

Town of Chelmsford
Route 40 Study Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 5, 2019

Members Present: Pamela Armstrong, Emily Antul, Nancy Araway, Virginia Crocker Timmins, Nance Gillies, Donald Van Dyne, Mike Walsh

Members Absent: None

Pam Armstrong called the meeting to Order at 6:58pm.

MINUTES: The Committee unanimously approved the February 5, 2019 minutes.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION:

Evan Belansky, Community Development Director, attended the meeting in the public section and was asked to provide subject matter expertise when needed.

Pam Armstrong stated that she was aware of communications from which she interpreted that some in the public thought the Committee was reverting back to the original zoning proposals revealed in August 2018. Pam clarified that the Committee is not doing that. The Committee is developing new recommendations based on the research conducted and inputs it has requested or received over the last several months.

Pam Armstrong met with David Hedison from the Chelmsford Housing Authority to discuss the current vision for an Age in Place / Continuing Care Community Village on Groton Road. There is a vision for the UMass West Campus for specialized senior living (assisted living, memory care, etc.). Evan clarified that there is not zoning in place yet for the UMass West area to accommodate specialized senior living and that historically the Housing Authority would create such a development in partnership with a developer. There was discussion about whether or not there would still be a demand for assisted senior living if such a development is created on the UMass West land. Independent 55+ living in the Groton Road area would be a complement to assisted living.

NORTH SIDE CONTINUED DISCUSSIONS

There was a follow up to previous discussions about whether extending IA to the street on the North Side would enable construction of more road(s) for industrial large truck access to Route 40. Evan received input from Town Counsel that this would not be a concern. It would have to go before the Planning Board to be accepted and approved. Most private developments in town are proposed with private roads.

Evan clarified the set-back requirements in IA zones. IA allows for 4-story buildings with set-backs 40 feet front, 40 feet rear, and 30 feet side. RC zone set backs are 20 feet front, 12 feet rear, and 30 feet side.

The Committee discussed extending the IA zoning on the north side to the street and expanding the overlay to include other housing besides age in place housing, giving a potential developer and the community more flexibility on options that would be aligned with residential neighborhoods. The Committee also discussed reducing the overlay set-back for 5 story buildings to 200 feet.

PUBLIC INPUT SESSION

Process clarification: Mike Raisbeck, Planning Board Chair, was in the public section and offered clarification on the process. The Committee recommendation report will go to the Planning Board. When the Planning Board is ready to act on any rezoning recommendations they will hold a public hearing. If it is approved by the Planning Board, it then goes to the next town meeting.

Kim Bennett, 25 Lovett Lane: Asked about town infrastructure ramifications for multifamily housing. The due diligence for this would be done as part of a specific project proposal.

Doug Gordon, Rumney NH: Asked for clarification on previous south side deliberations. Mr. Gordon's wife owns four acres on the south side that are land locked without access roads.

Roger Power, 258 Groton Road: Asked for clarification on previous south side deliberations.

Wenlan Lu, NorthStar Realty: Stated that if the south side was changed to allow multi-family there would be a sufficient buffer even with the National Grid easement. If the south side were changed to multi-family, they could support it with neighborhood commercial on the north side. She is concerned about the appeal of having residential on the north side with traffic noise and industrial zoning.

Tammy Arena, 3 Burton Lane:

- Not pleased in to hear that Planning Board member(s) are opening discussion for the south side in the future after all of the research and work the Committee has done to reach their recommendations.
- Asked if a developer could apply both the CEIOD and the new overlay. Answer is “yes”.
- Asked if residents on the south side who wanted to sell now could get market value for their homes. Pam Armstrong stated that her previous research showed they could. Donald Van Dyne did an MLS quick look in real time during the meeting and stated it might be a little below market value.

Dan Castellano, 245 Groton Road: Cited traffic volume increases in last three years. Mike Walsh asked if Mr. Castellano felt comfortable with the Committee’s vision for the North side and Mr. Castellano stated that he did.

Joseph P. Rivard, Dunstable, MA and Owner of 1 Ward Way business: Stated that he and his son intend to relocate his business. Identified safety concerns with potential collisions between cars and trailers as well as blinding sun when traveling west during late afternoon sunset hours.

Andrea Gauntlet, 264 Groton Road: Concerned about value of her home since the asphalt plant approval and noise.

Katie Sapp, 263 Groton Road: Her plot abuts the asphalt plant and she would like an opportunity to sell her home.

Pam Armstrong gave an example regarding the four new condo complexes near the Littleton Road asphalt plant. These homes sold before they were built.

Nancy Araway gave an example regarding the residential area on Route 110 where there is a lot of truck traffic. Triple glazed windows are used on home(s) for noise reduction. The residents who live there want to be there for the convenience of the area.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:06pm.

NEXT MEETING: March 12, 2019 at 6:00pm. Focus is to review Overlay language.