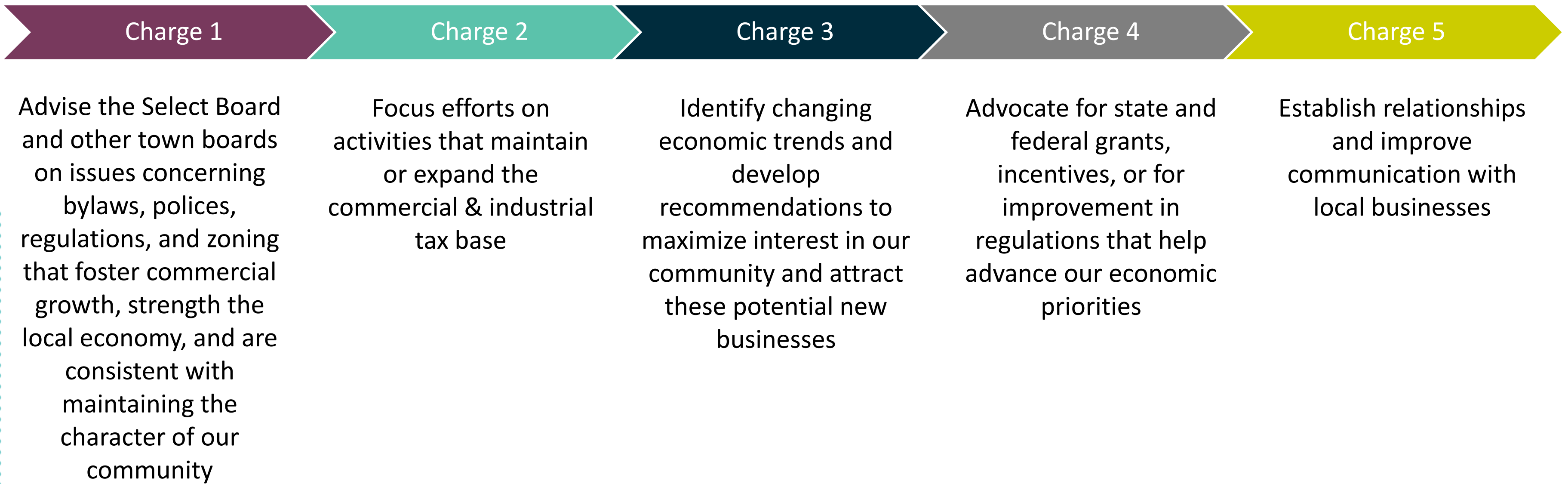


The image displays a dense, repeating pattern of small, identical text blocks arranged in a grid. Each block contains a short paragraph of text, which appears to be a placeholder or a test image. The text is rendered in a light blue or teal color against a white background. The overall effect is a textured, almost abstract composition of many tiny, legible sentences.

Economic Development Committee – FY24 Update to Select Board

- The Economic Development Committee (EDC) was formed in 2020 by the Select Board following the completion of the Belmont Business Strategy. The role of the Belmont EDC is to develop, implement, and update the recommendations in the Belmont Business Strategy, in conjunction with Town staff and departments



Committee Membership Overview



Name	Position	Affiliation	Term
Paul Joy	Chair	Engagement Managerr, Ducker Carlisle	2025
Wendy Etkind	Secretary	Product Management, Oracle Retail Global Business Unit; 30+ yrs working in & with the retail industry	2024
Erin Brown	Communications Coordinator	PR Director, Writer, Business Owner	2024
Rui “Renee” Guo	Member	Planning Board Representative	2024
Deran Muckjian	Member	Owner, The Toy Shop of Belmont	2024
Jack Sy	Member	Owner, Number 1 Taste	2024
Marie Warner	Member	CEO & Founder, Boston Women Connect and Warner Professional Sales	2024
Schuyler Wiggin	Member	Owner, Quebrada Baking company	2025
Armine Humphrey	Member	Owner, Valentina Day Spa	2025
Christopher Ryan	Staff Contact	Director of Planning and Building	



EDC Mission and Goals

Economic Development Committee Goals

Vision Statement

- Belmont is a vibrant and inclusive community that fosters innovation and growth, where businesses thrive and individuals can live, work, and play in a safe and sustainable environment

