

**Town of Carlisle Planning Board
MBTA Communities Subcommittee
Minutes of 7/9/24 1:00PM / Minutes Prepared by: Julie Mercier, Town Planner
Hybrid Meeting Format: Heald Room, 66 Westford Street, Carlisle MA & Zoom**

Voting Members Present:

- Kate Reid, Select Board
- Adelaide Grady, Planning Board (joined at 1:15PM)
- Christina Christodouloupoulos, Environmental Sustainability Committee
- Tony Mariano, Board of Health
- Helen Jackson Young, Conservation Commission (joined at 1:10PM)

Voting Members Absent:

- Christine Johnson-Battista, Affordable Housing Trust

Non-Voting Members Present:

- Julie Mercier, Town Planner

Other Attendees:

Carren Panico, Carlisle Mosquito

Acting Chair Reid called the meeting to order at 1:10 PM.

Minutes of 6/25/24

The Subcommittee reviewed the minutes. Ms. Jackson Young made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Mariano seconded. The minutes were approved 4-0-0 by roll call vote.

Survey Update

Ms. Mercier screen shared the MBTA Communities Survey responses. She noted that the survey has been out for 3 weeks and there are 113 responses, which is basically double the number of responses received prior to the last Subcommittee meeting. She said she will do another push on social media, the newsletter, emails, etc. Ms. Christodouloupoulos suggested getting it in the City in the Woods.

The Subcommittee took a brief look at the responses, noting specifically that a decent number of respondents are still not in favor of a larger-scale development, but that people are interested in the district being on the edge of town. Ms. Mercier said she can download the responses and see if there are cross-tabs or if it's possible to dig into the responses in more detail. She also noted that some of the open-ended responses are similar and can be collapsed. Mr. Mariano asked how the Subcommittee will use the survey data and opined that there are no "aha" moments so far. Ms. Mercier commented that there may be new ideas in the open-ended responses.

Chair Grady commented that a member of the Community Preservation Committee, who is the CPC representative from the Recreation Commission, suggested locating the

housing on Banta Davis and taking advantage of the excess capacity of the wastewater treatment plant. She also explained that the concept has been floated before.

Technical Assistance Update

Ms. Mercier screen-shared the complex spreadsheet that the State is referring to as their “compliance model” and noted that because the formulas are locked and the “overrides” don’t actually override the formulas, the model cannot accommodate Carlisle’s multi-family conservation cluster approach. She explained that Molly Obendorf, the technical assistant at Bohler Engineering, has hit a wall, and that she worries the State will reject the idea simply because their own technical staff cannot model it. Ms. Mercier opined that while the State needs a systemized way to assess compliance across 177 municipalities, the compliance model feels divorced from reality and is a horrifying tool to use to contemplate zoning.

Ms. Mercier explained that, with the compliance model, the 75 West Street parcel does appear to provide for the unit capacity and minimum density needed for Carlisle to comply, if contemplating a larger-scale building. Molly is going to run a variety of different zoning parameters in the model, to show the Subcommittee some options for zoning if they want to pursue that site.

Ms. Mercier noted that, with regard to the multi-family conservation cluster idea, she has asked Molly to shift her focus away from the compliance model, and instead work up some conceptual sketches of what the conservation cluster idea could look like on a few Carlisle parcels of different sizes. This will give the Subcommittee an idea of what parameters might work to result in zoning that matches their intent. In the meantime, Ms. Mercier intends to “break” the compliance model and re-build it to fit Carlisle’s conservation cluster idea.

Ms. Reid mentioned that interior lot setbacks could be very different than outer tract setbacks from neighboring properties.

Ms. Christodouloupoulos again mentioned focusing on areas that are already developed and mentioned a site on Curve Street with a number of structures on it, as an example. Some members expressed concern with spot zoning if the Subcommittee were to focus on any single parcel (i.e., parcels discussed on Curve St, West St, etc.). Ms. Mercier said they could look at putting the overlay on an area of town that’s more developed in general.

Chair Grady asked the Subcommittee to pause and consider how much they want to worry about breaking the system so the idea can fit the State’s requirements versus focusing on pursuing a good idea that meets a Master Plan goal, even if it doesn’t technically comply with MBTA zoning requirements. Members had varying opinions. Ms. Reid agreed they should look at the idea specifically and globally at the same time. Chair Grady commented that she likes continuing with the both/and approach, and that the group brings different perspectives and works well together.

