



Zoning Bylaw Working Group

Date: October 6, 2021
Time: 8:30 AM to 9:10 AM
Location: Conducted via remote participation

Attendees: Gene Benson, Pam Heidell, Ralph Wilmer, Charlie Kalaskas, Christian Klein, Jenny Raitt, Steve Revilak, John Worden, Kelly Lynema.

Minutes

1. **Discuss Zoning Bylaw Amendments – Section 1 of [Arlington Redevelopment Board \(ARB\) Goals for September 2021 through June 2022](#)**

Jenny Raitt shared the ARB Goals for September 2021 through June 2022, focusing on section 1, “Zoning Bylaw Amendments: Advance Zoning Bylaw amendments to future Town Meetings,” noting that this goal is similar to the ARB’s goal from last year. Specific recent or ongoing planning initiatives that have or will have recommendations for amendments to Arlington’s Zoning Bylaw include the Net Zero Plan, the Housing Plan (Housing Production Plan), and Connect Arlington.

Jenny noted that there has been interest expressed by the Board to consider zoning amendments to increase commercial development in Arlington, and invited the two ARB members on the working group to share their thoughts. Eugene Benson added that the Board has also expressed interest in amending the Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw to increase production of affordable housing. Steve Revilak stated that throughout the region there is presently many areas with 100,000+ square feet of commercial development in progress and expressed a desire to find a way to capture that momentum in Arlington. The ARB has not discussed specific zoning recommendations that it intends to advance at this point.

The Working Group discussed questions and comments regarding the ARB’s Goals, as well as other potential amendments that could emerge. Gene reported that the Clean Energy Future Committee (CEFC) has discussed going to Town Meeting with amendments to implement the Net Zero plan. Last spring, the CEFC had a subgroup working on the zoning amendment for energy efficient homes. Jenny will identify a member of the Working Group to reach out to the CEFC to discuss any potential amendments for 2022 Town Meeting.

Charlie Kalaskas asked about the ARB's goal to review the stormwater management plan and consider potential zoning recommendations. Jenny noted that the Town is currently hiring a new Environmental Planner; the new planner will work with the Engineering Division to provide an update. Charlie added that he would like to be involved in working on the initiative.

John Worden asked whether the ARB or the Working Group was going to consider amendments to mixed use along the commercial corridors. Steve responded that he is interested in understanding how the current zoning's restrictions on FAR constrain the economic viability of projects, adding that the FAR should be increased to allow the ARB to be more insistent on commercial ground floor uses in new development and redevelopment. Jenny acknowledged that there are different perspectives on this topic, and that the group should remain focused on what is feasible and determine priorities.

Turning to other potential zoning amendments, Christian Klein commented that the Zoning Board of Appeals has several items for consideration, including parking and driveways, a small amendment to large additions to add "whichever is smaller" to the definition, and a clarification to a half story.

Pam Heidell discussed working with the Conservation Commission on an amendment regarding Base Flood Elevation (BFE). Pam noted that this may align with some of the goals of the Net Zero Action Plan. In such an amendment, if an owner is rebuilding in a flood-prone area, the zoning would allow for some additional height to allow the building to be elevated to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Gene noted in the chat that Marshfield has adopted similar regulations for some areas. Jenny noted that she could bring this up at an upcoming Conservation Commission meeting.

John asked about enforcement and potential future amendments regarding driveway slopes on snout houses. Steve shared that this would be something to consider as part of the ZBA's request to review the parking section of the Zoning Bylaw. Jenny and Kelly Lynema will also address this with Mike Ciampa, who was unable to join the working group meeting due to a schedule conflict.

Next Steps

Jenny requested that members of the Working Group assist with reviewing the Zoning Audit, which was crafted as part of the Zoning Bylaw recodification in 2018. The group agreed to review the Zoning Audit documents and bring ideas about what to prioritize to the next Working Group meeting, scheduled for Wednesday, November 3. Kelly will share the audit documents in a follow up message.

2. Review minutes from August 4, 2021

John moved to accept the minutes from August 4, 2021, which was seconded by multiple members. The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Next Meeting

John expressed a desire to return to in-person meetings as soon as possible. Some members noted the convenience of meeting via Zoom. After a brief discussion, the Working Group members agreed to meet in person (if possible) in the Lyons Hearing Room of Town Hall.

2021 Meeting Dates: November 3, December 1