



MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA

MBTA TASK FORCE • TOWN HALL
Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts 01944-1399
Telephone (978) 526-6405 FAX (978) 526-2001

MINUTES OF THE MBTA TASK FORCE

September 21, 2023 6:30 p.m. Hybrid and In-Person Room 5

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chris Olney, Chair, Gar Morse, Susan Philbrick, Ann Harrison, Sarah Mellish, Sandy Bodmer-Turner, and Dennison Hall

Member Online: Richard Smith

MEMBER NOT PRESENT: Mike Pratt

STAFF PRESENT: Town Administrator, Greg Federspiel, Interim Town Planner, Betsy Ware. Task Force Administrator, Gail Hunter, Communication Manager, Tiffany Marletta

GUEST: N/A

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

Acknowledge Receipt of Correspondence

Between September 7 and September 21, the Task Force received 1 email from Ms. Foley and 3 emails from Ms. Iovanni. The Task Force will not reply to emails, however, will take the information under consideration.

Chair's additional comments as a follow up to the September 7, 2023 meeting.

- Mr. Olney noted that there is a Housing Production Plan for the Town that was developed in 2019.
- Mr. Olney indicated that the role of the Task Force is not to sugar coat or fear monger about the MBTA State mandate but to realistically evaluate the need while preserving the character of the Town.
- Mr. Olney is developing an additional list of questions and answers for residents which will be posted to the MBTA website.

Status of Scope of Services

Ms. Ware stated that the Scope of Services had been forwarded to six consultants with a response due date October 6, 2023. Ms. Ware is familiar with several of the consultants and believes that any of the consultants will have the level of expertise to address the needs of the Town.

Mr. Olney suggested a subcommittee to review the proposals. Ms. Philbrick suggested a member of the Task Force who is exceptionally good with management of data. Mr. Olney, Mr. Morse, and Mr. Smith will serve on the subcommittee.

Presentation of Information on Town Grant Funding over a 10-year Period



MBTA Zoning
Impacted Grant sum

Mr. Federspiel distributed the list of grants the Town had received over the past 10-years totaling \$5.2 M for an annual amount of approximately \$500K which would represent a 2% tax increase. The grants included all grants originally outlined by the State plus the supplemental list of grants the State indicated would also be impacted.

Mr. Federspiel acknowledged that the Town over the next 3 years anticipated receiving grants in the amount of \$8.1M for an annual average of \$2.7M. The additional grants are Mass Works grants connecting the LCD with Town water and sewer, Harbor dredging from the Seaport Economic Council, and funding for repairs to the Rotunda.

Karen Bennett, 29 Lincoln St. – Ms. Bennett stated that she understood from speaking with an attorney that the revised list of grants from the State will not be enforceable and does not believe that the Town’s list is accurate or will represent the loss of grant funding to the Town.

Mr. Federspiel stated that he has not heard that the second list of grants may not be impacted because the list is not enforceable but will speak with Town Counsel. Additionally, he pointed out that failure to comply will result in the Town being tied up in litigation with the State and that challenge will result in significant legal expenses for taxpayers.

Ms. Philbrick added that she participated in an “Office Hours Meeting” with the State office that promulgated the mandate and learned that the State will reserve the right to consider any Town’s state of compliance when considering grant applications. Ms. Philbrick noted from her reading and understanding of the Law that the Town could be at risk.

Sarah Pierce, 9 Friend St. – Ms. Pierce suggested that the Task Force needs to communicate that not complying with the State is an option. She does not believe the character of the Town should be impacted over some grant funding.

Mr. Smith added that he understands the role of the Task Force is to present a solution and the implications of costs for not complying. Mr. Olney agreed. Ms. Mellish stated that the MBTA Law covers many Towns with diverse Zoning Laws and the Task Force is well suited to develop a plan and recommendation for the Town.

Communication Plan and Calendar Phase I Presentation



MBTA Zoning
Communication and



Ms. Philbrick stated that the Communication Subcommittee has met twice and would with Ms. Marletta the Task Force is developing one consistent message. The subcommittee successfully placed a newsletter in the Tax Bills which was mailed on October 1, 2023 and are planning an outdoor Public Forum for October 14th with a walking tour of relevant neighborhoods.

Review Draft Data

Ms. Ware indicated that the information from the Assessor is being reviewed and finalized. Some information specifically around mixed use units needs to be reviewed. Mr. Smith stated that the 15 unit per acre requirement needs to be further analyzed specifically around high density streets. The Task Force will continue to work to define the number of units within the half mile radius of the MBTA station.

Subcommittee Update

Communications subcommittee update was included in Ms. Philbrick's comments and activity was primarily focused on the Communication Plan and implementation of the Plan with a focus on the Public forum to be held on October 14 on Town Common.

Zoning subcommittee met and discussed districts within the downtown area. Ms. Mellish is interested in defining an overlay district and maintaining the retail area of Town. Mr. Federspiel stated that it is important to clarify the by right issue for zoning especially if the Task Force is considering an overlay district.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Meeting Minutes for September 7th were held for a minor edit around the length of time the Zoning Subcommittee would be meeting.

Public Comment There was no additional Public Comment this evening.

Any other administrative matters that could not reasonably have been anticipated in advance of the required 48-hour posting. There were no additional matters to discuss this evening.

Adjourn

Mr. Morse moved to adjourn the MBTA Task Force meeting; Ms. Philbrick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.