

Town of Needham  
Council of Economic Advisors  
Meeting Minutes of June 24, 2024

Adam Block: Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:00am.

Roll Call Taken: Present - Adam Block, Bill Day, Rick Putprush, Mike Willcox, Lise Elcock, Adam Meisner, Matt Talcoff, Bruan Patel, Bob Hentschel

Absent: Heidi Frail, Kate Urquat, Dan Goodman, Jeremy Halpern

Also Present: Lee Newman (Planning) J.P. Cacciaglia (EDM).

Adam Block Calls meeting to order at 8:00am and notifies the meeting is being conducted in a hybrid fashion.

Approval of Meeting Minutes June 2023 : Motion to Approve Rick Putprush, Seconded by Bob Hentschel; Adam Block, Bill Day, Mike Willcox, Lise Elcock, Adam Meisner, Matt Talcoff, Bruan Patel, All Vote Yes, Motion Approved

Approval of Meeting Minutes Nov 2023: Motion to Approve Rick Putprush, Bob Hentschel, Adam Block, Bill Day, Mike Willcox, Lise Elcock, Adam Meisner, Matt Talcoff, Bruan Patel, All Vote Yes Motion Approved

Approval of Meeting Minutes Jan 2024: Motion to Approve Matt Talcoff, Seconded by Bruan Patel Rick Putprush, Bob Hentschel, Adam Block, Bill Day, , Mike Willcox, Lise Elcock, Adam Meisner, All Vote Yes Motion Approved

Lee Newman from the planning department spoke about MBTA communities and the town will be moving forward with two plans for the October Town Meeting. Plan one will allow for zoning of 1,868 units which will be known as the base plan and an additional one will be called the neighborhood housing plan which will allow for zoning of 3,290 units. That works out to 18.6 Units per acer in the base plan and 35.6 units in the neighborhood plan. The plans have been submitted to the state and the Town will receive comment back sometime in August.

Lee Newman followed with additional information on other developments in town. Blue on highland will be adding additional seats in the vacant space next door and matching the façade, the unused part of the former Harvey's will become a noodle restaurant, Sweet Basil will be making permanent their summer use of a parklet for outdoor seating. Muzzi is currently evaluating their site as there has been no movement on it. A medial office building is proposed on Highland that will remove 5 older buildings and consolidate space, approximately 50,000sq/ft.

Parking regulations are being proposed on the Parking study that will change the parking requirements for new development.

Mike Wilcox asked Lee Newman about First Ave and how it needs some amenities and what can be done to clean up the area, there is missing landscaping from some business that were not replaced when items died or were run over. Mighty Subs building needs some help as it is the first thing you see when you come into the park from the highway, and it is unsightly. Lee will pull site plans as to what is on them and report back as they will need to replace the landscaping if it is on the site plan for screening. Talked about the site with storage on it and a coming soon sign with rendering of future building.

Lee Newman, First and Highland as not gone through any planning process other than a conversational phone call.

Adam Meixner talked about leasing environment, Rick Putprush, asked is sweeteners are being used to help update or make older properties more desirable other than just a lower space. Adam Meixner mentioned they haven't seen much downsizing.

Mike Wilcox mentioned the market for purpose built buildings have the most difficulty as they are expensive to refit for other uses.

Adam Block talked about the reason why there was no Medical Use in the 128 district and understanding the history of it as it is a needed type of business and questioned if the planning board should be looking at adjusting the zoning and will have further discussions with Lee Newman and the Planning Board and Department.

Rick Putprush spoke that the industrial market has slowed in the very large Amazon warehouse, but smaller 10,000 sq/ft or 25,000 sq/ft buildings are very in demand, with zoning and land cost it makes it virtually impossible to build them.

Adam Block said the Kendrick and Charles Landing came through 40b projects to get those projects completed.

Lise Elcock mentioned the quiet zone and discussion was held on the long-term benefit of the proposed quiet zone and how will stop the train horn, which will worsen if the MBTA increases train frequency as they have talked about.

Bob Hentschel moves to adjourn second by Rick Putprush. All Vote Yes Motion Approved. Meeting adjourned at 9:12am