

**Meeting of the Planning Board  
Thursday, June 22, 2023**

The 29<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Milton Planning Board for FY2023 convened at 7:05 p.m. in the Blute Conference Room of Milton Town Hall.

**Present:** Planning Board Members Meredith Hall (Chair) Cheryl Tougias (Secretary), Sean Fahy, Maggie Oldfield and Jim Davis; Director of Planning and Community Development Tim Czerwienski (remote), Assistant Town Planner Josh Eckart-Lee (remote) and Sr. Administrative Clerk Julia Getman. Ms. Tougias joined the meeting at 7:17 p.m.

**1. Administrative Items:**

On a motion by Mr. Davis, seconded by Ms. Oldfield, the 5/11/2023 meeting minutes were approved 3/0/1 with Mr. Fahy abstaining; the 5/18/23 minutes were approved 3/0/1 with Ms. Hall abstaining and the 6/8/23 minutes were approved 4/0/0. Upcoming meetings were confirmed for July 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> and an MBTA Communities public forum was confirmed for July 17<sup>th</sup>.

**2. Staff Update:** Mr. Czerwienski stated that a site plan approval for a farm stand at 152 Robbins St. would be coming before the Board. He said that he had met with members of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) for a tour of East Milton as part of the rezoning process and that MAPC would be conducting research over the summer before initiating public outreach in the fall.

**3. Citizen's Speak:** No one Spoke.

**4. Committee Updates:**

Mr. Davis stated that he had been sworn in to the Capital Improvement Committee and Ms. Oldfield said she had been sworn in to the Fair Housing Committee. Mr. Fahy said there had been little activity with the Telecommunications Design Review Committee. Ms. Tougias reported on Master Plan Implementation initiatives, including environmental sustainability, climate change awareness and traffic discussions, and said that the Equity and Justice for All Committee would be attending the next MPIC meeting. Working with other towns to adopt a Historic Preservation Plan was considered. Mr. Czerwienski discussed updates to the Open Space and Recreation Plan, including parcel data and GIS mapping, and said that consultants Horsley Witten were creating a survey to gather feedback from the public.

**5. New Business: CPC Representative Appointment**

On a motion by Mr. Fahy, seconded by Ms. Oldfield, Ms. Tougias was appointed as the Planning Board representative to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC).

**6. Old Business: MBTA Communities Zoning**

Mr. Czerwienski stated that consulting firm Utile had created a second round of compliance models and that MAPC was continuing to conduct tests on a proposed Granite Avenue district. He said that attempts were being made to reduce district sizes and raise unit capacity and that a contract had been signed with RKG Associates for a fiscal impact analysis. He mentioned that a public forum had taken place on June 15<sup>th</sup> which had had a "light agenda." Ms. Hall suggested working with the Select Board to reassess Milton's designation as a rapid transit community and to reclassify it as an "adjacent community with an antique trolley." She believed that Milton was being unfairly compared to communities with greater rapid transit accommodations. Mr. Fahy mentioned the low ridership of the trolley and addressed the MBTA overhaul planned for the trolley line. Mr. Czerwienski noted that the new zoning will bring more units closer to the stations, which will lead to better use of its capacity. Ms. Tougias stated that the MBTA upgrades were being made for social justice and climate change factors and said that many people from Mattapan rely on the Red Line. She believed that approaching the zoning with the position that "Milton does not apply" is similar to the town's history of rejecting affordable housing, which ended up creating

an influx of 40B developments, and that the zoning addresses a real housing need. Ms. Oldfield believed that Milton was being “penalized” for its proximity to the Boston line and said that categorizing the town as a non-rapid transit community should be the focus of the zoning process. Ms. Tougias believed that conducting compliance studies will show that the Town is working in good faith to be compliant with the mandate and discussed the importance of conducting the compliance analysis to inform the fiscal impact analysis. Ms. Hall noted that classifying Milton as an “adjacent” community would allow for more time to develop the zoning, which is due in December 2023. The scope of RKG’s fiscal analysis work and data resources were discussed. It was suggested that the Select Board consider requesting reclassification. Mr. Czerwienski said he would support the BOS’s decision and that the Planning Board and BOS should be in agreement. Ways in which to publicize the zoning were discussed. The effect of the zoning on housing prices and housing opportunities were discussed.

**Public Comment:**

Jackson Humphreys of 34 Hoy Terrace said that the MBTA zoning will be the “most consequential zoning endeavor since zoning was first passed in 1938.” He said that reclassifying Milton as not being a rapid transit community was essential and discussed a 2012 MAPC article that described Milton as a “trolley suburb.” He stated that the outcomes of the zoning may not have the desired results and discussed his opinion of the variables defining a rapid transit district, including distance and ridership to a central business district. He said that complying with the law was important but that more time was needed to develop the zoning. He mentioned the need for more affordable housing and said that community engagement is essential.

It was proposed that the Board take a formal vote to support reclassification. Ms. Oldfield made a motion to have Mr. Czerwienski and Town Administrator Nick Milano produce documentation requesting reclassifying Milton as a non-rapid transit community. The extension of time which would be awarded for such a reclassification was emphasized. The motion was amended by Mr. Fahy, seconded by Ms. Oldfield, to pursue reclassification through “appropriate avenues,” including collaborating with the Select Board.

Ms. Tougias challenged the motion, stating that seeking reclassification without first asking and understanding how the classification was arrived at would demonstrate bad faith towards meeting the requirements of the law and she believed that compliance analyses should be continued in earnest. It was suggested that Mr. Milano, Ms. Hall and Mr. Czerwienski discuss the classification and present it to the Select Board. The motion was tabled.

**7. Discussion of Future Zoning Articles**

**Exterior Lighting:** The Board discussed the rights of tenants and homeowners and considered establishing a “grandfather clause.” It was suggested that lighting policies be researched in other communities, and enforcing compliance in a fair and timely way was discussed. It was agreed that lighting samples would be provided to Planning Board staff and that a light chart breakdown would be included.

**Signs:** Ms. Hall mentioned that according to the Town’s guidelines, neon signs are not allowed in Milton, however the rule is not enforceable because there are no exclusions in the town bylaws. It was suggested that a clause be added to the bylaws banning neon signs. Mr. Czerwienski discussed Milton’s billboard policy and Mass DOT’s protocol for restricting billboards in certain areas. He said that size, illumination and location of billboards can be regulated in the bylaw as a simple fix for restricting them in Milton. He said that the existing sign bylaw applies only to the business district and that all signs should fall under the sign bylaw and formally go into the sign review committee process. It was suggested that grandfathering of illuminated signs be discontinued, ending with new tenants. Mr. Czerwienski said he would speak to Town Counsel to develop legal language with the updates.

**Zoning Recodification:**

Mr. Czerwienski said that General Code had produced a legal analysis of the zoning and that an initial, substantive review of the bylaw was ongoing. He said that he had consulted with Bob Mitchell, a zoning specialist, who provided examples on how to make the bylaws clean, coherent, consistent, and useful. It was encouraged that the zoning bylaws of other towns be researched.

Ms. Tougias emphasized the importance of including a use table and dimensional requirements table, clear definitions and easy searchability. It was estimated that the cost of the work would be between \$30,000 and \$50,000. Requesting a reserve fund transfer for the expense was proposed.

On a motion by Ms. Tougias, seconded by Mr. Davis, the meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.



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Cheryl Tougias, Secretary

