



TOWN OF BELLINGHAM

10 MECHANIC STREET BELLINGHAM, MASSACHUSETTS 02019

Thursday, September 5, 2024

MBTA (Section 3A) Subcommittee

Meeting Minutes

5:30 pm

Arcand Meeting Room

Subcommittee Members Present:

Elizabeth Berthelette, William F. O'Connell, and Jeffrey Scornavacca (remote)

Also Present:

Director of Planning & Engineering, Robert Lussier

The meeting for the MBTA (Section 3A) was opened at 5:30 pm.

Presentation by Consultant Barrett:

Consultant Barrett was present to provide the most recent revisions to the MBTA bylaw which the Subcommittee will be presenting at town meeting. The Director of Planning and Engineering Rob Lussier provided revisions to Judi for review. Consultant Barrett included in the bylaw document some places where the town may consider exemptions for the existing zoning. This is for special residential uses and inclusionary housing. The inclusionary housing for MBTA communities needs to be limited to 10% since this is not a special permit. The affordable also needs to be onsite. The town cannot take in lieu payments or put the units off site. The units are subject to a deed restriction and the units would count on the subsidized housing inventory. There are several definitions noted and one included was for multi-family housing. Consultant Barrett communicated that the town must use the definition of multifamily housing based on Chapter 40 A. The next section discussed was for permitted uses. The uses allowed are strictly for multi-family housing. The density and dimensional table included was taken from the compliance model. The model does not include setbacks. Consultant Barrett communicated that the model does not look at frontage. It was recommended that the frontage for the North Main Street Subdistrict needs to be checked. Rob will follow up with Judi and will provide the frontage numbers. Consultant Barrett left in the section regarding row house. The units would be divided by ownership by the common wall which would not be subject to a side setback. The document also included a series of development standards. There was discussion that the bylaw needs to have some building standards within it for site design

which would include access within the project. There are also some specific sections which Judi exempted from Development Plan review for the purposes of the MBTA Communities Zoning. Some of the exemptions under Section 240 (18) are to clarify some of the things which would normally be discretionary and a town cannot apply those to MBTA Community Zoning. The standards are for things such as sidewalk design, landscaping on the site, connections between the buildings, parking and street. There can also be open space designated for all buildings within a project. The off street parking will be 1.25 spaces per unit since this is what the model is based on. There is a provision requiring bicycle parking if the development has 10 or more units. There are lighting standards included with pedestrian lighting versus parking lighting. There is the ability for the Planning Board to grant waivers. Consultant Barrett noted that the Development Plan review process has things within it that goes beyond what would be expected to provide for a “by-right” use. The submission requirements were included as they related to the bylaw. There were minor revisions to the landscaping buffer, and requirement for covered bicycle storage. There was a suggestion to add the inclusion of a lighting plan. The bylaw document has been reviewed by Town Counsel.

Member Jeffrey Scornavacca left the meeting at 6:20 pm and plans to return.

The meeting was opened to comments:

- Will there be a requirement for electrical charging stations? (This is not a requirement).
- A question was asked about if there needs to be something about screening of a new building and retaining the existing buffering vegetation. There is language about buffering and that additional can be added.

Consultant Barrett recommends that the Subcommittee work on its purpose statement.

The Town Administrator communicated in regard to mitigation, the Planning Board can look at offsite improvements if traffic is impacted. ex. connecting sidewalks. Consultant Barrett communicated that mitigation will be difficult since this is “by-right” The Town is not able to impose unreasonable standards on a developer and cautions the town.

Public Comments:

What discretion does the Town/Planning Board have in regard to how the bylaw is currently written?

Consultant Barrett responded that this is not eliminating qualitative standards, but making it clear what the Boards jurisdiction is and what the applicant has to submit so the board can make a decision. The Board is going to have a difficult time with offsite mitigation. She communicated that a bus stop with canopy could be a reasonable condition, if there is a safety concern with several children waiting for a bus on a road heavily traveled. Mitigation could be conditioned.

Consultant Barrett communicated that there are currently only three towns which have received approval from the State. Those towns with approval are Salem, Lexington and Arlington.

Next Steps:

- Work on purpose statement
- Plan Community Outreach which is scheduled for October 15th 1:00 pm and 7:00 pm at the Senior Center
- Working on the press release
- Contacting Dave Dunbar with Bellingham Bulletin
- Place information on the MBTA on the cable channel (scrolling screen)
- Attend Coffee and Connections
- Do a reverse call to residents for Town Meeting
- The public hearing from the Planning Board would be the first meeting in October. The Subcommittee would like to make sure that Judi will be attending the meeting.
- There is an event for the Seniors called “September Birthdays” which is September 26, 2024. It was suggested that there be a flier placed at this event.

Approval of Minutes:

August 15, 2024:

The minutes from August 15, 2024, will be tabled until the next meeting.

Next Meeting:

- September 12, 2024

Adjourn:

On a motion made by William O’Connell, seconded by Elizabeth Berthelette, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Sutherland
Recording Secretary