



Planning Board

March 19th, 2024

7:30 PM

In Person &
Virtual (Zoom)

Planning Board members present: Jon Cappetta, Michaela Moran, Sam Bajwa, James Fuccione and Patricia Clifford

Also present: Kristen Guichard, Planning Director, Kaila Sauer, Senior Planner, Nora Masler, Planner, & Alicia Burak, Administrative Assistant.

Planning Board members absent: Nathan Cookson

Jon Cappetta read the guidelines for the virtual meeting.

Jon Cappetta called the meeting to order at 7:37PM

James Fuccione called the roll: Jon Cappetta-Aye Michaela Moran-Aye, Sam Bajwa-Aye, James Fuccione-Aye, Patricia Clifford-Aye.

I. Regular Business

- 1. Residents Comments:** None
- 2. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes:** Continued to next meeting
- 3. Board Members Reports:** None.
- 4. Administrative Updates:** None

II. New/Special Business

Chair, Jon Cappetta the reported hearings PB23-10 (40 High Street) and PB23-11 (75 Great Road) have been continued to April 16th, 2024.

1. Public Hearing- Discussion on Proposed Zoning Articles

Chair, Jon Cappetta opened the public hearing at 7:40PM and read the public hearing notice. Planning Director, Kristen Guichard, Senior Planner, Kaila Sauer along with Select Board Member David Martin, Catherine Useoff gave a presentation on the

proposed zoning articles for Town Meeting while accepting feedback from the Board and Community. (<https://doc.actonma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-17878>)

A. Car Dealerships in the Limited Business District

Residents' Comments: Terra Friedrichs, West Acton expressed support for the proposed bylaw but preferred that the bylaw have a size restriction.

Board Comments: Pat Clifford asked how the zoning changes affect car dealerships that are already there. David Martin stated that zoning would only affect new business coming in to town or if a current business went idle for two years.

B. MBTA Overlay Districts

Residents' Comments:

Madeline Cruz, Sachem Way- expressed her concerns of future evictions for renters.

Janet Adachi of Simon Hapgood Lane, Bob VanMeter of 2 Half Moon Hill, Residents Jim Carey of Guswood Road, Franny Osman of 16 Half Moon hill , Laura Plaskin of Joseph Reed Ln, Judy Hodge of High St all stated their support of the proposed zoning changes.

Michael Miolas of Willow Street, asked for clarification of the proposed districts. Richard Kelleher, Brewster Lane- showed support for the plan but was concerned about water resources.

Irene Wuborski of 20 Carlisle Road, stated her concern for the wetlands and asked if there are restrictions on how much excavation is allowed. Kristen Guichard advised that there are bylaws in place for protection of the wetlands.

Terra Friedrichs, Mass Ave- expressed her concerns for rental evictions and thinks Dover Heights Apartments should be taken out of the proposal.

Board Comments:

Michaela Moran asked if it's possible to require some of the new housing to be rental housing. She would like to see comments from the Historical Commission regarding possible destruction of homes along Main Street. Nora noted that the current bylaws on demolition delay would still apply. She asked what the outcome would be if only one of the zoning proposals (MBTA or SAV) passed as they seem to be linked.

Kristen Guichard explained that they don't have to pass together. They looked at it as a comprehensive process because the MBTA station is within South Acton.

She noted a lot of town policies are focused on the climate action plan, and incentivizing and encouraging village scale development, mixed use and multifamily housing and if they both don't pass then some of the goals for the South Acton Vision and Action Plan would not be achieved.

Sam Bajwa-stated his concern about not having sewer systems in high density areas and asked if new sewer systems would be installed?

Kristen Guichard explained that a portion of the MBTA overlay district is located in the sewer district and the State does not require communities to upgrade or install new sewer lines. It would be up to the developer to see if the location is suitable for development.

James Fuccione noted that this is only a zoning proposal, which is a plan for what "could be" in the future with a lot of varying factors in which the town has to comply with state law.

