



Town of Mansfield
Planning Board
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Meeting Minutes
January 25, 2023

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MANSFIELD
MASSACHUSETTS

**MEETING HELD IN PERSON IN MEETING ROOM 3 A/B
AND VIRTUALLY USING GOTOWEBINAR PLATFORM**

Present: Joseph Cerretani, Chair; Sharon Friedman, Clerk; Ralph Penney; Michael McClanahan; Michael Feck, Adrian LeCesne; Brendan Roche, Alternate and Mark Corsillo, Alternate

Priscilla McGill, Administrative Secretary

Absent:

1. Planning Board Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Discussion – Arek Galle, BETA Group; Transit Oriented District (TOD) and MBTA Zoning

Arek Galle of BETA Group, Inc. was present. Mr. Galle reviewed the key milestones of 2022 working together from the Zoning Act MGL 40A Sec. 3A through public meetings and moving forward to talking about the housing production plan.

Mr. Galle confirmed that Jen Goldson of JM Goldson will be working with BETA Group to assist the Town on the initiative for the Transit Oriented District and MBTA zoning. He reviewed the agenda for the February 1st public meeting, room set-up, and key note speakers. The floor plan would have working table stations with staff available to assist with conversations. Ms. Goldson would address the audience and ask key questions to drive the audience into open discussions to narrow the topics toward more specific conversations. This would then drive the agenda for the next public meeting to be more specific to Bylaw adjustments, such as building heights and density.

The public meeting Press Release was advertised in the Sun Chronicle, on Town electronic sign boards, on social media, on the Town website on multiple pages and on Town text message notifications for those that are signed up for that format. The Board asked about reaching out to the schools and train station for public outreach. Chris McDermott, Economic Development Director, said he can reach out to both to inquire but may not be in time for the upcoming public meeting.

Mr. Cerretani inquired about the process for the February 15th meeting. Mr. Galle explained that there would not be as many transportation elements and they would be moving toward building standards that occupy the space within the district with tying into the Bylaw. There would also be discussions as to what comes out of the meetings and how it applies to the Bylaws with potential interactive electronic polling with the audience.

Ms. Friedman asked if there would be discussion as this relates to the Housing Production Plan (HPP) and if that information would be shared at one of the workshops. Mr. Galle said that Ms. Goldson will be reviewing the HPP and the SRPEDD survey to enable her to speak more directly about it at the later workshop.

Mr. Cerretani asked if the Board feedback on the HPP has been integrated into the plan. Ms. McGill said that the Board feedback has been received and reviewed by SRPEDD and will be incorporated into the revision. SRPEDD should be submitting a revision prior to the February 22nd Board meeting.

Mr. Penney inquired if the public workshops are for combined TOD revisions and MBTA zoning. Mr. Galle said that the course of action has been to move forward with what the MBTA zoning is asking while into the next phases of that program. The Bylaw can be amended and updated to be consistent with the community vision for the TOD as it aligns with the MBTA requirements.

Mr. Penney noted that at the last Board meeting there was discussion of amending the TOD at the Annual Town Meeting (ATM) and the MBTA zoning at the fall Special Town Meeting (STM). Mr. Galle agreed that it may be a two-step process with Bylaw amendments to the transportation issues in terms of grants and land use for the ATM and then map revisions with details of unit production for meeting the MBTA goal of 1,392 units, which is the target goal for by right multi-family housing. The map density calculations need to reflect that the number is attainable. Mr. Penney also noted that the original TOD was adopted in 2013 and it has been discussed since then but not acted upon.

Mr. Feck explained his understanding of two separate amendments for ATM and STM as they would not be ready by spring for the whole TOD as the State has outlined it. But that the density has to do with grants that have been established to get the ball rolling and to get the stakeholders involved with adjustment to the TOD taking place sooner rather than later. Mr. LeCesne said that his understanding is that technically either could proceed without the other but can be planned in tandem since they overlap substantially. Mr. Cerretani mentioned that height needs to be addressed to make connections between the east and west side of the tracks.

Ms. Friedman said that not all of the 1,392 units need to be in the congested area. Other areas near the train station and TOD can be used to satisfy the number of units. She recommended looking at how units would be constructed for strong models of community or village living, mixed use, or other options.

