

**Meeting of the Planning Board
Thursday, September 7, 2023**

The 5th meeting of the Milton Planning Board for FY2024 convened at 7:01 p.m. in the Blute Conference Room of Milton Town Hall.

Present: Planning Board Members Meredith Hall (Chair) Cheryl Tougias (Secretary) Sean Fahy, Maggie Oldfield and Jim Davis; Director of Planning and Community Development Tim Czerwienski, Assistant Town Planner Josh Eckart-Lee and Sr. Administrative Clerk Julia Getman.

1. Citizen's Speak:

Echo Berquist of 42 Lincoln St. supported the MBTA Zoning Act, stating that it benefits affordable housing and climate change. She said it would increase foot traffic and reduce car trips as well as improve the economy. She urged the town to "swiftly" comply with the law.

Brian O'Halloran of 7 Morton Terrace said that reclassification would significantly reduce the number of units required under the MBTA zoning, it would provide more time to develop the zoning, and allow more flexibility with the zoning.

Geoff Wilkinson of 199 Beacon St. strongly favored compliance with the MBTA zoning law and expressed dismay over the "friction" between the Select Board (SB) and Planning Board (PB). He said the EOHLIC was correct in classifying Milton as a rapid transit community and said the Attorney General has been clear that compliance with the law is mandatory. He said that Milton has a history of exclusionary zoning and that the law would provide needed housing. He encouraged the PB and SB to work together to find creative ways to make the zoning work.

Michael Bamberg of 541 Eliot St. stated that the Red Line serves 20,000 people an hour and the trolley serves 6,000 a day. He said that people prefer to drive rather than to take the trolley and that the MBTA zoning will "flood" the area with cars.

Peter Jackson of 14 Capen St. stated that there were creative ways to be compliant, including having the addition of new units take place slowly. He did not believe it would be difficult to turn two-family homes into three-family homes and one-family homes into two-family homes and said that ADUs should be permitted. He did not believe homes on 7,500 SF lots would be redeveloped and said that 7,500 SF lots should be the minimum size for 3-family homes. He believed the newly created districts could be expanded and urged the PB to develop creative solutions to preserve the character of the neighborhoods.

Mark Christo of 17 Waldo Rd. mentioned the failed campaign in 1969 to convert the trolley to rapid transit due to the stops and conservation land that would be lost, mentioned the trolley's "operational inferiority," and stated that it runs in a loop and does not go to Boston. He said the MBTA zoning was built on a "false premise" and that the Town should petition the MBTA to declassify Milton as a rapid transit community.

2. Discussion of MBTA Communities Zoning: Utile Update

Consultants Zoe Mueller and Matthew Littell of Utile updated the Board on compliance modeling and district boundaries. Ms. Mueller mentioned that noncompliance would violate state fair housing laws and that the list of grant programs that would be eliminated with noncompliance had grown to 16. She said that Milton is required to zone for 2,461 units but not obligated to build any, and that the average density would be 15 units per acre. New provisions for mixed-use were addressed. Lot coverage data, units per acre, minimum and maximum lot sizes, parking spaces per unit and unit height, were discussed for sub districts on Granite Ave., near the Mattapan and Milton stations, the transit area triplex, the Blue Hills Parkway corridor and East Milton Square. Three approaches to the zoning were discussed. Expanding certain subdistricts and adjustments to lot capacities were considered.

Ms. Tougias gave a presentation on existing condition analysis that she prepared for subdistricts around Eliot, Curtis and Briarfield Streets. Lot sizes, site plans, open space, lot coverage, setbacks, parking and

architectural features of several multi-family homes were discussed. Turning existing two-family homes into 3-family homes was discussed. She noted that there are properties that developers might consider tear down opportunities and suggested that the zoning be adjusted to encourage infill and not incentivize tear downs. She discussed increasing the minimum lot size to 10,000 SF, including more of Central Avenue and decreasing the unit count allowed on Blue Hills Parkway.

Ms. Meuller said that Utile would continue to test the Parkway conditions to see what is feasible as a subdistrict. Existing/modeled unit comparisons within the proposed subdistricts were discussed. She said she would determine whether the Blue Hills Parkway Corridor and Central Ave. would require a minimum lot size and that setbacks would be studied. She said that a 10,000 SF minimum for 4 units in the transit triplex area would be considered as well as allowing two buildings on a single lot. Incentives for including mixed use in new developments were addressed, and it was noted that properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places would be excluded. The Board discussed the Milton Village Overlay district, passed at Town Meeting in July of 2020, and how it was developed. Historic areas on Adams St./ Milton Hill and determining what is considered historically significant and how equitable those determinations are were touched upon.

3. Discussion of Zoning Authority Under Chapter 40A

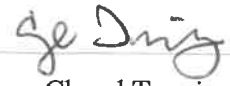
Ms. Hall stated that the SB had provided an MBTA zoning article and that it was the job of the PB to improve it. She suggested drafting two articles, one compliant with the guidelines and one with the law, which may provide a better chance of getting the zoning passed at Town Meeting. It was suggested that legal counsel specializing in zoning be consulted on the guidelines and the law and help the PB write its own article. Site plan review and design guidelines were mentioned. The possibility of reclassification was raised. Timelines for Town Meeting and the publication of the warrant were discussed. It was noted that a separate article addressing mixed-use developments would need to be drafted. Mr. Davis believed that the article was being rushed and suggested requesting more time. It was noted that the fiscal impact report from RKG Consultants would be provided after the warrant closes.

The Board discussed ways in which to approach the language of the article and aspects that required additional attention. The scope of work for Utile was addressed and it was agreed that the article should be reviewed by Town Counsel.

4. Discussion of the MBTA Reclassification Letter

The Board discussed letters to the MBTA addressing reclassification of Milton as a non-rapid transit community, drafted by Mr. Davis and Mark Christo of 17 Waldo Rd. Ms. Oldfield made a motion to send Mr. Davis's letter to all MBTA board members, seconded by Mr. Davis. Mr. Christo reiterated the points of his letter and the Board agreed it was more factual and concise, and Ms. Oldfield withdrew her motion. Mr. Czerwienski stated that he did not believe the request for reclassification would be accepted by the MBTA, noting that the trolley is comparable or faster than other forms of rapid transit to downtown Boston. Ms. Tougias stated that sending a letter to the MBTA about the lack of quality of the T will send the wrong message, and that focusing on developing better service would be advocating for the region. She mentioned the benefits to the climate of locating housing near transit and amenities, and the need for diversity in housing types in Milton, and believed that the letter would insinuate that Milton does not take compliance with the MBTA Communities Act seriously. Mr. Fahy mentioned that the SB had "broken the collaborative process" of working with the PB on a joint letter by issuing its own draft, with a different intent, without consulting the PB. He said he supports responsible zoning and owes it to residents to send the letter. Ms. Oldfield mentioned that the town pays \$1.8M per year in fees as a rapid transit community which may be reassessed with reclassification. Mr. Davis made a motion to send Mr. Christo's letter to the MBTA Board, seconded by Ms. Oldfield, 4/0/1 with Ms. Tougias abstaining. Ms. Tougias noted that Mr. Christo's letter had been received by members the afternoon of the meeting and that she had not had an opportunity to read it prior to the meeting. She suggested the board discuss policy around accepting letters from residents with the purpose of sending them to state agencies on behalf of the Board.

5. Adjourn: On a motion by Ms. Tougias, seconded by Mr. Davis, the meeting was adjourned at 11:10 p.m.



Cheryl Tougias, Secretary

