

Town of Carlisle Planning Board
MBTA Communities Subcommittee
Minutes of 9/24/24 10:00AM / 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
- Christine Johnson-Battista, Affordable Housing Trust
- Christina Christodoulopoulos, Environmental Sustainability Committee
- Helen Jackson Young, Conservation Commission
- Tony Mariano, Board of Health

Non-Voting Members Present:

- Julie Mercier, Town Planner

Other Attendees:

Carren Panico, Carlisle Mosquito
Bethany Barstow, Conservation & Land Use Assistant
Noelle Beland, Planning, Zoning & Land Use Assistant

Chair Grady called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM.
She went over the agenda.

Minutes of 9/17/24

The Subcommittee reviewed the minutes. Ms. Christodoulopoulos made one edit. Ms. Reid made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Ms. Christodoulopoulos seconded. The minutes were approved 6-0-0 by roll call vote.

Recap of 2-acre Strategy

Acknowledging that not all members were at the prior meeting, Chair Grady recapped the rationale behind moving from a 3-acre lot requirement to a 2-acre lot requirement, which is based on the thresholds for a public water supply. Mr. Mariano noted that public water supplies are governed by the DEP. Ms. Mercier clarified her understanding that the local Board of Health is responsible for reporting to DEP when a property or project meets the thresholds for a public water supply. Mr. Mariano pointed out that the BOH is responsible for a lot of regulations across Town but is not set up to monitor or enforce them – they typically get involved after the non-compliance occurs. Chair Grady and Ms. Reid clarified that moving to a 2-acre 8-bedroom strategy provides a buffer from a potential future non-compliance issue. Mr. Mariano asked what happens with larger properties. Chair Grady noted that they would have to be subdivided into 2-acre lots. Mr. Mariano expressed that the Subcommittee should make sure the public understands this.

Mapping Analysis

The Subcommittee revisited the Concord/Russell/South/FiftyAcre map, which Ms. Mercier wasn't sure she got exactly right. It was noted that the Assurance Technology site appears to be all ledge. Mr. Mariano confirmed that it is mostly shallow ledge and it used to be a copper mine. Chair Grady questioned the long-term viability of the property as a commercial use. Other members expressed agreement with this sentiment. Mr. Mariano commented that while ledge would make it difficult and expensive to develop, it is not impossible and can be done. He opined that it should be left in. The Subcommittee agreed.

Ms. Christodouloupoulos asked about the 4-acre parcels with wetlands at the rear, specifically along Concord Street (Audubon Lane), and the Fifty Acre Way parcels. Chair Grady noted that there are large areas of the Audubon Lane lots that appear to have good surficial geology, and that the wetlands could be carved off and protected. It was agreed the Audubon Lane parcels would remain in the analysis, but the Fifty Acre Way parcels would be removed.

The Subcommittee looked at the lots on the northwest corner of the South Street / Concord Street intersection. The mapping shows a lot of ledge in that area. Mr. Mariano opined that under the conservation cluster zoning, the presence of ledge might not be such a big issue, especially for properties that are already developed and have working septic systems. Chair Grady noted that the property on the corner has a large home on it but is undersized so would need to get acreage from a neighbor to utilize the zoning under consideration. Ms. Christodouloupoulos commented that the property to the north is the Heald House and either has historic preservation requirements or should be left out to help preserve it from development. Mr. Mariano commented that the house at 45 South Street is the oldest home in Town. Ms. Mercier offered to look into what protections might exist for these properties already. Chair Grady suggested that the Subcommittee may want to add the lots between Assurance Technology and the lots on Concord Street, because even though it appears there is ledge, the lots have large homes that could be carved up. Ms. Christodouloupoulos suggested the Subcommittee work through their initial analysis of all the areas before deciding to add more lots into this area. The Subcommittee agreed.

Ms. Mercier recapped her discussion of the unit cap / sunset clause issue with Town Counsel. She said that even though there may not be a legal issue with having a cap in zoning – because Carlisle is only required to zone for 95 units – the HLC may not view zoning with a cap as a compliant MBTA Communities district. She said that HLC is sensitive to the notion that a town would bestow property rights (i.e., allow another option for development of property) to a broad area of town, but then only allow it for the first properties that utilize it. Chair Grady commented that the Town has a situation like this in place already – the Accessory Apartment bylaw has a cap.

