



Master Plan Implementation Committee

Date: March 16, 2022

Time: 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Location: Conducted via remote participation

Attendees: Joe Barr, Mike Ciampa, Pete Howard, Charlie Kalaskas, Ann LeRoy, Wendy Richter, Jenny Raitt, Kelly Lynema

Absent: Melissa Tintocalis, Peter Howard, Adam Chapdelaine, Ralph Willmer

Guests: Rebecca Gruber, Len Diggins

DRAFT Minutes

1. Review Annual Town Meeting zoning articles.

Committee members discussed various zoning amendments being heard by the Arlington Redevelopment Board (ARB) to determine articles on which they would like to provide an opinion to the ARB and/or to incorporate into their Report to Town Meeting.

Article 38: Two-Family Construction Allowed by Right in R0 and R1 Residential Zones

Kelly provided an overview of the citizen petition, noting that dimensional requirements would not change. Only the allowable use would change from single-family detached dwellings only to also allow two-family or duplex dwellings. Jenny shared an overview of the staff memo provided to the ARB and posted with the ARB's agenda.

Committee members discussed the proposal to allow two-family buildings in single-family zoning districts by right at length, with members expressing a range of opinions. Some expressed concern about unintended consequences of allowing more housing by right or felt that it was counter to the Master Plan's goal of preserving neighborhoods as they are, whereas others noted that it could address concerns about the size of new single-family homes and be viewed as consistent with the Master Plan. It was noted that this idea was not discussed during the development of the Master Plan. It was discussed that if Arlington passed this amendment, it would be the first community in the state to do so—there have been proposals in Cambridge to do similar things, but nothing has

been presented as an amendment to their zoning yet. The Committee decided that given their varying perspectives it would be best not to weigh in on it.

Article 28: Enhanced Business Districts

Jenny talked about the proposed zoning amendment. Charlie asked about the areas of town to which the amendment would apply. The amendment would address properties under the ARB's jurisdiction. The Committee looked favorably on this amendment.

Article 41: Apartment Parking Minimums

Jenny noted that this amendment, although a citizen petition, is similar to what was proposed in 2019, which would bring the parking requirement for apartment buildings in line with what is required for single-, two-, or three-family dwellings – a minimum of one parking space per dwelling.

The Committee noted that this recommendation generally makes sense. There had not been much discussion around this at the ARB hearing, and ARB members had noted that it was also supported by Connect Arlington, which the MPIC noted was viewed as an update to the Master Plan.

Wendy asked if this would apply to existing apartment buildings. Jenny provided the example of Colonial Village, which has a giant parking lot with far more parking spaces than are used. They are currently repaving the lot, which if they could reduce the number of required parking spaces to a new minimum would allow them to reduce impervious surface. The same is true for the Millbrook Apartments, which was developed in the 1970s, is overparked, and is a lost opportunity for providing mitigation in a conservation area. The Committee agreed that this is a good example of places where parking could be reduced if the amendment were approved.

Article 42: Open Space Uses

Ann explained her understanding of the citizen petition, noting that she is in favor of the amendment. Jenny noted that the Select Board, Conservation Commission, or Parks & Recreation have jurisdiction over permits. She also noted that she has never seen a special permit request to the ARB for one of these uses. Joe noted that it seems odd to require a special permit for a temporary use, and that the amendment formalizes something that has already happened. Jenny agreed, noting how the relaxed rules during the pandemic supported businesses. Members of the MPIC supported this amendment.

Article 39: FAR

Charlie asked for more information regarding the proposed amendment to increase the FAR in the Business Districts. Jenny shared that the last time an FAR increase was proposed in these areas was in 2019 as part of a suite of amendments to encourage commercial redevelopment and additional affordable housing units. Right now there are a number of factors that make it difficult to

develop along Arlington's commercial corridors. As of the meeting, DPCD had received very little information from the petitioner, so staff have been unable to perform any calculations on what the increase in FAR could mean or whether it would achieve the petitioner's goals. As the ARB had not yet discussed the amendment, the MPIC decided to withhold comment on the article.

The MPIC voted 5-1 (Joe Bar, Ann LeRoyer, Mike Ciampa, Wendy Richter, and Charlie Kalaskas voting yes, Pete Howard voting no) to endorse articles 28, 29, and 41.

2. Review Master Plan-related Annual Town Meeting warrant appropriations.

Jenny provided an overview of two appropriation articles being heard by the Finance Committee: one for two years of operation and maintenance for BLUEbikes (\$100,000), and the other for Design Standards for the Redevelopment Board (\$50,000).

Ann asked if towns participating in BLUEbikes typically must pay for operations and maintenance. Jenny explained that the original communities in the system have a different arrangement, and they receive sponsorships from the business community that Arlington doesn't have. Arlington doesn't have an off-street location for bikes, and every time a station needs to be moved, whether for snow removal or parking spaces, it costs the Town money. The other way to minimize cost is to expand usage; if Arlington meets ridership goals, it is possible that Arlington would not have to pay for maintenance and operations. This was a challenge during the pandemic. Jenny noted that there is no other revenue source for BLUEbikes.

Charlie asked for how well the service is used and how this compares to Limebikes. Staff did not know immediately but will look at Annual Reports to see if the data has been reported. The two companies track data differently.

In the past, the MPIC has opined on the regional bikeshare program. If the appropriation is refused then the Town may have to reduce the number of docking stations. Joe noted that the MPIC could comment on this in their Report to Town Meeting.

The Town has commercial and industrial design standards created in 2015, but they have not been very useful to the Board (ARB). The Residential Design Guidelines, however, have been very useful in staff reviews of Zoning Board of Appeals dockets and conversations with buildings. The ARB would like to update their Design Standards based on the Residential Design Guidelines model to be more useful in reviews.

Ann asked about the recent update to the industrial zoning to include design standards. Jenny noted that this would expand upon those and also be applicable to the business districts. It could codify some of those standards. Wendy noted that if the Residential Design Guidelines have been useful it would be helpful to have something similar for the ARB.

3. Schedule meeting for April.

The MPIC will meet again in April to discuss the Report to Town Meeting. Kelly will send an email asking whether 5:30pm on Wednesday, April 13 or Thursday, April 14 works better.

4. Review minutes from February 17, 2022.

Charlie noted a few minor changes to the minutes. As some members of the MPIC had not seen the minutes, the group decided to vote on the minutes at their April meeting.

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