Ms. Christodoulopoulos asked that if the idea of a conservation cluster were pursued on a long parcel, could the zoning determine how the lots are arranged, sized, shaped, etc. She and Ms. Reid drew some example ideas on the whiteboard. Ms. Mercier and Chair Grady explained that the Subcommittee can decide all the parameters related to lot configuration within the new zoning, and the concepts prepared by Bohler should be really informative.

Mr. Mariano opined that the scope of the discussion seems to be going into planning and design, which is beyond what he thought the Subcommittee was charged with determining. He stated that he would like to just stick with determining if the Town can comply with MBTA Communities. Ms. Mercier reminded the Subcommittee that while their charge primarily focuses on determining feasibility of compliance with the MBTA Communities legislation and guidelines, it also mentions efforts towards creation of an additional open space or conservation cluster bylaw, as outlined in Master Plan Recommendation 19a. She explained that the reason the discussion includes planning and design is because the Subcommittee needs to determine the zoning parameters that best match their intent, to get ahead of unintended consequences.

Mr. Mariano shifted the conversation back to Banta Davis and asked about the adjacent Moseley land. Ms. Reid commented that the remainder of the Moseley land behind TILL has a deed restriction on it prohibiting further housing but brought up the idea of a joint housing/community center development on Banta Davis. Comments were made that this might get a lot of support. Ms. Reid also noted that 218 Bedford Road, the triangular parcel between Church Street and Bedford Road, directly across from Banta Davis, is in foreclosure and might be an opportunity for the Town.

Ms. Mercier screen-shared the AxisGIS mapping site. Members discussed Banta Davis- the location of the wastewater treatment plant, the location of the future dog park, nearby wetlands, and adjacent properties. Ms. Christodoulopoulos suggested looking at the development patterns of the surrounding neighborhoods, such as the parcels to the south, to see if there is opportunity there as well. Ms. Reid suggested looking at the parcels to the north and west as well. Chair Grady commented that people might be concerned with traffic from a development accessed off of a subdivision road versus a main road. Ms. Christodoulopoulos suggested that development off of a subdivision road would be more tucked away and less visible, which people might prefer. Chair Grady suggested that could be a question for a deeper dive survey. Ms. Mercier noted that the preliminary survey results and/or a complete shift in approach may lead to a series of deeper questions for a future survey.

Mr. Mariano noted that when there is a wastewater treatment plant, there are more options for water. He suggested determining the excess capacity of the plant, and whether a study might be needed to determine water availability. Ms. Christodoulopoulos asked how easy it is to expand a wastewater treatment plant. Ms. Reid mentioned that it's old and may need to be replaced soon, which could be a good opportunity for the Town. Chair Grady asked if the piping for the wastewater treatment plant goes under the wetland between

Banta Davis and the school. Mr. Mariano responded in the affirmative and noted that it is a possible and accepted approach.

Chair Grady noted that the Town can put out an RFP for Town-owned properties, or the Town could sell it and reuse funds to buy land for other priorities. Ms. Christodouloupoulos commented that if the zoning is on private property, the Town is not responsible for figuring out how to make the septic work. Chair Grady responded that the Town should determine certain things to avoid unintended consequences and account for the unknown unknowns.

Members went back and forth about an approach considering specific sites versus a bigger picture approach versus looking at existing neighborhoods. A few specific properties were mentioned including Benfield, 75 West Street, and the East Riding Drive properties currently under construction. Chair Grady commented that zoning on sites that are currently under construction or that have very recently been developed would maybe meet the letter of the law but not the intent, and the State would see right through it.

Ms. Mercier asked for direction from the Subcommittee, noting that it seems that all ideas are back on the table. She reminded the Subcommittee that they initially analyzed all the existing neighborhoods, and were going to continue to refine that analysis, but then the multi-family conservation cluster idea took them on a new path. There was general tacit acknowledgement that all ideas are still on the table and more information is needed for all of them. Ms. Mercier offered to have Molly model the various areas under discussion today, only to get a sense of simple compliance, not related to the multi-family conservation cluster idea.

Chair Grady asked Ms. Panico if she had any questions or comments. Ms. Panico asked for clarification on some points in the discussion. Ms. Mercier responded and offered to answer any questions she has over email as well.

No one else from the public was present.

Ms. Reid made a motion that the next Subcommittee meeting will be on Wednesday, July 24th at 1:00 PM. Ms. Christodouloupoulos seconded. The Subcommittee agreed unanimously via roll call vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 PM.

These Minutes were approved on 7/30/24.

Materials Reviewed at the Meeting:

- Agenda for 7/9/24
- Preliminary survey responses
- EOHLC Compliance Model