



Clean Energy Future Committee

Date: April 28, 2023

Time: 8:15 – 9:30 a.m.

Hybrid Remote/In-Person Meeting

Minutes

Attendance:

- Members Remote: Amos Meeks, James DiTullio, Marc Breslow, Pasi Miettinen, Shelly Dein.
- Members In Person: David Morgan, John Alessi, Ryan Katofsky (as Chair), Talia Fox.
- Members Absent: Jim Feeney, Eric Helmuth, Nellie Aikenhead.
- Also attending: Gene Benson, Patrick Hanlon, Kelly Lynema, Claire Ricker.

R. Katofsky convened the meeting at 8:15 am.

1. Hybrid Meeting Reminders and Roll Call

- If there is a technical failure, we will try to relaunch the meeting three times.
- If we are unable to relaunch and there are more than 20 minutes left in the meeting, the CEFC will reconvene the following Friday.
- If there are fewer than 20 minutes left, the CEFC will carry the remaining agenda items forward to the next meeting.
- Introduce John Alessi, Arlington's new Senior Transportation Planner and new member of the CEFC.
 - Previously transportation planner in Malden; specialty is working to advance sustainable mobility – i.e.,: walking, biking, public transit.

2. Review and Approve 3/24/2023 Meeting Minutes

- CEFC reviewed the draft minutes from the March 24, 2023, meeting. S. Dein moved to approve and M. Breslow seconded. CEFC unanimously approved with a show of hands.

3. MBTA Communities Presentation and Discussion

- Presentation by Jennifer Susse, Equitable Arlington
- Equitable Arlington was formed a couple years ago to find ways to promote housing in Arlington; anyone is welcome, meetings are at 8:30pm, two times per month. Equitable Arlington has had some successes, including getting the accessory dwelling units (ADUs) article, which is one of the most robust in the state, passed last year. Now the organization is focused on the MBTA Communities Act, and has been going out to talk to different groups in town to

get thoughts and insights. T. Fox noted the Town has its own official MBTA working group focused specifically on the upcoming fall MBTA Communities warrant article.

- Equitable Arlington members are Arlington residents who advocate for a wide range of housing choice for every income level and every life stage, and are especially in favor of housing that is sustainable, equitable, and accessible, ideally near public transit. Arlington has a housing supply shortage, and that increases costs for everyone: as a state, we also have the 3rd highest homelessness rates. This is a problem 50 years in the making.
- The Fair Housing Act was passed in 1978, and a few years later, the Supreme Court ruled that clauses in deeds that prohibit sales to certain communities were illegal. As a response, within a couple of years, multi-family housing production was shut down in many places (in Arlington, for example, “by right” zoning now only applies to single family and two-family zones), which has made housing more expensive, increased gentrification, caused polluting suburban sprawl.
- Complying with the MBTA communities bylaw means introducing zoning that better reflects our values, increases racial and economic diversity, supplies housing for public service employees, and allows for greener development (housing that is closer together and has shared walls is more environmentally friendly, easier to walk to instead of drive to, etc.)
- MBTA multi-family zone parameters:
 - Zone must include at least 32 acres, which is 1% of Arlington’s land area, though zone will more likely need to cover 2–4%. “Multi-family” is defined as three or more units; two-family homes don’t count.
 - Zone must allow for a minimum density of 15 homes per acre. While we do have that in parts of east Arlington, it’s not allowed “by right”.
 - Zone must have the capacity for at least 2046 homes. This figure is based on what underlying zoning allows rather than what actually has been built. For example, if a two-family zone was changed to a three-family zone, the capacity of each two family in that zone would increase by 1, even if the extra units have not been created.
 - Must allow (but not require) housing suitable for families with children and for all ages; no restrictions are allowed.
- The law is specifically designed to encourage “missing middle” housing, which is mid-sized, somewhere between the large apartment buildings and single-family houses. We already have this type of housing around town; this is an opportunity to “re-legalize” this kind of housing.
- A key point: Density is Greener and Housing Policy is Environmental Policy. This doesn’t mean we will never tear down an old house or cut down a mature tree to build. But it does mean well insulated dwellings, electric heat and cooling, solar ready, surrounded by porous surfaces and greenery.
- Process: 1) outreach, info sessions and visioning; 2) top option(s) presented, community reaction assessed; 3) late summer or fall final option chosen; fall Special Town Meeting, date to be determined.
- Questions / Comments
 - Members of the CEFC asked questions about how to get more information and how the CEFC can be more involved and helpful.

Sources of information include the Equitable Arlington website and Planning Department website. Right now, Equitable Arlington is primarily looking for community input.