Local Government Support for Small Business

- Small business and property owners to have open lines of communication with the town, including someone in the town with the position to guide in the process of opening business
- A more proactive Belmont in attracting new business from across Metro Boston and beyond
- We want Belmont to be able to better identify, research, apply for, and win state and federal grants
- We encourage Belmont to pursue additional Commonwealth surplus dollars for local one-time projects
- Create a comprehensive and reliable checklist for opening a business in Belmont that covers different industries and business types—including estimate time of completion

New business formation and growth

- Strive to make it easier to open a business in Belmont, including bylaw review, small business input, and strategic flexibility and change in accordance with other peer communities
- Advocate for and help fund the Trapelo Wayfinding project to increase the number of people who visit, shop, and dine along the corridor

Continued EDC Activity

- The EDC commits to continue hosting networking events, posting a communications newsletter, and providing public comment to Belmont media outlets, including the Belmont Voice
- We will also continue bringing small business, citizens, committees, and property owners together to discuss future initiatives, as well as support other committee activities as a supporter, liaison, or participatory member



2023-24 EDC Accomplishments

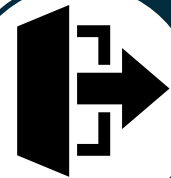
Charge 1 – Advising the Select Board and other town departments



- Presented 2022-23 achievements to the Select Board in Feb 2023, created an EDC Mission Statement, and submitted required Annual Report



- Town committee outreach included Vision 21 Implementation Committee, the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Long-Term Capital Budget Committee, School Committee, Community Path Project Committee, Energy Committee, Diversity Task Force & DEI Implementation Committee, Website Renewal Committee, the MBTA Multifamily Zoning Committee, and many others



- Joint external organizational outreach included the Belmont Business Center Association, Belmont Media Center, the Belmont Citizens Forum, the Belmont Voice, numerous town meeting caucuses and meeting members, and Work-Based Learning Alliance (successfully handed off to School Committee and Administration)



- Researched opportunities to change restaurant zoning, hotel zoning, sign zoning, parking regulations, permitting, and networked with Belmont landlords and members of the public to better inform challenges and opportunities, and overall execution



- Advocated (alongside VIC) and helped pass Restaurant Zoning Bylaw Reform at Special Town Meeting 2023 (November 2023)
- Successfully recruited two full new members in 2024 (Armine Humphrey and Schuyler Wiggin) with a full competitive vetting process
- Demand for economic development membership, involvement, and connection remains incredibly high

Work-based Learning Alliance (WBLA) Example



Factsheet	
Mission	To enable Massachusetts high school students access to paid virtual internships with Commonwealth employers
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ \$4 Million in state grants
BHS Student Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 100 Hr Paid Internship▪ Skills Course + 20 Hr Paid Project
Belmont Student Placements (Aug 2023-Jan 2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Atlantic Bay Mortgage Group▪ WBLA▪ Practera▪ Worcester Night Life▪ Tryphon Technologies▪ Massport▪ Good Life Productions▪ Rx-Post▪ New Brunswick College of Craft and Design▪ Creative Canvas Productions

“Belmont High School had four students participate in our inaugural cohort with the program last spring, two students interned over the summer, and there are currently eight students engaged in an internship this winter. The roll out was coordinated by me, and used advertisement through Sci/Tech teachers and Guidance counselors to inform students about the opportunity. I then worked with WBLA to follow up with students and help them get all required preparations and paperwork completed.

I was also able to attend some of the post-internship presentations. It was amazing what students were asked to do, and how they delivered.

The business partners spoke highly of the products the teams of students were able to produce. Anecdotally, students have told me that it was very eye opening to be engaged in the ‘real world’ and they gained skills around data analysis and marketing.

I think word of mouth will continue to spread among students about this experience, and interest will continue to grow this spring and into the summer.” – Liz Baker, Director of Science & Technology/Engineering, Belmont Public Schools

“This is all very exciting. Thanks all!” – Lucia Sullivan, Assistant Superintendent, Belmont Public Schools

“This is great news—internship opportunities are so important for our students, so I am glad to know that this is contributing to that effort. Thank you!” – Dr. Jill Geiser, Superintendent, Belmont Public Schools

Next Steps:

