

**Planning Board Meeting Minutes**  
**(Planning Board Attendance at Finance and Warrant Commission's Meeting)**  
**Tuesday, February 27, 2024 7:00 p.m.**  
**Library, Community Meeting Room**  
**660 High Street**  
**Westwood, MA 02090**

The Planning Board attended the Finance and Warrant Commission's public hearing on Annual Town Meeting warrant articles to participate in the discussion and presentation of annual Town Meeting warrant articles.

**Call to Order:**

Ms. Rollings opened the meeting at approximately 8:42 p.m.

**Planning Board members present:**

Ellen Larkin Rollings, Christopher A. Pfaff, Philip M. Giordano and Kathleen Nee.

**Staff members present:**

Nora Loughnane, Director of Community & Economic Development, Elijah Romulus, Town Planner, Amanda Wolfe, Housing & Land Use Planner and Jessica Cole, who recorded the meeting minutes remotely.

**Planning Board Articles**

PRESENTER(S): Nora Loughnane, Director of Community & Economic Development, Ellen Larkin Rollings, Planning Board Chair, Elijah Romulus, Town Planner, and Amanda Wolfe, Housing & Land Use Planner

**Public Hearing for Zoning Bylaw/Zoning Map and General Bylaw Amendment Articles for May 2024 Annual Town Meeting (continued from 2/13/24), including:**

**Planning Board Proposed Article 1: Amendments to Mixed-Use Multi-Family Residential Overlay District (MUMFROD)**

Ms. Loughnane gave a history of the Article and how it has to do with the MBTA Communities Law enacted by the MA legislature. She discussed the key components and how MUMFROD was adopted at Westwood Town Meeting in May of 2022. She went on to explain the MBTA Communities Law Compliance Guidelines and how Westwood can get to the acreage and unit capacity required.

Ms. Rollings went through how the Planning Board chose the parcels in Westwood.

Ms. Loughnane then went through the different proposed MUMFROD zones.

Comments:

- Is this all under one Article? Are we getting credit from the state for lots that are higher density, but are not being recognized? *Ms. Loughnane: That is the case under our current MUMFROD district because our zoning only requires 15 units per acre. The proposed zoning has some districts with greater than 15 units per acre. With the greater density requirement, we can take advantage of more units.*
- MUMFROD1 & 2 were previously approved? *Ms. Loughnane: No. What was previously approved are proposed to be in MUMFROD2 & 3, they were just called MUMFROD.*
- Have we thought about going back to the state and renegotiating the 50 acres? Very concerned about the number of students and schools. *Ms. Loughnane: That is not a possibility. Westwood is not the only town assigned 50 acres. The state is very clear they are not granting exceptions.*

Ms. Loughnane then went through the current zoning and proposed zoning on maps, and requirements.

Comments:

- How many acres are you adding and how many total acres will we have? *Ms. Wolfe: 65.72 acres and the unit capacity is 946.*
- Why are we exceeding it? *Ms. Loughnane: Total acres are allowed and then a calculation that the state uses where they remove certain properties. We also need to file a Compliance Model. We believe that we need to exceed the 50 acres in order to get units that are actually approved by the state as compliant.*
- Do we get a grace period if we are not in compliance? *Ms. Loughnane: The guidelines do not contain a grace period.*
- They don't send us a penalty bill, we just don't get any funding. *Ms. Loughnane: The state has determined that all towns in MBTA communities must comply with the law. They have determined that it is not just grant programs listed in the law to be ineligible for, but it is all grant programs that have any discretionary funding. And the Attorney General will file suit. If a town is in violation, the Building Commissioner may not enforce the zoning bylaw inconsistent with the state law.*
- What percentage of these areas are specifically in Islington? *Ms. Loughnane: It is probably 85%. Primarily on Route 1, East Street and University Avenue.*

- Has there been an analysis to estimate the impact to the Town's finances going forward? *Ms. Loughnane: This is zoning, not development. You can do a fiscal analysis based on development. If a property is proposed for development under this bylaw, the Town will have to do a fiscal study.*

#### **Planning Board Proposed Article-2: Wireless Communication Facilities**

Ms. Loughnane discussed how the wireless communications near University Avenue is terrible, and that 2 wireless companies have already come forward. She explained the requirements. Along with 2 additional properties: June Street Playground and the Pheasant Hill Conservation Area. There are no emergency communications in these 2 additional properties.

##### Comments:

- University Station, is there a reason why we did not permit these when the development was initially done? *Ms. Loughnane believes that the developer did not want to. It was not in their plan and didn't think they needed to. Residents in that area are finding out now, after 10 years, that there is a need for better communications. Our emergency services would like to see better service there as well.*
- How did we arrive at the 10 feet above the two monopoles and the 36-inch diameter? *Ms. Loughnane: Both requirements are existing requirements in our wireless communication bylaws. The Planning Board is limiting 2 monopoles and each monopole can accommodate up to 4 carriers.*

#### **Planning Board Proposed Article-3: Definitions**

Ms. Loughnane explained that our Building Commissioner has asked the Planning Board to revise definitions, add illustrations and some new definitions.

##### Comments:

- There was a question on the chart. Is the chart being added? Or are the definitions of how many units being changed? *Ms. Loughnane: None of it is being changed. It's been moved from the individual sections to the definitions section.*

#### **Planning Board Proposed Article-4: Map References for Overlay Districts**

Ms. Loughnane explained that this Article takes specific parcel references out of the bylaw and replaces them with map references.

##### Comments:

- Is there room for misinterpretation? *Ms. Loughnane: No, our map references are very specific. There is no way to confuse it.*

#### **Planning Board Proposed Article-5: Accessory Apartments**

Adding 'gross' because of misinterpretation to make it clear in our bylaw.

##### Comments:

- The difference being interior walls are counted as gross? *Ms. Loughnane: They take the gross area and draw a box around the entire apartment. As opposed to excluding closets, stairways and the thickness of a wall.*

#### **Planning Board Proposed Article-6: Temporary Construction Dumpsters**

This is a general bylaw amendment. It adds temporary construction dumpsters to the bylaw. It is only applicable to non-resident and multi-family residential properties.

##### Comments:

None.

##### Public Comments:

M. Arramo, 48 Clapboardtree Street, Suitable. The key component of the law is that it be suitable for families with children. No age or bedroom restrictions. Is there any guidance on what suitable means? *Ms. Loughnane: The only requirement is that at least 10% of the overall units have to have three bedrooms.*

##### Action Taken:

On a motion made by Ms. Nee and seconded by Mr. Pfaff, the Planning Board voted in favor (4-0) to continue the public hearing to the Planning Board's next meeting on Tuesday, March 12, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom, where a Zoom link and associated call-in numbers will be provided on Town's calendar on the homepage at:

<https://www.townhall.westwood.ma.us/>.

#### **Adjournment**

Upon a motion made by Ms. Nee and seconded by Mr. Pfaff, the Planning Board voted in favor (4-0) to adjourn at approximately 9:57pm.