

**Town of Carlisle Planning Board  
MBTA Communities Subcommittee  
Minutes of 9/4/24 2:00PM / 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 (arrived at 9:14AM)
- Adelaide Grady, Planning Board
- Christine Johnson-Battista, Affordable Housing Trust
- Christina Christodoulopoulos, Environmental Sustainability Committee
- Tony Mariano, Board of Health

Voting Members Absent:

- Helen Jackson Young, Conservation Commission

Non-Voting Members Present:

- Julie Mercier, Town Planner

Other Attendees:

Bethany Barstow, Town of Carlisle Conservation & Land Use Assistant

Chair Grady called the meeting to order at 2:02 PM.  
She went over the agenda.

**Minutes of 8/27/24**

The Subcommittee reviewed the minutes. Ms. Reid made a clarification. Ms. Reid made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Ms. Johnson-Battista seconded. The minutes were approved 5-0-0 by roll call vote.

**Mapping Analysis**

Ms. Mercier noted that she received feedback and questions regarding some of the areas discussed at the prior meeting. The Subcommittee revisited these areas.

The Subcommittee reviewed the Westford/West map. Mr. Mariano commented that mapping he reviewed at some point in the past showed less extensive ledge in the areas where ledge is prevalent on the maps under review by the Subcommittee. Ms. Mercier noted that the USGS maps being used are the updated versions of what Mr. Mariano had sent her a year or so ago. Ms. Mercier and Mr. Mariano agreed to investigate this discrepancy further. It was noted that more information is needed to confirm the test pit data acquired by the property owner for 75 West Street.

Ms. Christodoulopoulos expressed desire to protect and expand existing wildlife corridors and asked for the parcels west of West Street to be removed from the area under consideration due to the existing Conservation Restrictions in the area. She noted that the areas under consideration are much larger than what is required for MBTA Communities

compliance. She commented that once land is developed it is very unlikely to go back to its natural condition. Chair Grady commented that she has been thinking of parcel size and outcomes, and ways to keep the scale of development aligned with the intent of the Subcommittee. She commented that one way to do this is through the zoning – allowing development on the disturbed front portion of the lot while requiring certain areas to be carved off and put into Conservation Restrictions – which would result in greater protection for and expansion of the existing wildlife corridor. She suggested keeping these parcels in the area under consideration for now, especially because in the case of Westford/West, the parcels are on the edge of Town and appear to have good geology. She noted that there is a greater chance that the land will be put in a Conservation Restriction if it is included in the MBTA Communities zoning than if it is left as single-family.

Ms. Reid clarified that the goal is to add more capacity to what is already disturbed versus spread development into undisturbed areas. She commented that the argument for wildlife corridors could be made for almost any of the areas under consideration, and she agreed with Chair Grady that the parcels should be left in for now. She noted that the areas should start large and may be further refined after public feedback.

Ms. Johnson Battista agreed that the parcels should be left in, at least until more is known regarding the test pits and ledge on the property to the east of West Street.

Chair Grady suggested that the Subcommittee needs to start reviewing some draft zoning language. Ms. Mercier agreed and offered to put ideas together for the next meeting.

Bethany Barstow, Conservation & Land Use Assistant, asked whether the intention of the analysis is to find areas near towns with MBTA services. Chair Grady gave an overview of the various options on the table, noting that Carlisle has the ability to locate the zoning anywhere because we do not have MBTA services within our boundaries.

The Subcommittee reviewed the Patch Meadow map and discussed the Patch Meadow Brook corridor and associated wetland, which will limit what can happen in that area. Chair Grady explained that the parcels were included because they have good geology and are on the edge of Town. Ms. Reid explained that there are areas on the parcels that could work for development. The Subcommittee decided to leave the map as is. The question was raised as to whether the Patch Meadow Brook would have a 200' Riverfront Area under Conservation Commission jurisdiction. Ms. Mercier agreed to look into it.

The Subcommittee reviewed the Curve/Fiske map. Ms. Mercier received feedback that one parcel should be added and another excluded. Ms. Christodoulopoulos commented that the parcel was not included because it operates as a buffer to the cranberry bog and has a lot of trees. Chair Grady noted that the home on the lot was built pre-1962 and seems likely to be redeveloped at some point. She noted that zoning can include language about preserving land that has not been disturbed.

Mr. Mariano asked what the rationale is between disturbed versus treed and noted that the entire Town used to be cleared. He commented that he grew up in Carlisle and opined that the wildlife now is much better than it was before. Ms. Christodouloupoulos acknowledged the differences between old growth and new growth, and that disturbed habitat is still habitat. She explained that the rationale behind preserving undisturbed land is to protect established wildlife habitat, and that undisturbed areas tend to support more native biodiversity, as well as insects and birds that play a critical role but have gone way down in population recently. She noted that disturbing already disturbed land has less of an environmental impact. Chair Grady commented that she takes a macro view regarding environmental impact and views greenhouse gas emissions reductions due to increased density as a benefit on a larger scale. She noted that the zoning bylaw can be written to promote the conservation of existing treed areas and undisturbed areas so they can become part of an interconnected wildlife resource.

Ms. Reid pointed out that the intent of what the Subcommittee is doing will impact a lot less acreage than the acreage being put aside for the zoning. Mr. Mariano commented that he doesn't understand how the MBTA Communities zoning would impact lots any more than the current zoning. Ms. Mercier commented that zoning can be a tool for preservation. Ms. Christodouloupoulos opined that the current conservation cluster bylaw does very little for conservation. Ms. Mercier and other Subcommittee members agreed. Ms. Mercier noted that her role in all of this is to help capture the Subcommittee's intent within the zoning provisions/parameters.

The Subcommittee agreed to remove one parcel and add one parcel to the Curve/Fiske area.

### **Public Comment**

Bethany Barstow, Conservation & Land Use Assistant, did not have any additional questions.

No one else from the public was present.

The Subcommittee set their next meeting for Tuesday, September 17<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.

These Minutes were approved on 9/17/24.

### **Materials Reviewed at the Meeting:**

- Agenda for 9/4/24
- Minutes of 8/27/24
- GIS maps for mapping exercise