

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

**Minutes of 12/9/24 9:30 AM / Minutes Prepared by: Noelle Beland, Planning, Zoning & Land Use Assistant**

**Online Meeting Format: Zoom**

Voting Members Present:

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

Voting Members Absent:

- Helen Jackson Young, Conservation Commission

Staff Present:

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

Members of The Public

- Carren Panico, Carlisle Mosquito
- Cindy Craft, 75 Patch Meadow Lane
- Laura Harrison, 847 North Road
- Linda Fabrizio, 58 Patch Meadow Lane
- Madeleine Blake, 127 Carleton Road
- Maeve Lobo, 49 Old Quarry Drive
- Margery Berube, 784 North Road

At 9:30 AM Chair Grady called the meeting to order. She went over the agenda which included approval of minutes and finalizing a memo regarding alternative strategies to be submitted to the Planning Board for tonight's discussion. The minutes were not ready to approve. They will be reviewed during the next meeting.

**Strategy Report to Planning Board**

Ms. Christodouloupoulos asked if the 12/5/24 memo had been submitted to the Planning Board and Select Board already. Ms. Mercier replied in the affirmative. Chair Grady said the group can make corrections if there are errors and resubmit the memo. Mr. Harrison suggested it may be helpful to attach the full Housing Production Plan in the appendix. The group agreed to make the strategies section of the Housing Production Plan available for the Planning Board during any meeting in which this is considered. Ms. Reid pointed out that both the Master Plan and Housing Production Plan are linked on the Town website.

## **Alternative Strategies Document**

The Subcommittee went on to discuss a document outlining alternative strategies discussed but not pursued, and the reasons why. Chair Grady screen shared the document with her edits inclusive of edits proposed by Mr. Harrison. She read the document; the minutes below indicate questions, comments, and discussions for each section.

**Town-Owned Land:** Mr. Mariano asked for clarification on whether Town-owned land can be considered. Ms. Mercier clarified that it is generally excluded unless there are areas that are considered developable by the Town and the State. She noted that she is not sure what this process entails.

**Town-Owned Buildings:** Ms. Christodoulopoulos pointed out potential pitfalls with including the Bog House in the zoning, such as the fact that the land is currently under the care and control of the Conservation Commission, and the timeframe for making the land/building available for housing may not align with the MBTA Communities timeline. Ms. Johnson-Battista noted Article 97 complications.

**Town Center / Mixed-Use:** Mr. Harrison questioned whether the Subcommittee discussed that the Multi-family Unit Capacity Analysis does not need to take into consideration limitations on existing water or wastewater infrastructure. Chair Grady responded in the affirmative. Mr. Harrison asked if this was applicable to the Town Center discussion. Mr. Mariano said his take on the issue would be that the State would think the plan is disingenuous. He opined that developing the Town Center does not make sense without infrastructure, which would require all or most property owners to sell to a developer. Chair Grady said her take was that the Subcommittee should present something real to the Planning Board. Ms. Reid suggested adding a note that there are known water quality issues in the Town Center. Mr. Mariano added that there are known water quality and quantity issues. Chair Grady said to leave specific issues out and note more generally that there are water issues.

**Large Development on Edge of Town:** Ms. Christodoulopoulos said there were public comments made in meetings where this idea was brought up again in favor, and suggested this could be something the Planning Board would want to consider further.

**Churches:** Mr. Mariano asked if this strategy would be considered spot zoning. Mr. Harrison suggested, if there are concerns about spot zoning, that a legal analysis be obtained.

**Vacant Land:** Mr. Harrison commented that the impact on individuals is not something that can be minimized. Ms. Christodoulopoulos noted that this approach conflicts with Master Plan and Select Board goals of preservation and protection of natural resources. The Subcommittee then discussed the idea of a multi-family conservation cluster subdivision on larger tracts of land and added language that they had considered creating a zoning overlay as an alternative that could be applicable to parcels otherwise able to be

developed for single-family home subdivisions pursuant to Subdivision Control Law and/or Approval Not Required plans. A multi-family conservation cluster subdivision overlay would encourage less clearing of parcels and ensure meaningful habitat preservation.

The Subcommittee acknowledged that Mr. Harrison needed to leave and asked him for any final comments. Mr. Harrison brought up the Do Nothing alternative and stated that the Subcommittee needs to recognize that the Town is looking at them as subject matter experts on this topic, and to defer everything to Town Meeting is avoiding some of the responsibility that the Town has placed on the Subcommittee. Ms. Reid responded that the Town did not write the charge, the Planning Board did. Mr. Harrison said he understood but wanted to recognize that people are looking to the Subcommittee to be the experts on this issue. The Subcommittee agreed to leave the language on Do Nothing as is. Mr. Harrison left the meeting at 9:59 AM.

**Commercial Areas:** Ms. Reid pointed out that the commercial zoning districts exist because of historic commercial uses.

**Existing Development Overlay:** Ms. Christodoulopoulos urged the consideration of zoning a portion over existing density as it could lessen the amount of new development. She agreed that doing it as a sole strategy is disingenuous but doing a portion could lessen the blow and demonstrate responsiveness to feedback. Ms. Christodoulopoulos expressed concern with the new ADU Law adding to densification in Town. She said finding a middle ground shows good will. Chair Grady noted that she has several counterpoints she could make whether now or later. Mr. Mariano asked whether the State would rule it out. Chair Grady clarified that the State looks at land as vacant and does not rule out zoning over existing denser development. She noted that the actual acreage of the existing development tracts is relatively small, and some of them use adjacent land for nitrogen loading. She noted that when the nitrogen loading exclusion adjustments are made to the development parcels, in some cases the zoning may result in less density than what is there, and the State is not favorable to reduced density. She explained the alternative, which is not adjusting for nitrogen loading, and opens the flood gates to larger buildings and unintended consequences. The group agreed that further consideration was needed for this strategy.

**Low Value Properties:** Subcommittee members expressed concerns with spot zoning.

**Willing Property Owners:** Subcommittee members expressed concerns with spot zoning.

The Subcommittee added a preamble to the memo.

Ms. Johnson-Battista asked what happened with Chair Grady's draft letter to the editor regarding Nitrogen loading calculations. Ms. Christodoulopoulos asked if the Subcommittee should include this letter in their information to the Planning Board. Chair Grady said her feeling was that they would not get consensus on the letter, and said she did not feel comfortable taking

votes to represent the Subcommittee since not all members were present. Ms. Johnson-Battista expressed that the letter contains good information and should be disseminated. Chair Grady offered that she could submit it as an individual not representing the whole Subcommittee.

Ms. Reid made a motion to submit the alternative strategies report to the Planning Board for tonight's meeting. Mr. Mariano seconded the motion, and it was approved 4-0-1 (Christodoulopoulos abstained) by roll call vote.

Ms. Johnson-Battista made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Reid seconded the motion, and it was approved 5-0-0 by roll call vote. The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 AM.

These minutes were approved on 12/17/24.

#### Materials Reviewed

- Agenda 12/9/24 Morning
- 12/5/24 Memo to Planning Board
- Alternative Strategies Discussed but Not Pursued