

**TO:** Planning Board  
**FROM:** Sue Brown  
**SUBJECT:** Planners Report, Project Updates  
**DATE:** December 14, 2020

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### **Personal Perspective**

With a number of important projects before the Town and the need to consider each in the context of the Town's wide variety of needs and objectives, I want to share a personal perspective on how residents, elected officials, appointed board and committee members and Town staff might work together to help build consensus and make decisions.

I believe it is paramount that we shift our paradigm from a decision-making model that is based on competing or opposing ideas to one that is based on supportive ideas so the Town can benefit from collaboration and synergy. What if, instead of looking at a project as a win for one idea or priority and a loss for another, we work to find a way to make a project a win for multiple priorities. What if we could look at each development opportunity as a way to protect our environmental resources, respect community character and strengthen the local economy? What if we could look at each preservation initiative as a way to support community health, heighten our sense of community and increase resiliency? What if we replace "you can't..." with "how can we..."?

We have the ability to plan and design with nature; we have the capacity to preserve our neighborhood values and create a stronger, more inclusive and resilient community, what we need is the will to work together so all the Town's goals are met.

### **Housing Opportunity - MAHT sites and DPW**

- Our Consultant Team has completed a first draft of modeling and is looking to present findings at the next MAHT meeting.
- Modeling is based on the number of units and rents, and projects costs with assumptions about financing and a permitting path
- Initial modeling assumes 44 new affordable units across the three MHA sites and 30-40 market rate units on the DPW site

### **40R Smart Growth Overlay District Vision, Regulations and Application**

- The MAPC Project Manager, Alexis Smith, is taking an unexpected leave of absence. Chris Kuschel who has been working with us and is the principal author of the Draft Design Guidelines will take over as Project Manager.
- The Consultant Team has submitted an area calculation map and a working draft of Design Guidelines (attached)
- Planning a multi-board meeting-likely in January.

## **Open Space and Recreation Plan Update**

- The OSRP planning effort is on hold until January as Mary Reilly, Project Manager for the Town and Courtney Lewis, Project Manager for MAPC are both on unexpected temporary leaves of absence.

## **Western Woods Preservation**

- Working on a web page layout, with text, images and links.

## **ADA Project Funding Grant**

- Awaiting Decision from Mass Office on Disability

## **Wastewater Treatment Feasibility Study**

- No change in status

## **Housing Production Plan Update**

- Presentation to BOS and PB at Joint Meeting on December 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Planning Board should review strategies and be prepared to vote in early January.
- Any Board recommendations for changes to the Plan should be submitted in writing.

## **Cemetery Assessment**

- Draft Report submitted. DPW reviewing.
- Report outlines a number of strategies for increasing burial capacity at existing cemeteries well above the anticipated projection of 800 over 20 years.

## **Local Initiative Project Application**

- BOS hosting public workshops to solicit input and provide information
- Applicant has agreed to fund Peer Review of Transportation Study, Fiscal Impact Report and to identify potential Environmental Issues to address
- Negotiation with the Applicant expected to begin in January

## **Building Consensus about the Future of the LCD**

The Limited Commercial District is the focus of the Town's attention due to the LCD Smart Growth Feasibility Study, the proposed LIP apartment complex, and the LCD Zoning Review that the Board recently voted to delay. And before all of this, the Master Plan identified the Limited Commercial District as the area with the highest potential to increase Town revenue through planned development. The Master Plan also noted the need to make any development environmentally friendly stressing the need for Low Impact Development (LID) and to allow for development that fits the needs of the town.

Recognizing that the Town is looking to the LCD for multiple opportunities and understanding that several large landowners have plans they would like to

advance in collaboration with the Town and PB, I wonder if it makes sense to engage a consultant to lead the Town in an exercise to build consensus on the future of the LCD. The exercise could begin with the concepts offered by the Master Plan and refine the concept into a clear set of principles that would be the baseline for future changes.

I have spoken with one local Consultant that provides this type of service to understand how consensus building might unfold and the price for the service (\$7 to \$10K) If the Board is interested in pursuing the idea I would be happy to invite her to speak to the Board.

I also welcome other ideas or approaches for building consensus about the future of the LCD.