

**Arlington Redevelopment Board**  
**Monday, December 2, 2019, 7:30 PM**  
**Second Floor Conference Room, Town Hall Annex**  
**Meeting Minutes**

This meeting was recorded by ACMI.

**PRESENT:** Andrew Bunnell (Chair), Eugene Benson, David Watson, Kin Lau, Rachel Zsebery

**STAFF:** Jennifer Raitt, Director of Planning and Community Development and Erin Zwirko, Assistant Director

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The Chair called the meeting to order and notified all attending that the meeting is being recorded by ACMI.

The Chair introduced the first agenda item, Broadway Corridor Student Project Presentation. The MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning Broadway Corridor Student project. Ian Ollis, Griffin Kantz, and Kendrick Manymules are among the group of students from MIT and Harvard who worked together on a practicum at MIT in planning. The Broadway Corridor was their project for this semester, which has not been studied by the town for some time. The students are investigating the corridor and working on suggestions for improvements in the future.

The students began the project in September by meeting with the Planning and Community Development Department staff, attending Town Day, conducting interviews, and met with community groups. In November the students began meeting with stake-holders. The students planned community engagement events, spoke to residents, businesses, and sent emails to collect information and understand what they like and dislike about the area. The student in-reach group met with Tree committee, Transportation Advisory Committee, Police Department, and the Recreation Department. The areas of focus were housing, mobility, and neighbor character.

Griffin Kantz introduced the housing findings related to housing around the corridor. The students found that 37% of residents are cost burdened and over 11% of households spend over 50% of their income on housing in this area. They found the number of residents that rent versus own is even in the Broadway Corridor area. The students found that the Broadway Corridor is one of the densest areas of Town but there are not many attractions in the area. The students learned from a demonstration at Town Day, conducted by Sustainable Arlington, that housing affordability is one of the top concerns for Arlington residents. There is room to allow the corridor to grow and allow for more density for the Town.

The students' housing recommendations are: 1) Incentivize and shape affordable housing growth along the corridor by reviewing height and density restrictions, host community processes about how public land may be acquired for affordable housing, and examine underutilized land parcels for redevelopment. 2) Ensure high quality of life on Broadway by addressing hazards due to flooding and extreme weather, and add ground-floor retail to contribute to street life.

The students found reliable regional transportation is important for the corridor. The corridor has sidewalks on every street, tree shading on side streets, and crosswalks. There are some safety concerns which include a long street width to a lack of crosswalks, insufficient tree shading on Broadway, and safety concerns at intersections such as Warren and River Street. Suggestions to improve mobility include: curb extensions, and daylighting, which is taking parking spots one or two spaces before the cross walk to increase visibility. The students found that the amount of bike traffic along Broadway is almost as busy as Mass. Ave. and the bikeway but there is no in bike infrastructure of any kind on Broadway. There is space for bike lanes on Broadway and there is a safety need. Mass. Transit busses 87, 88, and 89 travel through the Broadway corridor but there are no benches or bus shelters like there are elsewhere in Arlington. The students recommend a bus only lane approaching Alewife Brook Parkway from Broadway to help mitigate traffic congestion east-bound in the morning. Additional corridor-wide recommendations include: make walking routes to school safer, advocate for Sunday service on the 87 MBTA bus,

improve safety and traffic flow for all modes at Sunnyside Ave. and Alewife Brook Parkway, improve safety for all transportation modes at the Broadway/Warren St. intersection and possibly redesigning the intersection.

