

Town of Needham
Joint Meeting of the Select Board with the
Planning Board, Finance Committee, and Housing Needham Advisory Group
Minutes for Tuesday, April 30, 2024
Powers Hall
and
Via ZOOM
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89068374046>

6:04 p.m. Call to Order:
A joint meeting of the Select Board, Planning Board, Finance Committee, and Housing Needham Advisory Group (HONE) was convened by Chair Marianne Cooley. Those present were Vice Chair Heidi Frail (also Co-Chair of HONE), Marianne Cooley, Joshua Levy, and Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick. David Davison, Deputy Town Manager/Finance, Katie King, Deputy Town Manager, and Susan Metropol, Recording Secretary, were also in attendance. Heidi Frail called to order the meeting of the Housing Needham Advisory Group (HONE). Chair Adam Block called to order the meeting of the Planning Board. Chair Carol Fachetti called to order the meeting of the Finance Committee.

Also in attendance on the Finance Committee were Karen Calton, Vice- Chair (and also a member of HONE), John Connelly, Barry Coffman, and James Healy.

Also in attendance on the Planning Board were Paul Alpert, Artie Crocker, Vice Chair Natasha Espada (also Co-Chair of HONE), and Justin McCullen.

Also in attendance on the HONE Committee were Jeanne McKnight, Ronald Ruth, Michael Diener, and Bill Lovett.

Also in attendance were Eric Halvorsen, RKG Associates; Chris Heep, Town Counsel; Emily Innes, Innes Associates; Carys Lustig, Director of Public Works; and Lee Newman, Director of Planning & Community Development.

6:10 p.m. Introduction:
Heidi Frail provided an overview of the MBTA Communities Act. Ms. Frail noted that the draft zoning will be sent to the State tomorrow, May 1. Ms. Espada presented a timeline of HONE's activities with a focus on community engagement. The upcoming activities including State review of zoning, Planning Board finalizing the zoning article, Town Meeting voting, and Final State Review.

HONE's Final Recommendations

1. **Base Compliance Plan:** A scenario that adheres very closely to the zoning boundaries and dimensional standards in Needham's current Zoning Bylaw. This scenario is intended to meet the minimum compliance requirements of the MBTA Communities Act.

2. **Neighborhood Housing Plan:** A scenario that increases dimensional standards and the number of units that can be built on a parcel of land as a way to encourage housing production and respond to the goals in Needham's Housing Plan. This scenario is intended to meet and exceed the minimum compliance requirements of the MBTA Communities Act.

Article Overview

Lee Newman presented the recommendations that HONE is presenting to the Town advance four zoning amendments, which build on each other:

Article 1: Create a multi-family overlay district following the recommended district boundaries and dimensional standards in the Base Compliance Plan.

Article 2: The map change for the Base Compliance Plan to accompany Article 1.

Article 3: Amend Article 1 and inserts the dimensional standards of the Neighborhood Housing Plan.

Article 4: The map change for the Neighborhood Housing Plan to accompany Article 3.

Ms. Newman presented several maps which illustrate these scenarios, as well as a comparison of the scenarios and the parameters of both the Base Compliance Plan and the Neighborhood Housing Plan. She also outlined the recommendations of HONE to the Planning Board both within and outside of the MBTA Communities Act.

Eric Halvorsen then reviewed the Propensity for Change Analysis and Fiscal Impact Analysis conducted on HONE's two proposed scenarios. The Propensity for Change Analysis uses a financial feasibility model for multifamily development land value utilizing market return metrics, asking rents, and construction costs. Mr. Halvorsen presented a model demonstrating the potential change in value after the zoning change, with the model applied to each proposed district. The Fiscal Impact Analysis model was constructed to understand the potential tax revenues from new development compared to the municipal and school operational costs to support that development. The model considers Town tax rates, multi-family valuation, development program, incremental governmental expenditures, and student generation rates per unit.

Mr. Halvorsen also reviewed the Tax Implication Analysis methodology as applied to the Base Compliance Plan and the Neighborhood Housing Plan. Finally, Mr. Halvorsen reviewed HONE's Proposal for Affordability as required by the MBTA Communities Act, with the following components:

- Continue to require that 12.5% of all new units in buildings with 6 or more units are set aside as deed restricted affordable housing
- RKG's Economic Feasibility Analysis (EFA) supports HONE's recommendation to keep the current affordability requirements in place for MBTA Districts.
- Keeping the affordability set aside at 12.5% helps Needham continue to stay above the State's requirement of 10% affordability town wide.

Katie King then provided an overview of the Capital Impact Assessment, which considers Police, Fire/EMS, Schools, water and sewer, stormwater, and roadways. There are no anticipated capital impacts on Police, Fire/EMS due to recent investments. The School Department master plan for updating aging school facilities and creating enrollment capacity district-wide would be able to accommodate both zoning plans. The Town believes it has enough water capacity to support housing that may result from proposed zoning. Ms. King emphasized that stormwater and roadways will be prioritized for the foreseeable future.

Discussion ensued on a range of topics, with specific regard to zoning capacity, the size of parcels in various districts across Town, workforce housing, and the differences between the Base Plan and the Neighborhood Housing Plan. Another area of focus was an upcoming traffic study. The proposals put forward in this joint meeting are recommended for the October 2024 Special Town Meeting, following a preliminary review by the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities and the Planning Board's hearing process for zoning amendments.

Motion by Mr. Levy that the Select Board accept the recommendations of the Housing Needham Advisory Group and send the Base Compliance Plan and the Neighborhood Housing Plan to the State for a preliminary review.

Second: Ms. Frail. Unanimously approved 4-0.

8:02 p.m. Adjourn:

Motion by Mr. Levy that the Select Board vote to adjourn the Special Joint Meeting of Tuesday, April 30, 2024.

Second: Ms. Frail. Unanimously approved 4-0.

Motion by Ms. Fachetti that the Finance Committee vote to adjourn the Joint Meeting of Tuesday, April 30, 2024.

Second: Ms. Calton. Unanimously approved 5-0.

Motion by Ms. Frail that the HONE Committee vote to adjourn the Joint Meeting of Tuesday, April 30, 2024.

Second: Mr. Diener. Unanimously approved 8-0.

Motion by Mr. Block that the Planning Board vote to adjourn the Joint Meeting of Tuesday, April 30, 2024.

Second: Mr. McCullen. Unanimously approved 5-0.