Ms. Panico, Carlisle Mosquito reporter, recapped the discussion of exploring a broad area with a cap versus a narrow area without a cap to make sure she understood it. She stated that even if HLC won't allow a cap, the Town could look to zone multiple different areas

that total the minimum acreage needed to get to the 95 units. Ms. Mercier confirmed this statement.

Mr. Mariano opined that zoning the entirety of Residence B would be irresponsible on the part of the Subcommittee because it would put a lot of work on the town to sort out which areas are favorable for development in the future. He commented that the Subcommittee is doing that work now, and putting forth areas that seem feasible as a starting point.

The Subcommittee revisited the Hanover/Johnson map and discussed whether to include it. Mr. Mariano noted that he is not aware of any specific deed restrictions on bedrooms due to limited septic size. He clarified that going forward the BOH is not going to allow deed restrictions for new construction. Ms. Mercier noted that Ms. Fantasia responded to her inquiry on Hanover/Johnson and sent a document that she still needs to review. Chair Grady said an argument could be made for keeping this area in the analysis because the homes are large and could be carved up.

The Subcommittee looked at the Cross/Bingham/Trillium map. Chair Grady noted that there are large lots but they are served by small roads. Ms. Reid opined that spreading the burden limits the impact of development on a local roads. Chair Grady suggested keeping the entire area because even though there is ledge, there are no wetlands. Ms. Reid noted that there are multiple buildings on some of the lots already.

Ms. Barstow and Ms. Beland opined that a community of tiny homes would be cool and relayed their experience as young renters. The Subcommittee discussed the need for units to be connected to count as multi-family under the law.

Ms. Barstow asked why the Town doesn't explore the possibility of using the excess capacity at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Chair Grady and Mr. Mariano noted that it is a good question and explained that excess capacity doesn't necessarily mean more units can be served. Some of the capacity is required from a design perspective, and some is required for reserve.

The Subcommittee agreed to study the remaining 4 areas and come to the next meeting prepared with exclusions and additions.

October 16th Open House

The Subcommittee recapped that the Open House will be on Wednesday, October 16th from 4:00-7:00 PM, in-person only, to encourage people to drop in and have one-on-one conversations with Subcommittee members and staff. Ms. Beland showed a draft postcard she prepared and asked for feedback. Ms. Barstow suggested it could be like a college fair, with booths and individual conversations. Ms. Mercier asked the Subcommittee for ideas for presentation materials.

Subcommittee members suggested: high-level FAQs; poster explaining 3-units on 2-acres versus 30-units on 2-acres and versus 95 units on 6.3 acres; illustrations of nitrogen loading exclusion; high-level takeaways from survey.

Ms. Mercier stated that she wants to mail the postcard to all residents, which will cost approximately \$1400 and will need to be paid for from the Planning Board budget. She noted that she asked the Town Accountant to calculate the surplus salary funds (due to one assistant retiring and the lag before the new assistant started). She asked the Subcommittee to commit to a date for the 2nd open house so she and Ms. Beland can advertise it on the same postcard. The Subcommittee agreed to have the second open house on Saturday, November 16th from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM. They requested a bigger space than the Clark Room. Ms. Mercier offered to try and book the School Cafeteria. Ms. Johnson-Battista suggested the postcard include a QR code and link to the website so people can get more information. Ms. Mercier agreed.

Public Comment

Carren Panico, Mosquito reporter, asked if the Multi-Family Conservation Cluster would be similar to the existing conservation clusters for single-family that the Town already has in zoning. Chair Grady, Ms. Christodouloupoulos, and Ms. Mercier clarified that it will be similar in concept but there will be some key differences, mainly related to the requirements around clustering of housing units, and preservation of open space that results in meaningful ecological conservation.

Ms. Panico suggested that the Subcommittee be prepared to respond to questions about how the new ADU law relates to MBTA Communities.

No one else from the public was present.

The Subcommittee set their next meeting for Tuesday, October 1st at 3:30 PM. Ms. Reid reminded the Subcommittee that she will not be available.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:11 AM.

These Minutes were approved on 10/1/24.

Materials Reviewed at the Meeting:

- Agenda for 9/24/24
- Minutes of 9/17/24
- GIS maps for mapping exercise
- Draft Open House postcard