



# TOWN OF MEDFIELD

*Office of the*

## PLANNING BOARD

TOWN HOUSE, 459 MAIN STREET  
MEDFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS 02052-2009

MEETING OF:  
**August 21, 2023**  
MINUTES

**Members Present in Person:** Acting Chair Sarah Lemke, Seth Meehan, Member; Doug Larence, Associate Member, Paul McKechnie, Member, Jamie Sullivan, Associate Member

**Members Absent:** Chair James Brand, Teresa James, Member

**Staff Present in Person:** Maria De La Fuente, Director of Land Use, Cara Wise, Administrative Assistant

**Others Present:** Jerry Potts

**Location:** Zoom

At approximately 7:30 pm, Acting Chair Sarah Lemke called the meeting to order and discussed the parameters of the Zoom hearing rules.

Ms. Lemke read the items on the agenda and proceeded to take roll call for attendance.

### **Presentation:**

Mr. Jerry Potts discussed updates on the Open Space and Recreation Plan. He explained that they had received comments from the State. Mr. Potts discussed what they are doing in regard to the comments from the State and the changes that were made to the Open Space and Recreation Plan. Mr. Potts explained that he went back to other Boards and Commissions and explained what was being done to make sure that they were in agreement with the changes that were made. Mr. Potts stated that he appreciated Ms. De La Fuente's work on the maps and how well it turned out. Mr. Potts is seeking a letter of support for the Open Space and Recreation Plan. Ms. Lemke asked which Boards have responded to the edits that have taken place. Mr. Potts discussed meeting with the Conservation Commission and there being a bit of confusion about what was needed from the Conservation Commission regarding the Plan. Mr. Potts stated that there wasn't a vote that took place but the Commission agreed with the changes. Mr. Potts explained that he is meeting with the Selectboard tomorrow evening and Parks and Recreation is in discussion for a date to meet. Ms. Lemke agreed that the Open Space and Recreation Plan was sufficient, however was surprised that Medfield State Hospital was at a low standing on the list within the Plan but also understands considering the Trinity Project beginning soon. Mr. Potts expressed

that they have added more language pertaining to Medfield State Hospital. Mr. Meehan agreed with Ms. Lemke about Medfield State Hospital being low on the list but understands why at the same time. Mr. Meehan inquired about the time frame of the Plan. Mr. Potts explained that they are ambitious to do projects within the Plan but they need a source of funding which the Plan will help facilitate receiving funds. Ms. Lemke suggested since Ms. James was unable to attend and has been very involved in this, she should be allotted the chance to give her feedback. Mr. Potts was happy to have the vote taken at the next meeting so that all Board members are involved. Ms. Lemke suggested that the Plan be added for a vote to the September 18, 2023, meeting.

