

**Town of Carlisle Planning Board
MBTA Communities Subcommittee**

Minutes of 10/22/24 9:30 AM / Minutes Prepared by: Noelle Beland, Planning, Zoning & Land Use Assistant

Hybrid Meeting Format: Heald Room, 66 Westford Street, Carlisle MA & Zoom

Voting Members Present:

- Adelaide Grady, Planning Board
- Christine Johnson-Battista, Affordable Housing Trust
- Christina Christodouloupoulos, Environmental Sustainability Committee
- Kate Reid, Select Board
- Tony Mariano, Board of Health

Voting Members Absent:

- Helen Jackson Young, Conservation Commission

Non-Voting Members Present:

- Julie Mercier, Town Planner
- Noelle Beland, Planning, Zoning & Land Use Assistant

Members of The Public

- Carren Panico, Carlisle Mosquito
- Cindy Craft
- Margery Berube

Chair Grady called the meeting to order at 9:33 AM. She went over the agenda which included debriefing the recent Open House and allowing for public input.

The subcommittee put off approving the last minutes until the next meeting.

Open House Debrief

The subcommittee began their meeting by discussing the most recent open house. Chair Grady started by saying there is a need to clear up that this is a work in progress and not a fully formed idea. Reiterating that the open house is for discussions, and not proposing a finalized plan.

A main concern brought up to subcommittee members at the open house was ground water supply. Ms. Christodouloupoulos noted that people seemed more receptive of two units on two acres compared to three. Concern was expressed that increased density could strain water supplies. The subcommittee acknowledged this is a valid fear and concluded that a study needs to be done.

Mr. Mariano noted that the Board of Health is somewhat unaware of the water supply issues because each well and septic is privately managed by property owners. He also

added that a town wide water study could be very expensive and widely inconclusive. This is because there is no municipal well field to test. Instead, he suggested testing smaller areas. Carlisle has 'hit-or-miss' bedrock fracture systems. Chair Grady asked if two side by side wells at the same depth could have different water supplies. Mr. Mariano responded by saying it is very likely possible that the two wells have different recharge rates, regardless of having the same dimensions. He also stated that we need to address this water issue regardless of the MBTA Communities Act.

Ms. Reid asked what kind of data we have in our files on this matter. Mr. Mariano said that newer neighborhoods have better records because well drilling requirements have improved over time. Data we already have on file is depth of wells, depth of bedrock, and flow rates.

Chair Grady asked what the disconnect was from receiving this information from the Board of Health, and if this could be brought up at the Board of Health meeting. Ms. Mercier requested this information almost two months ago and has not received it. Mr. Mariano added that definitive information can be expensive and impossible to get.

The subcommittee went on to discuss different locations in town that would be more suitable for rezoning based on their location in proximity to the Concord River. These locations have glacial outwashes. These include Skelton/River Rd, East Riding/Brooke St, and Davis Rd. Ms. Christodoulopoulos mentions that this is a large area all together, and the need to spread out the impact on traffic. Chair Grady says it will be spread out in space over time, and this is important to note in presentations. Many people believe that if we just rezone all in one area, it will never be developed because of the infrastructure.

Chair Grady added that HPP has maps of areas that could be developed as subdivisions. She asked if these areas could be changed to multifamily subdivisions. Ms. Reid reminded the group that these are on pristine land, which the survey did not favor. Ms. Christodoulopoulos says it makes more sense to encourage the division of existing large structures to accommodate Carlisle's character and preserve undisturbed land. Ms. Grady says she agrees on this principle, but there was strong push back from people at the open house, claiming this is targeting certain neighborhoods unfairly. There are also major concerns about how multifamily houses will affect the property values of adjacent single-family houses.

The subcommittee will collect data on property values. Ms. Christodoulopoulos reminded the subcommittee that it is important to decide based on data and not initial reactions. Chair Grady says the challenge is the proposal passing at town meeting. Ms. Mercier suggests showing the process of the proposal and providing options for the Planning Board.

Grady agrees that people want options. Ms. Christodoulopoulos suggested the Saint Irene option.

The subcommittee discussed town owned land. Chair Grady says that the state will not see this as a real possibility. The subcommittee also discussed the Saint Irene's idea to construct senior housing. Ms. Mercier noted that there are exclusions in the MBTA Communities Act for Town Owned Land and institutions. Prior proposals for a 40B development on Banta Davis did not get far.

Ms. Mercier mentioned concerns of what "neighborhood scale" consists of in terms of zoning regulations. Ms. Reid mentioned spot zoning concern.

Ms. Christodoulopoulos brought up Ken Montello's suggestion of looking at low valued properties in town that already exist.

Chair Grady said that there were two questions brought up at the open house she could not answer. These were what does the state match per child in school, and if Title 5 and nitrogen sensitivity treatment could mean no longer just four bedrooms per acre. Mr. Mariano addressed the Title 5 question by saying this was discussed in the beginning. Anything is possible at a price; nitrogen pretreatment is costly and has not proven to be effective. With pretreatment you can do more than under nitrogen loading limitations.

Mr. Mariano added that people are fracking their wells much more frequently than he realized. He says the Board of Health needs to reexamine private water supply regulations.

Ms. Grady says the leaching field may take more room depending on the underlying soil. Ms. Christodoulopoulos asked if we can include language in the zoning that if leach field requires clearing, that it be restored as a meadow. Ms. Grady responded, saying that it would be in HOA documentation regulations.

Chair Grady had a conversation with Brian Cruise, of Rodgers Road, at the open house where he said he anticipated that the Supreme Judicial Court would uphold the law of the MBTA Communities Act but throw away the guidelines. Mr. Cruise is a land use lawyer. Ms. Johnson-Battista also noted she saw a video saying the guidelines may be thrown away.

Ms. Christodoulopoulos says the subcommittee should plan on how to proceed if the Town Meeting says no to this proposal.

Public Input

No comments were made.

Next Steps

The next meeting was set for Tuesday, October 29th at 10 AM.

There are three meetings until the next Open House. Ms. Mercier is to map out a schedule to present the proposal to other boards and committees.

Meeting adjourned at 10:51 AM.

These minutes were approved 11/12/24.