Kendrick Manymules presented the final focus area, neighborhood character. Mr. Manymules said the residents interviewed liked the current neighborhood, but would add more trees along the streets. They also like “traditional- style” residential buildings and Lussiano Field. The students suggested working to enhance the street scape, make use of vacant or unused lots, “dead” facades, and parking surrounding buildings. The students said they expect new vibrancy with the addition of businesses and new construction at 117 Broadway. Residents have access to several green spaces within walking distance. Environmental challenges include flooding along the brook, urban heat island effect, and stormwater contamination. The students reported that residents said that they would like the corridor to reflect more of the Arlington Center vibe. The students’ recommendations include changing the area from a “Grab and Go” to a “Come and Stay” atmosphere by activating the ground floor of the street scape. The suggestions are to: encourage temporary and tactical activation of streetscapes; activate Lussiano Field and open up the space to the neighborhood; preserve the neighborhood environment; and preserve and expand the existing tree canopy along the corridor.

The report will focus on specific sites are Lussiano Field, the Lahey site, and the Broadway Streetscape as a whole. Further outreach, research, field visits and classwork with design principals will be conducted by the students to finalize concept designs. No park access to Lussiano Field from Broadway, Mr. Manymules reviewed some possible designs for future corridor improvements for the Lussiano Field area. For the Lahey site, the team suggested design improvements include ground level retail, apartments, and townhomes. To address the street scape, a design with bike lanes and more open pedestrian friendly uses for the street were suggested.

The Chair asked the Board if they had any follow up questions for the students.

Mr. Lau thanked the students for their recommendations. Mr. Lau said that he did not see a balance between their recommendations and the needs of the residents, with parking for example. Mr. Lau said he likes the suggestions for the Lahey property but that would be one massive project with many owners involved. Mr. Lau asked if the students figure out a way to phase any development. Mr. Kantz said that the student group wanted to present a vision of what might be possible for the corridor, something visionary and inspiring. Ognyan Georgiev said that the students did meet with the owner of the Lahey building to do some ground work for the project. Mr. Kantz acknowledged that there are conflicting needs between the need for increased density, additional parking, and space for bicyclists. Mr. Kantz suggested not removing parking for bike lanes in front of businesses and residences.

The Chair said that he appreciates that the students talked to so many stakeholders involved to propose improvements for an area of Arlington that has not been thought of in a while. Mr. Watson said that he appreciates the amount of work the team completed in a semester and the amount and range of public engagement activities. Mr. Benson said he thinks the challenge for the town would be to take the aspects of the final report that they like and make it happen over a period of time with community input. Mr. Benson said that he feels that this study will be an important building block to help guide the town. Ms. Zsembery said she thinks the amount of public input is great. She asked if there were any ideas that were interesting but deemed too aspirational to make it into the final report. Mr. Gorgiev said the Warren intersection was the third site they were looking at and can really be opened up for public space.

The Chair opened the floor to comments and questions from the public.

Barbara Thornton said she loved that the students presented a vision. Ms. Thornton said that she was blown away by the statistics, especially by the number of one and two person households. Ms. Thornton said that Arlington is thought of as a town of families but those statics show clearly it is not only that. Ms. Thornton said she would like to have the students come back with a vision that provides more details about these people and their housing

needs. Ms. Thornton asked if that represents a real demand. Ms. Thornton asked if people may be living in inappropriate housing units, and if so is there a demand for additional housing units.

Leo McCue from Arlington Taxi said that at Broadway and Gardner Street roadway may need to be resurfaced. He also noted a street, which is a private way, should be improved because it is a big problem and has a huge effect on traffic.

Christopher Loretta said he was not surprised by the number of single person households found in the study. Mr. Loretta said that area is the most affordable area for single units. Mr. Loretta asked the students if the proposed buildings are five-stories and if they are allowed by current zoning code. Mr. Kantz said that the entire proposal for the Lahey site would not be possible with the current zoning regulations. Mr. Loretta asked about the bicycle use on Broadway, being the same volume as Mass. Ave. and the Bikeway. Mr. Kantz said that the data is from the Strata and Lime Bike applications, those were the data sets the team used to draw the bike usage totals.