### **Administrative:**

**Approval Not Required (ANR) Plans – n/a**  
**Change of Use Determinations – n/a**

### **Update/Discussions:**

#### **MAPC for IE Zone**

Ms. De La Fuente discussed the update on the MAPC's economic development study for the IE zone. Ms. De La Fuente shared her screen to show the area in discussion and literature pertaining to it. She discussed the possibility of being able to use some of this area to bring revenue to the town. Ms. De La Fuente stated that Mr. Larance is going to be the liaison for the Selectboard regarding the IE zone potential. Ms. De La Fuente discussed getting in contact with key stakeholders who will interview with MAPC staff. Ms. De La Fuente explained that there will be a community visioning process to get the community involved and receive their comments and feedback regarding the IE zone. Ms. De La Fuente stated that there are a few steps that MAPC will conduct to help improve the IE zone and make it a community-friendly area. Ms. De La Fuente explained that this is just a study to see if this is feasible and nothing will happen without further discussion on what the town believes is beneficial. Ms. De La Fuente discussed wanting to make this district a "go-to" for younger residents of the town as well as having fun activities to attract residents and bring in revenue for Medfield. Mr. Larance discussed getting more information from MAPC and using that to be able to move forward to making it a mixed-use area. Mr. Sullivan mentioned the Norwood Space Center and the possibilities that we may have with the IE district in Medfield. Mr. Sullivan discussed marketing it properly so that the residents of Medfield see it as a beneficial zone to the town. Ms. De La Fuente discussed other towns having open office/flex space in industrial buildings to rent or utilize for meetings, etc. with café shops and/or luncheon space without having to go into Boston. Ms. Lemke thinks this is a good idea to bring more economic activity to Medfield which will be beneficial considering there is only 5% business in Medfield. She discussed this helping the residents who are feeling the pressure of increased taxes in Medfield due to the small number of businesses/economic activity in town. Ms. Lemke believes that the IE district is a great place to bring in businesses but she doesn't want to draw attention away from the downtown area where she is hoping for more mixed-use zoning to also bring more revenue to Medfield. Mr. Meehan discussed the consulting that was done for the mixed-use proposal for

downtown Medfield and how much work was put into that. Mr. Meehan discussed those efforts being well thought out and measured and doesn't want to see all that work get lost in the mix. He expressed that it is smart to keep both efforts of mixed-use and the IE district but be mindful of how this is presented and not take the focus off of one to push for the other. Mr. Meehan stated that he believes that the residents may be overwhelmed with presenting these ideas around the same time and it may not be received well. He suggests that we approach it carefully so that we do not receive backlash for too many changes happening to the town at once. Ms. Lemke discussed that this would take some time to be officially done and the background steps, information needed, and processes can be done simultaneously while the mixed-use is in progress. Mr. Meehan stated that he doesn't want to push mixed-use on residents and then bring on IE zoning right after the downtown zoning is complete. Ms. De La Fuente discussed being fully transparent and being open to the public as to what is happening with the zoning process in Medfield to bring more businesses into town. Ms. De La Fuente would like to keep a positive aspect on both items. Mr. Larance inquired about the process of MAPC and what the next steps are going to be. Ms. De La Fuente is going to touch base with Mr. Larance to discuss after the meeting.

### **Letter of support for Trinity's Historic Tax Credit Application**

Ms. Lemke stated she didn't have any questions or comments regarding the letter of support. Ms. Lemke suggested a vote for approval of the letter of support for Trinity's Historic Tax Credit Application.

✓ Roll Call Vote: Mr. McKechnie, yes, Mr. Meehan, yes, Ms. Lemke, yes, (3-0-0)

### **Floodplain Bylaw Diagnostic and Proposed Mandatory Changes**

Ms. De La Fuente shared her screen and discussed the literature being presented. Ms. De La Fuente stated that FEMA is supposed to update all their maps every ten years and due to Covid they are still working on it. Ms. De La Fuente said that FEMA will have the floodplain maps in 2024 based on elevation above sea level. Ms. De La Fuente stated that we as a town do not really have a say over the maps as FEMA has its own formula and we have to comply. Ms. De La Fuente pointed out that there are changes to the state building code stating that all new construction and all significant work done on old construction over the current value of the home must be in compliance with the floodplain standards set by FEMA. She clarified that this is to ensure all structures in the floodplain are safe to protect life and property value. Ms. De La Fuente stated that when FEMA updates their maps from 2012 to 2024 this is going to trigger FEMA's review of our zoning bylaws not being in compliance. Ms. De La Fuente reached out to Mr. Eric Carlson from DCR, Massachusetts FEMA point person and he looked through our current bylaw and discussed the issues as of now. Ms. De La Fuente discussed the literature she shared on her screen discussing the suggestions brought forth from Mr. Carlson. Ms. De La Fuente stated that there is a model bylaw that FEMA has and we have to pick and choose some options but there are mandatory pieces as well. She discussed appointing someone to be the Floodplain Administrator, which is usually the Building Commissioner or the Conservation Agent, whichever we see fit. Ms. De La Fuente discussed the permits that are needed in current