Mr. Galle replied that the current TOD overlay consists of about 60 acres and when the unusable portions are backed out, the current TOD overlay area is not large enough to accommodate the minimum 50 acres required for the new overlay and it would create an imbalance. The new Draft Map 12 consists of about 70 usable acres to create a balanced overlay on both sides of the tracks. The final map should create a balanced overlay with walking paths, acreage, managed building heights with a step-down density moving away from train station.

Mr. Penney said that architectural or design standards should not be imposed for the TOD. He read a letter into record that was sent to the Board in 2014 from Karl & Bill Clemmey relating to their opposition of implementing design standards. Mr. Galle referenced that the current Bylaw does have regulations for building scale, height, and facades and noted that the Board may not want to move away from controls that are currently in place. Mr. Galle suggested that the Board may want to consider what they want to include for density bonus options, such as community playground, boardwalk, trail system, bridges, alleys that connect through, access ways, benches, or lighting and what rewards would be granted to the developer for including incentives.

Ms. Friedman suggested that they should review housing models of how people cohabitate, which would not impose design standards. Mr. Roche said that guidelines could be imposed for improvement and consistency of the design standards and should be reviewed and improved. Mr. Penney said that the TOD overlay was implemented in 2013 and nothing has been done since and developers are saying that it is not workable the way it is currently written. Mr. Roche also expressed that he felt that the downtown train station area is a very different unique situation and is a perfect area to be more effectively specific in the overlay. Mr. LeCesne said that now is an important time to consider changes without imposing mandatory design standards. Mr. Feck also noted that the stakeholders would need to be on board to make the overlay work.

Mr. Cerretani said that there is a memorandum of agreement with the landowners, that MassDOT is moving forward with the Route 140 and Route 106 renovations, which the TOD needs to tie into. It is very important to start making decisions to keep the ball rolling to tie it all together. Mr. Penney expressed concern with making decisions in time for the Annual Town Meeting since there is so much to consider. Mr. Cerretani suggested that they work to try and get it done with a place holder, but could withdraw if it is not ready and move to Fall Town Meeting. Mr. Penney felt that density needs further review.

Mr. Galle noted Bylaw sections that should be reviewed for revision tying into the TOD overlay; parking, design standards, materials, density & dimensional, building height, design conformance, zoning incentives, community benefits, open space, and density bonus. He spoke of possible worthy incentives and tiering the incentive list in order of importance for what to give back to the community. Mr. Cerretani said that he feels there should be design standards in place for a cohesive standard design to be implemented as mandatory in the downtown and train station areas.

Mr. Galle said that some existing Bylaws will require more work and discussion than others. The public workshops will set groundwork for discussion and changes. Discussion ensued for changes to parking requirements for reducing requirements in some areas.

Mr. Corsillo inquired if it would be possible to get a list of awarded grants and what the money has been used for relating to the TOD overlay. Mr. Dumas said that some of the grants are from MassWorks, Housing Choice, and MassTrails and others and that he could provide a list for the next meeting. He also noted the he, Chris McDermott, and Josh Reinke will be participating in the MassWorks program for additional funding for the construction of the roadway and that grant is up to \$5Million annually per project or multiple phases of a project.

Mr. Dumas inquired, based on the Board's feedback, if it would be helpful, with assistance from BETA Group to put some proposals together for the Board to consider for the TOD Overlay Bylaw revisions. This would also be helpful for when the new planner is on board. The Board agreed that would be helpful.

Mr. Feck inquired if Mr. Dumas could explain the process of TOD Bylaw amendment submission for Annual Town Meeting and the next phase MBTA Bylaw amendment for Special Town Meeting. Mr. Dumas explained that the Town is required to meet State statute for MBTA communities by January 31, 2023 and the Town has submitted its compliance Action Plan in advance of that date. Mr. Dumas explained that the MBTA community overlay is going over the TOD overlay. The changes to the TOD overlay have to take place first in order to work in alignment with MassDOT Route 106 Phase I and Phase II roadwork but also work congruently with the MBTA community overlay.

The next part of the process is to identify the changes in the TOD to align with MBTA communities and with the grant sources from the State and Federal government. The Town has until 2024 to get the MBTA overlay designation into place which does not jeopardize current work with the TOD overlay. Mr. Galle said that it would be a lot to take on all at once and working on the TOD in sync with the Route 106 work makes sense, where there is more time to complete the MBTA compliance by 2024.