The EDC has invited representatives from the School Committee, Administration, Ms. Baker, and WBLA representatives to address the Belmont business community in March 2024, with the goal of recruiting additional Belmont businesses to join the WBLA alliance and benefit from projects done by Belmont students and other participatory high school students from across Massachusetts to improve marketing, data analytics, and other critical areas of improved business competitiveness

Source: Work-based Learning Alliance website, MA press release, EDC discussions

Charge 2 – Focus efforts on activities that maintain or expand the commercial & industrial tax base



Followed the Direction of the Select Board and Worked Alongside VIC to Pass Restaurant Reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Numerous meetings on a wide number of ideas and key questions, as detailed in the following slidesHeld two joint meetings with VIC, including a meeting that saw five key recommendations pass without a dissenting voteAdvocated for Town Meeting Member support and passage of restaurant reform, including definition simplicity and the elimination of special permits for non-formula based Food Service Establishments
Feedback from Local Business & Commercial Property Owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Conducted a survey of local restaurants and also solicited primary feedback from a range of existing Belmont restaurant ownersHave also increased engagement with Have had additional conversations with other Leonard St. property owners as well as reach out to current and former businesses owners about the challenges of opening and operating a business in Belmont
Analyze Belmont’s Current Challenges and Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hosted a wide number of speakers and experts at our committee meetings to better understand and discuss Belmont’s fiscal challengesContinued to stay informed on critical zoning issues such as MBTA 3A
Recommendations to Select Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Add Economic Development Coordinator to the Department of Planning & BuildingHotels as a by-right business type up to 35 rooms within LB 1 and 2town-wide economic development market analysis and working group in preparation for a new Master Plan

“The process was unnecessarily long and complex involving far more meetings, documents and approvals than in any other town in Massachusetts.”

“Lacks clarity. Could have had more guidance to quicken the permitting process. I was told I missed a step in the permitting process and should have applied for the CV first prior to the liquor license..”

Belmont Hotel Discussion and Key Questions

- The Economic Development Committee (EDC) was formed in 2020 by the Select Board following the completion of the Belmont Business Strategy. The role of the Belmont EDC is to develop, implement, and update the recommendations in the Belmont Business Strategy, in conjunction with Town staff and departments

Question 1

- What specific zoning regulation should be implemented for hotels in Belmont, considering the town's character, preferred locations, and size limitations?
- Goal – prompt discussion about types of hotels (boutique, chain, B&B, etc) that would be a good fit for Belmont and the areas where they could be developed

Question 2

- How should the zoning bylaws address short-term rentals such as Airbnb or other temporary housing options within the town?
- Goal – open up discussion on possible restrictions, regulations, and potential impact on the local community, as well as whether specific zoning regulations should be created for short-term rentals

Question 3

- What measures should be taken to ensure that the development of hotels and short-term rentals will not negatively impact the surrounding residential areas, such as noise, traffic, and parking concerns?
- Goal – prompt potential strategies to minimize any negative effects on the community while still promoting economic growth through the introduction of hotels and short-term rentals

Existing Hotel and Accommodation Mentions within the Zoning Bylaw

Existing Bylaw

- The only mention of Hotels within the Zoning bylaw has to do with parking (5.1.2 section c)

5.1.2 section C

- “Hotels, motels, room and board, other commercial accommodations: one parking space for each guest unit, plus one parking space for each eight units or fraction thereof.”

Adding comprehensive language to the zoning bylaw will allow Belmont to better manage the growth and development of hotels in town, ensuring they align with the community’s vision and goals. The current language in the zoning bylaw is not sufficient to address the any aspects of hotel development except for parking

Comprehensive
Regulation
Introduction

Encourage
Investment

Preserve Town
Character

Address Community
Needs

Promote
Sustainable Growth

Restaurant Zoning Bylaw Key Questions

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Survey Results

- What did business owners tell us about opening a restaurant in Belmont?
- Goal 1: To understand the challenges and opportunities faced by restaurant owners in Belmont
- Goal 2: To understand any significant trends or common themes that arise from the responses
- Outcome: Identify the most common concerns, challenges, and suggestions of business owners

Current Key Bylaws

- What do the current bylaws in Belmont say about restaurant regulations?
- Goal 1: To give an overview of the current regulatory landscape for restaurants in Belmont
- Goal 2: To highlight any areas within the current bylaws that may be causing difficulty for restaurant owners
- Outcome: A clear understand of the existing regulations that govern restaurant operations in Belmont