floodplain areas as well as dealing with floodplain zones that are not defined yet. Ms. De La Fuente discussed the requirements should there be new subdivisions or subdivisions that currently exist that need to be updated/permited. Ms. De La Fuente discussed that we need to add more definitions to the bylaws that are listed in the document being discussed. Ms. De La Fuente stated that we have to be in compliance with FEMA or there could be consequences pertaining to the discounts on flood insurance for Medfield residents. Ms. De La Fuente mentioned discussing this with Ms. Trierweiler and the Building Commissioner as it is very technical and we need to become very familiar with the 500-page manual. Ms. De La Fuente suggested having in-depth discussions to either amend our current bylaw or start over and use the model bylaw provided by FEMA and have it as our basis for the floodplain zones. Ms. De La Fuente stated that we are not up to par compared to other towns regarding floodplains. Ms. Lemke stated she had to review the current bylaw and the model bylaw to have any judgment on this. Ms. Lemke believes that if it is a full-scale rewrite of the bylaw to be consistent and up to date with FEMA laws and regulations we may want to consider the model bylaw and work off of that. Ms. De La Fuente believes that the current bylaw lacks information and is somewhat vague. Ms. De La Fuente discussed the process that will take place to approve the bylaw with FEMA, Medfield, and the AG. Mr. Meehan would like to review the model bylaw and our current bylaw more closely to make sure we don't lose anything that was added to the current bylaw in the past for the benefit of the town. Mr. Meehan discussed the new definitions being added to the bylaw and how it is going to be adapted to the new changes being discussed. Ms. De La Fuente discussed that there are going to be a lot of zoning changes in the spring and we will be able to add the new definitions with the changes.

#### **Minutes:**

- June 5, 2023 & June 26, 2023 – Ms. Lemke made a motion to approve the minutes.
- Seconded by Mr. McKechnie.
  - ✓ Roll Call Vote: Mr. McKechnie, yes, Mr. Meehan, yes, Ms. Lemke, yes, (3-0-0)

#### **Administrative Updates:**

- Historical Commission – Mr. Meehan stated that the Commission is meeting on Wednesday, August 23, 2023, to meet about Trinity regarding the approval letters needed for MSH. Mr. Meehan discussed 3 Hatters Hill Road applied for an interior renovation permit and subsequently decided to demolish the entire property without a demo permit. He mentioned that they are discussing changing the demolition delay bylaw. Ms. Lemke inquired about the consideration of the number of years before something is considered historic. Mr. Meehan explained that 50 years is the national standard and that the Historical Commission is creating an inventory of properties in Medfield. Ms. De La Fuente discussed the Historic District maps are considerably out of date and wanted to have the consultant review and revise the maps for Medfield. She stated that she is waiting for a price proposal from the consultant and this could come from the Planning & Zoning Department's budget. Mr. Meehan clarified that this is related to the Historic District Commission and would need to contact Mr. Mike Taylor. Mr. Meehan is going to give Ms. De La Fuente the contact information for Mr. Taylor. Mr. Sullivan

commented that he is shocked that there are no repercussions for the owners who decided to tear down a historic property without a demolition permit. Mr. McKechnie discussed that this falls in the Building Department's hands regarding the issuing of permits. Ms. Lemke discussed this also being in the Building Inspector's hands as to what type of permit was issued and what was permitted to be done prior to the demolition.

- School Building Committee – N/A
- Affordable Housing Trust – N/A
- Open Space and Rec Plan – as discussed earlier in the meeting

**Adjournment:**

Mr. McKechnie made a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:10 pm.

Mr. Meehan seconded the motion.

✓ Roll Call Vote: Mr. McKechnie, yes, Mr. Meehan, yes, Ms. Lemke, yes (3-0)

Respectfully submitted,  
Cara Wise, Administrative Assistant