- K. Lynema reiterated the point that housing density is connected to sustainability, and that people need to understand the connection between housing and climate change. Concept of “15 minute” neighborhood is key; these are walkable neighborhoods where people live closer to work, and don’t get into a car for everything. K. Lynema also reminded the CEFC about the Visioning Kits, which are available on the town MBTA Communities website; the town wants to hear from as many people as possible.
- Jennifer Susse was thanked for the presentation. Note was made that the MBTA Communities area would affect quite a small proportion of the land in Arlington, just 1 – 4%. A. Meeks noted that climate resilience should be part of the conversation, i.e., East Arlington is in or close to wetland / floodplain, so might not be a good place for more density. K. Lynema noted that MBTA communities is just one part of a housing puzzle. Other groups are advancing other efforts.

4. Sustainability Updates – T. Fox

- Best news – Town Meeting passed the Specialized Stretch Code! It will take effect 1/1/2024, and is the completion of another action in our action plan! Many thanks to many people; Town Meeting vote was 204 in favor, 11 against, 2 abstained.
- Electrify Arlington has a part time job opening for an Energy Advocate funded by the Mass Save Community First Partnership. Ideally will have someone who represents some of the target populations with whom we are trying to work (low and moderate income, people of color, etc.)
- Electrify Arlington has some events as part of EcoFest. Will be at the Sunday Resource Fair. Have an Arlington Community Education class about planning ahead to electrify on May 9. And have an Electrify Arlington fair on May 11 at the Robbins Community Room.

5. CEFC Comments on 40-B Applications

- T. Fox: 40-B is a state law that allows developers to bypass local zoning and create larger and denser development provided that at least 25% of the units are affordable to households making 60% of the Area Median Income or less. CEFC has been asked to comment on some of these projects, most recently the HCA proposed project on Sunnyside Ave. Want to discuss the role that the CEFC should play and also share comments that R. Katofsky and T. Fox submitted as individuals.
- K. Lynema: 10 Sunnyside is a Housing Corporation of Arlington Passive House project designed to be as energy efficient as possible. It’s a 43-unit, 100% affordable complex with a bit of mixed use. HCA may create offices on ground level and a community room on the second floor. The space was formerly an autobody business and the site is almost entirely impervious, so in general the proposal is an improvement over existing conditions. If this project was to go before the Arlington Redevelopment Board (ARB), there

would be many environmentally related requirements. However, 40-B is “by right” within certain parameters, so the ARB does not have jurisdiction. Instead, the project will be heard by the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), and it’s the ZBA who is asking CEFC to provide comments. The ZBA would like to know if CEFC fully endorses project or if there are sustainability items that should be included or removed.

- T. Fox and R. Katofsky submitted individual comments, rather than on behalf of the CEFC, because there wasn’t enough time to get committee approval. In short, the comments said that the project is in line with the NZAP goals and the Specialized Stretch Code, and suggested that the developer confirm the fuel sources for HVAC, water heating, and appliances, and provide information about adding future electrical vehicle chargers beyond the proposed 20% of parking spaces.
- Questions / Comments from other CEFC members
 - Committee comments focused primarily on whether or not the HCA should be asked, or required, to increase the percentage of spaces with EV charges. Some members felt 100% should be at least pre-wired for electricity whereas other felt that might be too much of a financial burden. Note: S. Dein a member of the HCA and has been involved with the Sunnyside project.
 - Comments are addressed to the applicant directly and not to the ZBA to ask of the applicant. CEFC concluded that R. Katofsky and T. Fox could tweak the Sunnyside comments to make the requirement or request for additional upfront or future EV chargers stronger.
 - P. Hanlon clarified that he will be chairing the hearings for this application, and he very much wants to incorporate CEFC comments into the hearings. In general, developers only pay attention to what is required; they don’t tend to go above and beyond, so important to give the proposals thought and provide feedback up front before the project is approved.
- Future policy for 40-B comment requests
 - R. Katofsky suggested CEFC could authorize him as chair and T. Fox to provide comments when requested unless there is something out of the ordinary or less than transparent in the application, in which case they would bring it to the full CEFC for discussion.
 - P. Miettinen made a motion to allow the Chair to submit comments to the ZBA on future 40-B applications, as requested, following the principles laid out in the comments on the Sunnyside project, which were discussed by the CEFC today. Motion seconded by D. Morgan. Motion approved unanimously by a show of hands.

6. Confirm Next Meeting Date May 26, 2023 – will be a hybrid meeting

- D. Morgan moved to end the meeting and T. Fox seconded. Unanimous vote by show of hands.
- The meeting was adjourned at 9:23am.

Submitted by Nellie Aikenhead