Key Considerations

- How should the current bylaws be adjusted based on the survey feedback?
- What are the potential implications of these changes on the broader community
- Goal 1: To consider changes or additions to the bylaws based on the survey results and the current regulatory context
- Outcome: A list of recommended changes to the bylaws for further discussion by VIC and the Select Board

Belmont Parking, Signage, and Building Height Key Questions

- The Economic Development Committee (EDC) was formed in 2020 by the Select Board following the completion of the Belmont Business Strategy. The role of the Belmont EDC is to develop, implement, and update the recommendations in the Belmont Business Strategy, in conjunction with Town staff and departments

Minimum Parking Requirements

- What are Belmont's Existing Parking Requirement Categories?
- How does this compare to our neighbors?

Signage Bylaw

- What do the current bylaws in Belmont say about signage regulations?
- Goal 1: To give an overview of the current signage regulatory landscape in Belmont
- Goal 2: To highlight any areas within the current bylaws that may be causing difficulty for business owners

Building Heights

- How should the current bylaws be adjusted based on the survey feedback?
- What are the potential implications of these changes on the broader community
- Goal 1: To consider changes or additions to the bylaws based on the survey results and the current regulatory context
- Outcome: A list of recommended changes to the bylaws for further discussion by VIC and the Select Board

VIC and EDC Final Motions and Recommendations – July 2023



Lodging/Hotels Adopted Motion

I move that the Economic Development Committee and the Vision 21 Implementation Committee endorse the recommendations concerning lodging. These recommendations include creating precise definitions for Hotel and Hotel – Boutique/B&B; permitting Hotels – Boutique/B&B by-right in all business districts, and larger Hotels in specified districts. These actions are rooted in our commitment to facilitating suitable economic development, increasing lodging diversity, and preserving our town's character."

Adopted: 17 Yes, 0 No

Restaurants Adopted Motion

I move that the Economic Development Committee and the Vision 21 Implementation Committee endorse the recommendations regarding restaurants. These include streamlining restaurant definitions; permitting Restaurants all business districts; eliminating or relaxing minimum parking requirements; and implementing a grease trap code and allowing outdoor seating by right on the restaurants property. Our aim is to simplify the approval process for restaurants, support a varied local economy, improve dining options, and uphold environmental standards through improved grease management."

Adopted: 17 Yes, 0 No

Signs Adopted Motion

I move that the Economic Development Committee and the Vision 21 Implementation Committee endorse the recommendations pertaining to signage. This includes allowing conforming signs by right and non-conforming signs with a special permit. This change aligns our signage regulations with the overarching zoning bylaw, upholds the principles of the 2017 sign law, and improves efficiency for the Planning Board, Office of Community Development, and business owners."

Adopted: 17 Yes, 0 No

General Business Adopted Motion

I move that the Economic Development Committee and the Vision 21 Implementation Committee endorse the general business recommendations. These include, permitting conveyance of permits with properties under certain time frames, and obligating the Office of Community Development to respond to application requests within 30 days. Our intention is to bolster Belmont's competitive edge, encourage investment, expedite processes, and bring our systems up-to-date."

