



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
Department of Planning & Community Development
730 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, Massachusetts 02476

Memorandum

To: Arlington Redevelopment Board

From: Jennifer Raitt, Secretary Ex Officio

Subject: Potential Zoning Bylaw amendments for 2020 Annual Town Meeting

Date: November 25, 2019

Please accept this memo as an overview of potential zoning amendments for 2020 Annual Town Meeting. The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) works with a number of groups and committees, as well as on planning processes, that often lead to recommendations for zoning amendments. The following describes a range of initiatives and their timelines for moving forward with any recommendations.

The Zoning Bylaw Working Group is working with RKG Associates on an Economic Analysis of the Industrial Zones. This work will extend through next spring 2020 and any zoning recommendations brought forth from that analysis might be considered at a future Town Meeting. Therefore, any zoning recommendations from this analysis will not be ready for 2020 Annual Town Meeting.

The Design Review Working Group will be working with Harriman to prepare residential design guidelines for the R0, R1, and R2 districts and recommend a design review process. This work will extend through next fall 2020 and any recommendations will be brought to a future Town Meeting. Therefore, any recommendations from this process will not be ready for 2020 Annual Town Meeting.

The Arlington Heights Neighborhood Action Plan Implementation Committee began meeting in November. The committee will be working on implementing short-term, non-zoning recommendations. There will not be any zoning recommendations for 2020 Annual Town Meeting recommended by this committee.

The Housing Plan Implementation Committee is working on two recommendations for 2020 Annual Town Meeting. One of these recommendations is directly from the town's 2016 Housing Production Plan: create a Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund per MGL c.44 s.55C. The formation of a Trust is not an amendment to the Zoning Bylaw. A related recommendation that the committee is discussing is a potential Town Meeting resolution to adopt a Real Estate Transfer Tax in order to collect a percentage of funds from any real estate transfers. If voted on affirmatively, this resolution would require a subsequent Home Rule Petition in order to become law. Any funds generated from this tax would need to be deposited into a Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

The DPCD is overseeing three other planning processes which will eventually include zoning recommendations. The Sustainable Transportation Plan Advisory Committee is in the process of interviewing consultants for the plan. The planning process is expected to continue through 2020. The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) is working on the Hazard Mitigation Plan which will continue through March of 2020. Any zoning recommendations from this plan would be brought to a future Town Meeting and will not be ready for 2020 Annual Town Meeting. MAPC is also working on the Net Zero Plan which will continue through fall 2020. The Net Zero Plan will include recommendations for energy efficiency and carbon reduction in all sectors. The plan will include clear metrics and measurements to achieve carbon reduction by 2050. Any zoning recommendations from this plan would be brought to a future Town Meeting and will not be ready for 2020 Annual Town Meeting.

DPCD is also working with the Engineering division to meet regulatory requirements, improve local water quality, and maintain and recharge groundwater resources by incorporating green infrastructure practices into the Town's stormwater management program. We are achieving this by working on updates to our Stormwater Bylaws. These bylaw updates are necessary in order for the Town to be compliant with the MS4 General Permit. Municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) discharges are regulated under the General Permits for Stormwater Discharges from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems in Massachusetts effective July 1, 2018. Please see the attached memo from the Horsley Witten Group and Eastern Research Group regarding a review of the town's bylaws, including its Zoning Bylaw. Zoning amendments recommended in this memo should be submitted for 2020 Annual Town Meeting.

Other potential zoning amendments for the 2020 Annual Town Meeting include the following:

Amend 8.2 to increase the two-year period to three years regarding Special Permits and Building Permit applications (anti-segmentation clause). Amend Definitions to add "apartment conversion". Amend 5.3.22 to include a subsection C that describes how landscaped and usable open space is calculated relative to Gross Floor Area. Amend 5.2.2 to include a subsection C. that indicates uses without a "Y" or "SP" in the applicable zoning districts are prohibited. Lastly, the following administrative corrections are needed: correct Board of Selectmen to Select Board; add day to August date noted in Section 5.4.2.B; correct citation to state regulations for medical marijuana; correct 5.3.22 to match new half-story definition; and correct citation in Billboard definition.