

Town of Belmont, Massachusetts
MBTA COMMUNITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

February 9, 2024

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA

DATE: February 20, 2024
TIME: 3:44 PM

Present: Thayer Donham, Roy Epstein, Rachel Heller, Paul Joy, Patrick Murphy, Drew Nealon, Julie Wu

Town Staff: Christopher Ryan

MAPC: Josh Fiala

The meeting was called to order at 8:31 am. The meeting was held virtually via Zoom and in person in Belmont Town Hall.

1) Discussion of Chapter 3A Compliance Model

Roy Epstein announced that he had reconsidered and now supports removing the parcels with Star Market, The Belmont Car Wash and the BP gas station from the maps. He moved to remove the following parcels: 521,535 and 563 Trapelo Road from further consideration. Rachel stated that this is not an agenda item and should not be voted on tonight. Patrick Murphy seconded the motion. Roy stated that there was a second and that the vote would proceed. Rachel spoke about the need to hold off on voting and to present this to the public at our community meeting on 2/15 to get feedback before making any decision. The motion was adopted by a vote of 6 to 1.

Yes: Thayer Donham, Roy Epstein, Paul Joy, Patrick Murphy, Drew Nealon, Julie Wu

No: Rachel Heller

Roy Epstein told the committee that he had two observations regarding Option 1:

- i) South Concord Ave parcels should be modified from Sub-district 4
- ii) He was concerned that since Sherman Gardens has age-restricted senior units that the property might not count toward 3A compliance.

Rachel Heller reported that the zoning cannot restrict age but the property owner or developer can. Josh Fiala confirmed Rachel's statement. Roy Epstein requested that EOHLC weigh in and confirm this. Chris Ryan will ask EOHLC.

Paul Joy requested that the Memo Roy Epstein wrote to MAPC be forwarded to the committee along with the response provided by MAPC.

Josh Fiala reviewed the table showing the number of units in the option but it needs to be modified to reflect the removal of the 3 parcels in Waverley Square.

Julie Wu wondered if the contiguity requirement was making the proposed zoning in Waverley Square too dense?

Josh Fiala reviewed the Option 2 Waverley and Belmont Center only. He reported that it was easier to achieve contiguity in this option. The numbers will change based on the prior discussion and based on the final review by EOHLC.

Patrick Murphy and Rachel Heller requested that MAPC add Belmont Village back into the map. Josh Fiala indicated that probably could happen and still achieve compliance.

Roy Epstein asked for clarity from EOHLC on how the Mandatory Mixed Use zoning is calculated toward 3A compliance.

Josh Fiala reviewed Option 3 – Distributed Option.

Roy Epstein and Paul Joy expressed concern about eliminating commercial space. Rachel Heller requested that all the Belmont Housing Authority properties be included in the mapping.

Josh Fiala told the committee that MAPC was having trouble keeping up with all the tweaks the committee was requesting because it is a lot of work to make changes and rerun the model each time. He is concerned because the discussion was focusing on two modified options: the distributed option and the station area option. MAPC is burning through fee that they would like use for other things like helping with the communications.

Rachel Heller suggested that the committee get feedback on the existing options at the Public Forum on 2/15/24 and then tweaks can be made to the mapping. Josh Fiala said that was fine but they will still need to rerun the model after the tweaks are made. He also said that changing typologies is a big change.

Paul Joy reported that he had listened to the Planning Board meeting and is interested in getting a market and fiscal analysis and would like that topic on a future meeting agenda.

2) Public Comments

Jane Shapiro thanked the committee for the vote on the Star Market property.

John Beaty said that he lived on Pleasant Street and he is against any tall development on Leonard Street. He was not sure how the zoning went from a 3 to a 5.

Linn Hobbs, 12 Moore St, reported that his house is included in the map. Since it is within the Pleasant Street Historic District, it should be removed from the 3A zoning map. Roy Epstein promised that the map would be modified to remove his property.

Antonio Molle indicated that he would prefer to consider the price of non-compliance to the 3A zoning. He feels that this zoning will negatively affect the town of Belmont.

Linda Nickens stated that she is concerned about the potential height of structures on the west side of Leonard Street as shown in the current proposal. Roy Epstein responded that he would discuss with MAPC.

Next Meetings:

- **Monday, February 12th at 7 pm in a hybrid format.**
- **Thursday, February 15th from 7-9 pm Public Forum in a Hybrid Format at the Beech Street Center.**
- **Thursday, February 29th at 7:30 pm** in a remote Zoom format only. Paul Joy to do minutes.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 am

Minutes recorded by Thayer Donham.