

**Meeting of the Planning Board
Thursday, October 5th, 2023**

The 8th meeting of the Milton Planning Board for FY2024 convened at 7:05 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. Administrative Items:

Approval of minutes was deferred. Upcoming meetings were confirmed for October 12th and 26th.

Staff Update

Mr. Czerwienski reported that a budget meeting had taken place with Town departments and that Town Administrator Nicholas Milano had recommended a level service budget plus supplemental requests for the PB. It was mentioned that an employee appreciation luncheon would take place on Oct. 11th.

2. Citizen's Speak:

There were no speakers.

3. Old Business: East Milton Square Zoning Update from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

MAPC Principal Planner Josh Fiala said that MAPC had decided to hold a public forum in January of 2024 instead of in November of 2023, which would follow Town Meeting and lessen the confusion over MBTA Communities zoning. After a brief discussion, the PB agreed that the original schedule should be followed and that the two zoning endeavors could be explained earlier in the process through public forums and outreach.

Mr. Fiala provided an update on the EMS zoning, which included overlay boundary adjustments, community outreach efforts, height, lot size, density restrictions, and next steps.

4. MBTA Community Zoning

Mr. Czerwienski reported that he and Ms. Hall had developed an alternative to the proposed zoning map put forth by the Select Board (SB), which would reduce the allowable number of units on Granite Avenue by 60 and create a subdistrict on Randolph Ave. (option 1q) of 193 units. The board did not support the addition of 193 units on Randolph Avenue as a trade for 60 units at Granite Avenue. Ms. Tougias addressed the importance of "seeing what it looks like on the ground," referencing existing multi-family developments, approved 40Bs, and Floor Area Ratios (FAR) associated with them. She discussed two development scenarios using 1 and 2-bedroom square footage formats and maximum FAR calculations with rental apartments and condominiums. Comparisons to the compliance model were referenced, and projections for 440 Granite Ave., the Residences at East Milton Square (40B), 36 Central Ave. and 131 Eliot St. (Hendries), with calculations for commercial space, were discussed. With a redlined version of the Select Board article, Ms. Tougias discussed in detail the edits she had made to the zoning language, which included design guidelines. The potential for subdivision, the assemblage of properties and parking ratios were addressed. Site plan procedures in the zoning, "tiered" dimensional standards and setbacks for different subdistricts were discussed. Requiring general development standards and site plan review for all districts was proposed. Requirements related to driveway width, lot coverage, open space, setbacks, frontage, landscaping, height restrictions, mechanical equipment, renewable energy, stormwater maintenance, architectural features, building materials, and connectivity between districts were discussed.

Public Speak

Ashley Brown of 50 Columbine Rd. said that she supports the triplex plan, stating that it attains compliance while putting development in "smart places." She said the PB was more informed than the SB on mapping scenarios and should work together with the SB, and that it was "critically important" for the maps to track the bylaws and that a compliant model be put forward.

Julie Crowley of Thistle Ave. discussed the heavy traffic volumes on Granite Ave. She said small, surrounding neighborhoods would be severely impacted by the “massive” subdistrict proposed for Granite Ave. It was noted that residents outside of the transit area will be impacted by the zoning and Mr. Fahy agreed with her concerns.

Ashley Carnathan of 27 Riverside Ave., speaking on behalf of her parents, said that rezoning Granite Ave. would negatively impact their lives. She described the traffic on Granite Ave. as “overwhelming,” and requested that traffic lights be placed at Thistle Ave. and Courtland Cir. at Granite Ave. She said most people drive into Boston because the MBTA is unreliable.

Chris Shirley of 55 Courtland Cir. discussed the inefficiency of the MBTA, particularly in his neighborhood, and said that his neighborhood was a driving community. He expressed concerns about development within what used to be a flood zone and the sewer upgrades required.

Ashley Brown emphasized that she supported plan 1n, the triplex mixed-use plan for the transit area.

Mr. Fahy suggested that the “Triplex Area” be referred to as the “Eliot St. Corridor” to help identify the area. Ms. Tougias continued with the redlined comments, commenting on existing conditions, details to be included in the site plan, architectural plans, a lighting study, and traffic and shadow studies for the subdistricts. Ms. Hall suggested revisiting single-family homes and Apartment Dwelling Units (ADUs).

The process for submitting a PB article and providing a recommendation for the SB article were discussed, and the necessity of holding a public hearing was addressed. Ms. Tougias emphasized the language as the main focus of discussion should the PB submit an article of its own, as the map and density is where the greatest difference of opinion lied. Mr. Czerwienski asked that the PB provide guidance and definitive decisions to the SB for inclusion in its language. Ms. Oldfield said she did not support the SB’s article and suggested taking “baby steps” towards full compliance. Creating a subdistrict at Quisset Brook and Winter Valley were considered. Ms. Tougias said that if the PB continued to focus on mapping with an impending deadline she planned to put forth her comments to the SB “as a citizen,” independent of the PB. It was noted that the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) and the Attorney General would review the article, it would be considered at Town Meeting, and that the PB would continue to work on improving it. The tax benefits of multi-family housing were discussed.

Fiscal Impact Analysis:

It was suggested that that Fiscal Analysis Consulting Firm RKG use the 1n compliance model provided by compliance consultants Utile, incorporating its own backup data and FARs scaling calculations.

Public Speak:

Jay Fundling of 39 Sias Lane said that RKG had not considered employee benefits in its analysis. He said that healthcare costs, pensions and retiree medical costs were significant and he encouraged RKG to confer with the Town’s Accounting Department to determine specific costs.

Ms. Oldfield said she had not been provided adequate information from Town Counsel regarding status as a rapid transit community and made a motion, seconded by Mr. Davis, to have Ms. Hall authorize the hiring of independent counsel at a cap of \$15,000 to address the law vs. the guidelines and what is legally enforceable. The jurisdiction and opinions of Town Counsel and the EOHLC, AG and SB were considered. It was suggested that Town Counsel be consulted on the matter.

5. Adjourn: On a motion by Mr. Davis, seconded by Ms. Oldfield, the meeting was adjourned at 11:22 p.m.


Cheryl Tougias, Secretary