Pat Clifford asked what the timeline would be for development to fully be realized under the proposed zoning changes. Kristen stated it would not be a quick process as various factors such as wastewater infrastructure is not there yet.

C. South Acton Village District

Residents' Comments:

Fran Osman of 16 Half Moon Hill confirmed with the Planning Division that in this proposal, a large home would be able to be split up into condos. She noted that she loved the idea of making more affordable housing available but was concerned with the market rate.

Jim Kerry of Guswood Road, showed support of the plan and liked the mixed use capability.

Michael Miolas of Willow Street, asked for clarification on possible opportunities for housing and commercial business uses at the (town owned) MBTA parking lot.

Richard Kelleher added that the MBTA lot should be housing and not commercial

Alissa Nichol of School Street, asked if the Town considered enlarging the SAV area and adding village residential to be more revitalized like West Acton. She

stated that she agreed with Michaela Moran's statement about adding a demolition by neglect bylaw.

Kristen Guichard noted that there were some, but few individuals who expressed a desire to expand the South Acton Village District, but noted there was not an overwhelming majority. She did note the proposed MBTA overlay district abuts the SAV district and would allow for mixed use.

Terra Friedrichs of Mass Ave, stated concern about tenant evictions, and asked why there is not a requirement that all apartments must be affordable.

Board Comments:

Sam appreciated the effort of the Planning Division

Michaela Moran asked why the requirement for a landlord to live in a property has been removed from the proposal. Kristen advised that it gives more housing opportunities. Michaela suggested a demolition by neglect bylaw in order to protect the homes in the historic district.

Patricia Clifford asked about the public outreach process and praised the Planning Division on their efforts.

D. Assabet River Overlay District and Powder Mill District

Residents' Comments:

Jim Snyder Grant, Chair of the Select Board, mentioned a proposed (now withdrawn) project that was next to the senior center and asked for clarification if the project would be allowed with the new zoning. Kristen Guichard advised the district remains unchanged, except for the car dealership and associated vehicle sales and rental. Other aspects remain in place. An overlay district offers additional options but requires compliance with specific guidelines and is limited to certain uses.

Franny Osman of Half Moon Hill, voiced her support and encouraged the Planning Board to look into on street parking which help with safety of pedestrians.

Alissa Nichol of School Street, voiced her support for the plan.

Royce Fuller of 5 Robert Road, expressed he had no issue with the number of auto dealerships in that area, except for the section across from the McGovern Dealership, particularly the part on the river. He suggested that area could be developed into a better site. However, he has no objections to auto dealerships south of that point.

Terra Friedrichs of West Acton, expressed concern about the lack of affordability in the housing being discussed. She noted the importance of making housing affordable for those working in nearby shops to truly create a livable work environment.

Michael Miolas of Willow Street, suggested increasing the amount of affordable housing.

Board Comments: None

Michaela Moran suggested to continue the hearing to the next meeting to obtain more feedback and requested to see what the projection would be using the hypothetical state calculator.

Patricia Clifford requested information on the MBTA Communities law and what the risk is to the Town if it doesn't pass.

Jon Cappetta motioned at 9:58PM to continue the public hearing to 4/2/24 at 7:30PM at Town Hall and for the Planning Board to vote to move the articles to Town Meeting and whether or not they recommend the articles. Michaela Moran seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Jon Cappetta- Aye, Michaela Moran-Aye, Sam Bajwa-Aye, James Fuccione-Aye, Patricia Clifford- Aye.

James Fuccione motioned at 10:00PM to adjourn the meeting. Michaela Moran seconded to motion. Roll Call Vote: Jon Cappetta- Aye, Michaela Moran-Aye, Sam Bajwa-Aye, James Fuccione- Aye, Patricia Clifford- Aye.

Materials used at this meeting:

Planning Board Agenda

Link to May ATM 2024 Zoning Public Hearings:

<https://doc.actonma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-17878>

