

**BEDFORD PLANNING BOARD**  
**Zoom Remote Meeting**  
**Minutes**  
**February 28, 2023**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Steven Hagan, Chair; Christopher Gittins, Amy Lloyd, Todd Crowley and Jacinda Barbehenn

**STAFF PRESENT:** Tony Fields, Planning Director; Catherine Perry, Assistant Planner

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Shawn Hanegan, Select Board; Bedford Citizen reporter; Judi Barrett and Bob Mitchell, Barrett Planning Group; Dan Carroll, 1 Hilda Road

Chair Hagan called the remote meeting to order at 7:00 pm, called the Roll of Board Members in attendance, cited the Remote Meeting Guidelines, and stated that Bedford TV is recording.

**PUBLIC HEARING (continuation)**

**Planned Residential Development under ZBL Sec 9 – 229, 251A and 251F old Billerica Road**

Chair Hagan reported that the applicant has requested a further continuation without testimony, to the next meeting.

**MOTION:** Member Lloyd proposed and Member Gittins seconded, to continue the public hearing to the scheduled meeting on March 14.

**VOTE:** By Roll Call:

Christopher Gittins	Aye
Amy Lloyd	Aye
Todd Crowley	Aye
Jacinda Barbehenn	Aye
Steven Hagan	Aye

**BUSINESS SESSION**

**Preparation of educational and presentation materials for Annual Town Meeting**

The Board worked further on materials related to its proposed Zoning Bylaw amendments to Section 4.2.2 and Table 1 on Two-family Dwellings. It reviewed a revised set of PowerPoint slides from Member Crowley.

Chair Hagan recommended that the presenter be ready to answer questions that may come up about MBTA Communities zoning, even though that is a different subject and does not have to be in place until the end of 2024. He also suggested clarifying the distinction between dwellings and units.

Member Gittins suggested mentioning that the number of two-family dwellings built recently is miniscule (both in absolute numbers and as a proportion).

Member Crowley asked how many unbuilt, developable lots there are. Staff responded that there are a small number of unbuilt parcels of land such as horse farms. Assistant Planner Perry added that a count of future lots is complicated by the fact that the larger remaining unbuilt parcels could be subdivided, and sometimes small subdivisions are created by replacing existing single houses on oversized lots. Planning Director Fields agreed to supply information on the larger tracts and any other useful summary.

Member Lloyd suggested emphasizing that the current bylaw is very restrictive on 2-family dwellings. Also that diversity is something we are trying to recognize and provide for, more than seeking. In relation to there being 800 pre-1945 houses, it could be noted that some are too small to be likely candidates for conversion to 2-families.

Better illustrations of FAR and Lot Coverage would be beneficial. If necessary, the available diagram could be simplified by cutting parts out.

Member Crowley still needs the list of comparison towns from Director Fields.

No deadline has been received for making the presentation available for the Town website, so there may be another week to finalize it.

### **Zoning Bylaw Reorganization Update – “Crosswalk” presentation by Barrett Planning Group**

Consultants Judi Barrett and Bob Mitchell joined the meeting. Ms. Barrett explained that the “Crosswalk” document has been supplied to show the suggested placement of sections within the new bylaw. Many are existing sections rearranged, to make them easier to find, and a few are new ones.

Ms. Barrett showed the document on screen and ran through it. Some points she highlighted were:

- Administration and Enforcement will be a bit more comprehensive and has been placed at the start. There is an advantage to placing sections that will persist over time at the start, as their numbering will not be disturbed by future changes.

- In the Uses section, more detail will be put in the table rather than in separate text. Some specifically prohibited uses will be identified, as that can help to address nuisance issues such as noise and glare.
- Accessory uses and structures will be categorized.
- Section 6 will be used for nonconforming situations, to match the section number in Chapter 40A.
- Definitions have been placed at the end but could alternatively be at the beginning.

Ms. Barrett stated that it important to reach agreement on the order of sections at this stage as it is difficult to change later.

Assistant Planner Perry asked if now is the time to raise questions about potentially changing the nature of some major zoning provisions to reduce the number of different or unusual types, for example making Industrial Mixed Use into an overlay district or simplifying Residence D/ Multiple Dwellings on a Lot. Mr. Mitchell responded that there will be future discussions on potential changes, organized at various levels of significance. Ms. Barrett noted that because districts and special regulations will each be grouped into a major section, new ones can be added without disrupting the numbering.

On the placement of Definitions, Board members concurred that they like them at the end.

Members generally welcomed the proposed reorganization of sections.

Next steps were discussed. Ms. Barrett said that the consultants will move the current text into its places in the new structure. It will be preserved as a Word document at that point. Board members asked if they could receive that when it is done. Ms. Barrett expressed eagerness to start writing the new pieces. It was agreed that when they have done some writing, they will supply both documents.

Chair Hagan thanked Ms. Barrett and Mr. Mitchell for their work and presentation.

### **MBTA Communities multifamily zoning – potential community survey**

Planning Director Fields' memo noted that the Select Board recently acquired a more robust version of the online survey tool Survey Monkey, and reported that the Town of Milton is using such a survey to seek public input on its MBTA Communities zoning. He asked if the Board might be interested in doing something similar in Bedford. While noting that we have a longer timeline for compliance, he thought it might be hard to host an in-person forum. An initial draft of a survey for Bedford was included in Board packets.

Member Barbehenn said she has sent some markups and suggestions to Director Fields.

Assistant Planner Perry cautioned that when conducting public outreach, we usually try to give an introductory educational presentation and encourage people to be thinking in a broad and positive way about planning considerations, before asking for opinions. If people pick a position based on little knowledge, they may be reluctant to change position later. She noted that staff needs to do some technical investigating itself to be clearer about the options and implications along the Great Road and elsewhere.