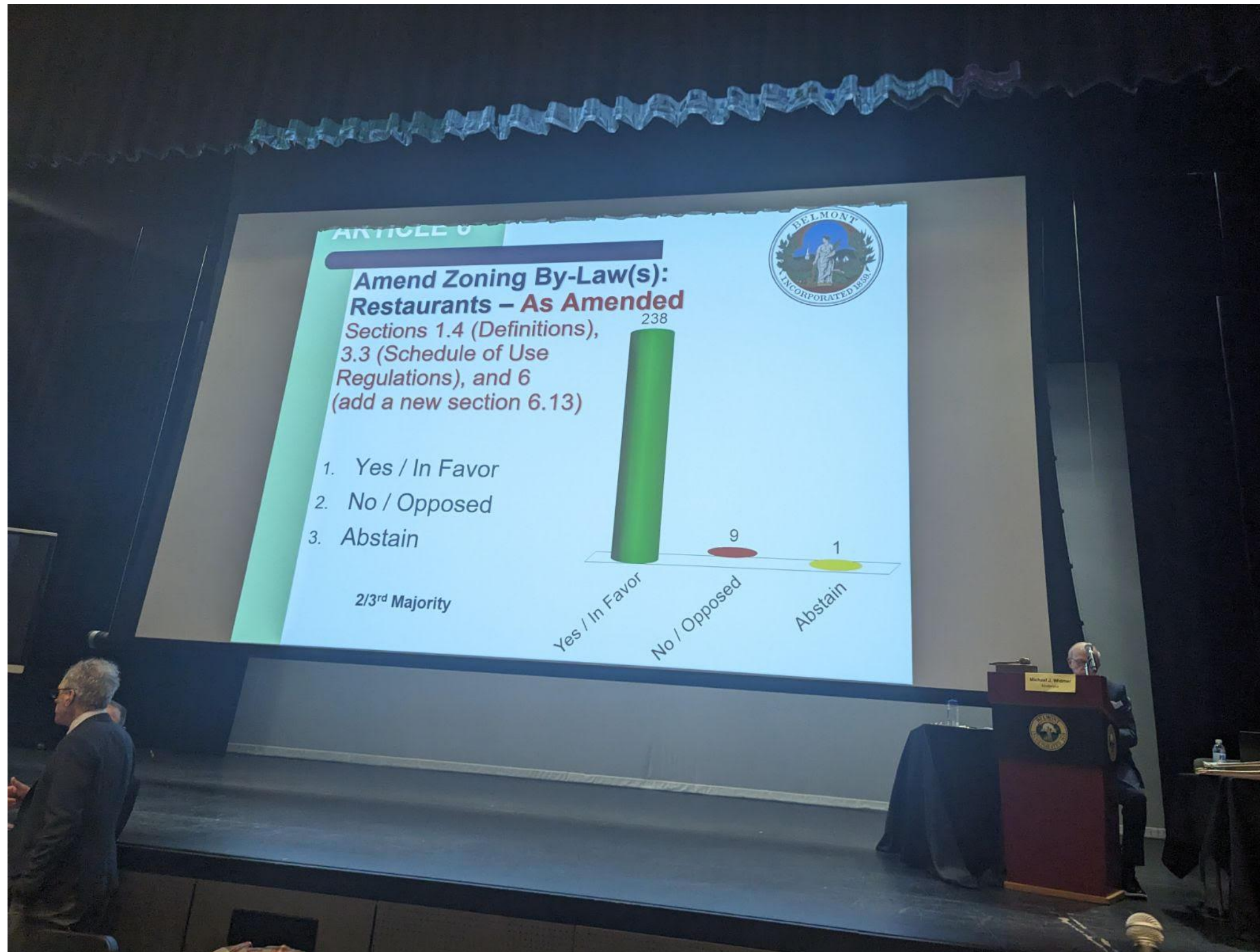
Adopted: 16 Yes, 0 No

Final Adopted Motion

I move that the Economic Development Committee and the Vision 21 Implementation Committee endorse all the recommendations presented today concerning lodging, restaurants, signage, and general business. Our unified endorsement reflects our commitment to improving our town's business environment, stimulating economic growth, and aligning our policies with modern practices."

Adopted: 16 Yes, 0 No

Source: VIC and EDC discussions



Source: EDC Chair Personal Photo

Additional Select Board Advice and Recommendation:



Fall 2024 Hotel Recommendations

The Economic Development Committee (EDC) has unanimously approved a motion supporting the concept of 'by-right' hotels up to 35 rooms in specific zones within Belmont. This decision was made at our meeting on Tuesday, January 23rd, with a decisive vote of 7-0

We have identified LB 1 and LB 2 zones as the most suitable for by-right hotel development up to 35 rooms. Hotels of larger size would be permissible by special permit. Additionally, we suggest that hotels could be permissible by special permit in LB 3 and the General Business district. Furthermore, we propose that areas like the McLean R&D subdistrict could be considered for hotel development, potentially under a special permit process

Our committee believes that these recommendations will significantly contribute to Belmont's economic vitality and align with the town's strategic development objectives. We are confident that this initiative will enhance Belmont's attractiveness as a destination, benefiting both residents and visitors

While we have not created specific language to be included in the Spring 2024 Warrant, we are aware that such efforts are underway at the Planning Board level. We strongly believe given the results of Fall Restaurant Reform that adding hotel language and use table to the Belmont Zoning Bylaw would pass Town Meeting, and we urge the Planning Board and Select Board to include it

