



MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA

MBTA TASK FORCE • TOWN HALL
Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts 01944-1399
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MINUTES OF THE MBTA TASK FORCE

July 20, 2023 6:30 p.m. Hybrid and In-Person Room 5

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chris Olney, Chair, Ann Harrison, Sarah Mellish, Susan Philbrick, Richard Smith, Sandy Bodmer-Turner in Room 5 with Dennison Hall, and Gat Morse online

MEMBER NOT PRESENT: Mike Pratt

STAFF PRESENT: Interim Town Planner, Betsy Ware. and Administrator, Gail Hunter

GUEST:

Call to Order – the meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Acknowledge receipt of correspondence

An email was received from Ms. Iovanni, 20 Pine Street, Unit A and posted to the website. Task Force members were reminded to forward all correspondence to Ms. Hunter for posting to the website.

Task Force Chair Reminders

- Open process – with back-and-forth exchanges among members of the Task Force.
- All meeting materials will be posted on the website.
- During the meeting the Chair will acknowledge receipt of correspondence but not read correspondence into the record. All correspondence will be posted on the website.
- The Task Force will address topics on the meeting agenda.
- Public Comment will be taken at the end of the meeting.
- The Zoom Chat Function will remain open as long as the function and chats are respectful.
- The Task Force will hopefully complete business by consensus, if not conflicting views will be part of the final report.
- Please follow the Open Meeting Law and refrain from discussing Task Force business outside of scheduled meetings.
- During Public Comment please state your name and address and keep your comments brief.
- Site visits will be posted as meetings; however, the Task Force will have no deliberations during site visits.

Meeting Schedule

Ms. Ware provided the Task Force with the agenda in the Word document below. Meetings will be once a month during July and August and twice monthly starting in September.

Ms. Ware stated that a MIT class of graduate students will be using the MBTA Zoning in Manchester as part of their practicum.

Members of the Task Force expressed interest in using the GIS program. Ms. Harrison suggested a meeting to demonstrate how the maps are utilized and will schedule a meeting for June 26th in Room 5 for interested members of the Task Force. Mr. Olney added that State Law had created tools for the Task Force to use.

Long range Task Force schedule is contained in the Word Document below.



2023-7-10 -Outline
for MBTA Zoning Ta

Introduction of Task Force Members

Mr. Olney stated he has served as an elected member of the Planning Board for four years and has served as a Trustee on the Affordable Housing Trust. Mr. Olney clarified that the Task Force is not discussing development in the Town it is proposing Zoning that might allow controls for future development. He added there is a lot of talk about density and the fact is the minimum lot size in the downtown area is 6K square feet and the guidelines defined are 15 units per acre.

Ms. Mellish serves as Chair of the Zoning Board of Appeals and has been on the Board for nine years. Ms. Mellish is also Chair of the Finance Committee and has served on the Finance Committee for 12 years. She is the designated Trustee for the Finance Committee on the Affordable Housing Trust. Ms. Mellish pointed out that the challenge for the Task Force is to bring the non-conforming lots into Zoning to allow for those homes to have the same standards by right as conforming lots.

Ms. Philbrick stated that she has served on the Planning Board since January 2023 and does not have the intuitive knowledge of Mr. Olney and Ms. Mellish, however, she is interested in considering what is best for the Town with the understanding there are unique issues around topography that apply only to our Town. She committed to work as an advocate for the Town.

Ms. Harrison indicated that she has been active in Town government and has served on the Finance Committee, School Committee, and is currently an elected member of the Select Board. Her goal is for the Town to match Zoning for what exists. Ms. Harrison is also concerned that recent development in the downtown area is constructed on filled tide land and that will likely result in flooding in the future. She questions if it is wise to change zoning to meet the MBTA mandate including filled tide land.

Mr. Smith currently serves on the Historic District Commission as a Commissioner. He is interested in historic preservation and believes the Town would be well served to stop the tear down of historic homes to keep the Town as beautiful as possible. Mr. Smith added that Manchester-by-the-Sea is a wonderful place to live.

Ms. Bodmer-Turner stated that she is one of two citizen representatives on the Task Force. Ms. Bodmer-Turner indicated that she has past experience working on land permitting projects primarily in the western states. She would like to make sure that the process of the Task Force is clear, transparent, and well communicated to residents.

Mr. Hall stated that he believes the biggest challenge for the Task Force is meeting the goals of two State agencies, one Housing Development and the other Coastal Management, whose goals are in conflict with Housing Development not taking into consideration that flooding is inevitable.

Mr. Morse indicated that he was an investor and developer of real estate in Boston with 10% to 20% of his development projects in affordable housing. He is optimistic that the Town can achieve the goals of MBTA Zoning.

Objective of the Task Force

Mr. Olney presented an objective for discussion. The Task Force members discussed, edited, and agreed on the final Mission Statement contained in the PDF below.



MBTA Mission
Statement.pdf

Review Primer of Zoning

The PDF below is the revised outline of Zoning for the MBTA Task Force.



MBTA Zoning.pdf

Additional Controls – Wetlands Protection Act

The Conservation Commission oversees the Wetlands Protection Act, and the Act clearly states that the Town cannot build on wetlands. The Town also has a Flood Plan Zoning By-Law, that controls building on wetlands. This By-Law was approved by the State and FEMA.

The Task Force confirmed that the State had eliminated Town wetlands from their projection of land available for building.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Ms. Harrison moved to approve the MBTA Task Force meeting minutes of June 8, 2023; Ms. Philbrick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjourn

Ms. Mellish moved to adjourn the MBTA Task Force meeting; Ms. Harrison seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.