Board members appreciated these thoughts but liked the potential to have a big reach through online and/or other means. They discussed incorporating introductory or linked material.

### **Pre-planning for the next Comprehensive Plan**

Chair Hagan introduced the topic, observing that municipalities should prepare Comprehensive Plans every ten years or so and that time is coming around.

Member Barbehenn expressed the opinion that a new one is needed, rather than an update, as times have changed.

Member Lloyd agreed, but noted that it will mean leaving behind some other projects.

Assistant Planner Perry said that a new plan usually begins with a review of the old plan to identify progress on the actions, changed or continuing circumstances etc. However, she believes that most of the action items have been followed up on and that it makes sense to think in terms of a new plan.

Chair Hagan asked if we will hire consultants, and noted that most towns do.

Member Gittins asked if we used consultants last time, or just Board members and staff. Assistant Planner Perry responded that we used a relatively small consultancy contract, for document design, editing of text, and facilitation of some of the discussions.

Chair Hagan noted that there may be grant sources of help as well as town-paid consultants.

Director Fields reported that he has been looking into grants that might be available. Some require matching funds from the town. The aim would be to minimize the amount of a request to Town Meeting.

Member Barbehenn called for recognition that it will need both. She pointed out that this project is broader than the Planning Board and suggested that members advocate for it.

Member Lloyd observed that it will involve a lot of work for the staff and Board members, even with consultants.

## **Liaison Reports**

Chair Hagan reported that Depot Park held an open house.

Member Gittins reported that he has been invited to give an overview of the opt-in stretch energy code to Mothers Out Front at their April 3 meeting. Several members of the Energy and Sustainability Committee are likely to attend and assist with the presentation. DOER has provided a template for a Warrant article. Mothers Out Front will be happy to have others involved.

Member Crowley reported that the ZBA had some standard cases. He needs to miss a couple of meetings but will keep in touch. He has forwarded the Zoning Bylaw “Crosswalk”.

Member Gittins missed the Chamber of Commerce meeting but supplied some points for Select Board member Hanegan to present, given that there is concern about vacancies at the Stop and Shop plaza.

Mr. Hanegan noted that the family that owns the plaza would need to sell it for any redevelopment to happen. He reported that there is some support for incorporating housing and opening up the river front, and that mixed use is worth considering.

## **Staff reports**

Assistant Planner Perry stated that she will be giving a “What’s Going on Around Town” talk with Code Enforcement Director Laskey next Thursday, at the Council on Aging. She also reported that she is continuing to investigate the workings of the MBTA Communities compliance model, with a second test covering the Shawsheen and Marketplace districts on the Great Road, and the Depot Area. She will report her findings at the next meeting.

## **Other Business**

Member Barbehenn reported that she spoke about housing at a meeting of Mothers Out Front, and they voted to support 2-family zoning. She plans to discuss housing with them further.

Member Barbehenn stated that she will miss the next Planning Board meeting. She noted that is when the Board traditionally votes on its reorganization. She asked if she can make a nomination for the new Chair and Clerk now. Chair Hagan responded that she cannot do that now; it needs to wait until after the elections.

Member Lloyd asked Member Barbehenn to notify the Board, or staff if at short notice, if she will be making a presentation to a group about a Planning Board matter.

Member Lloyd referred to a comment from Bedford Arbor Resources Committee (BARC) relayed in Director Fields' memo. She supported the idea of common requirements for tree cutting applications. She also asked if the Code Enforcement Director will receive a copy of the Zoning Bylaw "Crosswalk". Director Fields confirmed.

## Minutes

The Board reviewed three sets of minutes.

MOTION: Proposed by Member Lloyd, seconded by Member Gittins, to approve the minutes of January 24 as written.

VOTE: by roll call:

Member Lloyd – Aye  
Member Barbehenn – Aye  
Member Crowley – Abstain (as not present for the meeting)  
Member Gittins - Aye  
Chair Hagen – Aye

MOTION: Proposed by Member Barbehenn, seconded by Member Lloyd, to approve the minutes of February 7 as written.

VOTE: by roll call:

Member Lloyd – Aye  
Member Barbehenn – Aye  
Member Crowley – Abstain (as not present for the meeting)  
Member Gittins - Aye  
Chair Hagen – Aye

MOTION: Proposed by Member Lloyd, seconded by Member Barbehenn, to approve the minutes of February 14 as written.

VOTE: by roll call:

Member Lloyd – Aye  
Member Barbehenn – Aye  
Member Crowley – Aye  
Member Gittins - Abstain (as not present for the meeting)  
Chair Hagen – Aye

## **Adjournment**

Member Barbehenn moved and Member Gittins seconded to adjourn, at 8:50 pm.

Roll Call:

Member Lloyd – Aye  
Member Barbehenn – Aye  
Member Crowley – Aye  
Member Gittins - Aye  
Chair Hagen - Aye

Minutes prepared by Catherine Perry.

Approved March20, 2023

## **DOCUMENT LIST**

Agenda

Memo from Planning Director Fields to Planning Board, dated February 24, 2023 with respect to matters to be taken up at the February 28, 2023 Planning Board Meeting.

Revised Draft PowerPoint slides for presentation and backup materials, by Todd Crowley – Zoning Bylaw Amendment: Two Family Housing

Development Update chart dated February 23, 2023

Draft Minutes of January 24, 2023 Planning Board meeting

Draft Minutes of February 7, 2023 Planning Board meeting

Draft Minutes of February 14, 2023 Planning Board meeting