Mr. McClanahan asked what is required from the Board to help move this along. Mr. Dumas said the next step is the TOD overlay rework with BETA Group working with the Board to develop a draft for consideration at an upcoming meeting. The goal should be to have the Bylaw amendment ready for Annual Town Meeting in June. The placeholder language would need to be ready for submission by March 1st. Mr. Dumas also confirmed the contract extension for BETA Group with a subcontract for Jen Goldson.

Mr. Penney inquired about parking and the design of the road. Mr. Dumas said they are entering into a contract with VHB and discussion could be had with the Department of Public Works and VHB but he does not want to confuse what is on the immediate agenda for the Board relative to the TOD sponsored article for ATM. Mr. Feck suggested that downtown businesses would want on-street parking in front of the business. If there is no road design with on-street parking would that drive business away. Mr. Dumas said discussions are taking place as to types of parking in the area for limited parking on the new street. The parking would not be meant for commuter parking. There are future designs for commuter garage parking which would be funded by the Federal Transit. This could be considered with the parking Bylaw changes but the long-term goal would be to put together visioning documents to see what that could look like.

Mr. Penney asked if the Board could review other MBTA communities parking regulations. Mr. Galle answered that they need to consider layers of parking and how parking functionally works, where parking would be and if more centrally located. Neighborhood activity would also be taken into consideration. The MBTA owns land near the tracks and would need a public right of way for access to the train station. There needs to be further discussion and review of the area for traffic flow for the new access road with neighborhood protection from traffic.

Ms. Friedman said that in review of the Master Plan it was noted that the Housing Production Plan and the Community Preservation Act as an important piece of the overall planning where it provides housing revenue and she expressed that the Town should not lose sight of that. She suggested more research with presentation to the Town and opportunity of major State funding.

Mr. Cerretani expressed that the parkway should be more of a greenway in the new district between the TOD and the existing neighborhood. It should be a walkable drivable space in partnership with the other landowners. Mr. Dumas also noted that there have been conversations with Foxboro relating to future parking access as it would impact both Towns.

Mr. LeCesne suggested that bonus incentives include benches, lighting, street trees and the width of sidewalks. Mr. Corsillo suggested adding recycling facilities to the incentives.

Mr. Cerretani asked if Mansfield is still a part of the Early Adopter Technical Assistance Program. Mr. Galle confirmed that Mansfield is still a part of the process and referenced MHP's response of Mansfield's submission noting where it could be improved to comply with density.

Mr. Cerretani asked if there are required milestones to achieve and if it could be achieved without a Planning Director. Mr. Galle said that there are milestones which could be met with what interim provisions are in place for continued participation in the program until a Planner is hired. Mr. Galle noted that they are in the process of adding the MHP comments into the redline version of the TOD revisions.

3. Correspondence

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The Board reviewed the minutes adding changes and clarifications. The Board agreed to approve the minutes at the next meeting after final changes have been made.

4. Around the Table

Mr. Penney asked if Zoning Bylaw copies were ready. Ms. McGill said it is in progress and will be ready soon. She clarified that the Site Plan Approval will need to be added and that she is working with Judi Barrett to complete the application process.

Mr. Penney asked if there is a draft for applicant submission timelines. Ms. McGill said she is working on the draft.

5. Executive Session

Mr. Cerretani stated that the reason for the executive session is to consider applicants for the open position of Director of Planning and Development.

Motion by Ms. Friedman to enter into executive session and to not return to open session under Executive Session Exemption No. 8, MGL Ch. 30A, Sec. 21 to consider or interview applicants for employment or appointment by a preliminary screening committee if the chair declares that an open meeting will have a detrimental effect in obtaining qualified applicants.

Mr. Cerretani, Chair stated “I so declare.”

Roll Call vote

Joseph Cerretani, Chair - aye

Sharon Friedman, Clerk - aye

Ralph Penney - aye

Michael McClanahan – aye

Adrian LeCesne - aye

Brendan Roche – aye

Michael Feck, Alternate - aye

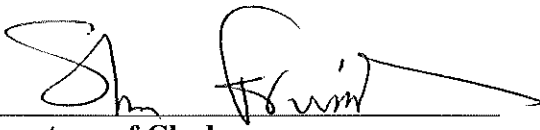
Mark Corsillo, Alternate - aye

Eight (8) in favor, Zero (0) opposed, Zero (0) abstained PASSES

6. Adjournment

The Board entered into Executive Session and did not return to open meeting.

Date of Next Planning Board Meeting February 8, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.



Signature of Clerk

3.8.2023
Date of Approval