Source: EDC Minutes

Economic Development Market Analysis and Working Group

In our recent EDC meeting on Tuesday, January 9th, we discussed and voted unanimously in favor of conducting a market analysis as a necessary precursor to any vision planning and zoning effort aimed at expanding our tax base. The need for this analysis has grown more apparent in recent years, and we believe that it aligns with the broader objectives of our community, as well as the objectives of various governmental entities. We are excited about the prospects of this endeavor, as it represents an opportunity for our town to make informed decisions about its economic future

A market analysis is a fundamental prerequisite for vision planning and zoning. It provides the critical information required to assess the capacity of our community to support the desired uses before committing to planning and zoning for them. A comprehensive town-wide market analysis will help the Select Board, the Planning Board, Vision 21, and the EDC to identify market needs by type and quantify them. This data will enable subsequent planning and zoning processes to calibrate their districts and dimensions effectively. We urge the Select Board to fund this market analysis without delay

In line with our commitment to making informed decisions, we have taken steps to be represented as part of a cross-committee and board working group dedicated to overseeing this initiative. Member Armine Humphrey has graciously agreed to serve as our EDC liaison to this group, working alongside representatives from other committees. In addition, Members Deran Muckjian and Erin Brown have volunteered to serve as Armine's alternate, ensuring continuity in our efforts

Charge 3 - Identify changing economic trends and develop recommendations to maximize interest in our community and attract these potential new businesses



Wayfinding

- We are pursuing external fund sources with support from the Garden Club to finally fund Trapelo Rd Wayfinding
- This includes an updated price sheet from our 2022 consultant, Favermann Designs



Charge 4 -Advocate for state and federal grants, incentives, or for improvement in regulations that help advance our economic priorities

Grant	Amount	Use	Impact	Future
One Stop For Growth	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none">We encourage the Select Board and the Office of Planning and Building to pursue state grant programs pertinent to core economic development growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Given discussion for a new Master Plan and Zoning Bylaw Re-write, and the town’s fiscal situation, grants will be pivotal to allowing Belmont to reposition itself for future commercial growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Additional funding required to fully execute the project—could be a combination of private/donated and public capital dollars
Other	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Other committees have also inquired about grant funding—such requests should be streamlined and organized through a single point of contact within the administration		

Town of Action – Community Planning Grant Program	Town of Acushnet – Community Planning Grant Program	Town of Concord – Community Planning Grant Program	Town of Norton – Community Planning Grant Program	Town of Easton – Community Planning Grant Program
Acton will create an Economic Development Strategic Plan to help direct efforts and resources towards a clearly defined vision for the future	Acushnet will update its Master Plan, and provide a comprehensive analysis of existing conditions, a vision for the future, and an implementation plan to achieve the Town’s vision, to enable economic growth and housing developments	Concord will complete an Economic Feasibility Analysis for compliance for Section 3A of MGL c.40A	Norton will do a comprehensive zoning update to ensure that all bylaws are consistent with the State's laws and policy goals and ensure that the town is allowing for a variety of housing options and economic development opportunities which incentivize mixed-uses	Easton will update its 2014 Master Plan through public outreach, updating formative issues, goals & objectives and creating an action plan that incorporates current trends and issues
Amount: \$90k	Amount: \$100k	Amount: \$25k	Amount: \$60k	Amount: \$60k

Examples of other MA towns using One Stop for Growth state funds for economic development and master planning documents

Charge 5 - Establish relationships and improve communication with local businesses

Communication Coordinator Role

We continue to send monthly newsletter to businesses with updates, important information and surveys to get feedback

Business Database

We have continued to update our online business database and directory

Small Business Networking

In 2023, we hosted two additional networking events at Savinos (Cushing Square) and Patou Thai (Belmont Center), with generous support from Cambridge Savings Bank

EDC and Belmont Town Day

We once again had a table at September 2023 Town Day, which enabled us to have robust conversations on economic development with community members

Business Outreach

We continue to track, advocate, and celebrate new business openings, as well as monitor existing business health and ongoing operational success

Media

Continue to engage all media outlets including the Belmont Voice, Belmont Media Center, Belmont Citizens Forum, and others to advocate for economic development

LEONARD ST., BELMONT, MASSACHUSETTS

BELMONT BUSINESS CENTER 1930'S

Source: Belmont Historical Society

