters to State, and "Advisory Concerning Enforcement of MBTA Communities Zoning Law if there is not compliance.

Presentation from Town Counsel:

Town Counsel was present to explain the Multi-Family Zoning Requirement for MBTA (3A) Communities. It was explained that the new law requires than an MBTA community shall have at least one zoning district of reasonable size in which multi-family housing is permitted as of right and meets other criteria set forth in statute.

The requirements are the following:

- Minimum gross density of 15 units per acre
- Located not more than .05 miles from a commuter rail station, subway, or bus station.
- No age restriction and suitable for families with children.

These agenda items are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.



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Since the town is considered an adjacent community, the requirement is for 750 units. Town Counsel did communicate that the majority of towns she services have received grants to utilize consulting services to designate the area or areas.

The Subcommittee discussed that they could utilize Jim Kupfer to assist with the designation of the parcel or parcels. There was also conversation about trying to seek a grant to utilize a consultant.

There was a comment from the public about the impact this will have on town services and also the schools. There was also acknowledgment that there was a letter sent to Governor Healy from the Selectboard indicating that the Town of Bellingham has been designated as a Housing Choice Community for striving to meet the housing needs of the community. The Governor was also invited to join the town in discussions regarding MBTA (3A) zoning requirements.

Town Counsel did indicate that there will be consequences for those towns who show noncompliance which would include being ineligible to receive certain forms of State funding and would risk liability under federal and state fair housing laws.

The Subcommittee will be meeting on Thursday, February 1, 2024 at 6:00 pm to discuss this further.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Sutherland
Recording Secretary

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