Patricia Worden said that the need for affordable housing in the entire metropolitan area is great. Ms. Worden said that Arlington has over 1,000 subsidized affordable units and probably several thousand naturally affordable units. With the addition of more dense construction there would be incentive for developers to demolish those naturally occurring affordable units which will lead to evictions and displacement of those tenants. Mr. Kantz said they should keep in mind the effects of evictions due to gentrification. Mr. Georgiev said that the students did not propose re-zoning.

Beth Melofchik asked if the presentation is available to the public. Ms. Raitt said that the presentation is available with the online agenda for this meeting and with a news item on the Redevelopment Board page on the Town website. Ms. Melofchik asked if the written report would be available to the public and asked if the Planning Department would edit the written report and Ms. Raitt said that the presentation from the students would be posted.

Mara Vatz asked if the students thought about communicating with Somerville to help solve the traffic issues at the Broadway intersection. Ms. Vatz stated that the intersection from Arlington is reduced to one lane in Somerville and that communication with Somerville would be required for making improvements to that intersection. Ms. Raitt said the Town Manager's office initiated a conversation with the Somerville Mayor's and Planning offices to discuss opportunities to work together along that corridor connecting both communities. Ms. Vatz then asked to consider how the Green Line extension would impact the Broadway corridor since it will change how a lot of residents will be getting to Kendall Square. Mr. Kantz said he spoke to the MBTA and was told that the MBTA is looking to review bus routes in the area after the Green Line extension is in place.

Barbara Thornton asked if there are Arlington Housing Authority units in the area. Menotomy Manor has 176 housing units.

Don Seltzer asked if the students had any data about who uses Lussiano Field and what the rationale is for opening the field up to Broadway. Mary Hannah Smith, a member of the student team, said they did not ask where people lived but did find that the field is one of the most beloved areas in the neighborhood. Ms. Hannah Smith said the students did not have a good sense if people were crossing Broadway to visit the field. Mr. Seltzer said that it may be an advantage to have the field buffered from the busy Broadway street. A member of the student team said that part of the student's recommendations is to make it easier and more inviting to cross Broadway. Ms. Hannah Smith reported that there are unsafe intersections on the streets connecting to Lussiano Field and there is work to make side street access safer also. Mara Vatz stated that the access to the sports fields is not ADA compliant. Student, Paulo Perez, said the idea of opening Lussiano Field to Broadway was to encourage more vibrancy to the corridor. Opening the park would be a catalyst for more people to gather in the area. Based on feedback from the residents, there is a lack of places to go or gather in the community for those residents that live within the

Broadway Corridor.

The Chair thanked the students for their presentation and that the Town will continue these conversations.

The Chair introduced the second Agenda Item, Housing Plan Implementation Committee (HPIC) update. Ms. Raitt introduced Karen Kelleher and Patricia Worden. Ms. Raitt gave an overview of the committee and their focus related to issues other than zoning. The proposed Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund (MAHTF), which would be under the purview of the Select Board, and a proposed real estate transfer fee are the two main things that the group has been discussing. Ms. Zwirko said that the real estate transfer fees would need to be deposited into a MAHTF. Ms. Zwirko said that they are waiting for more information from Town Counsel on ways to format the warrant articles that may go along with this proposal. Ms. Raitt would like to have the Board's support of the HPIC's efforts to advance these articles as they may be filed for spring Town Meeting.

Ms. Worden, a member of the HPIC, said she thinks the Trust Fund would be beneficial for the Town as many affordable contributions are required to be deposited to a MAHTF. The Chair asked if this is a missed opportunity and now it would be corrected. Ms. Raitt said that it was not necessarily a missed opportunity as much as it is a positive for future financial contributions toward affordable housing and the Town's ability to advance those opportunities. Ms. Worden said that the Town has already lost money by not having a MAHTF.

Mr. Lau expressed concern that this would place an additional burden on developers building in town. Mr. Lau asked if with the MAHTF the goal will be to build developments with only affordable housing units or to work with developers to create developments where affordable housing is integrated with market rate housing units. Ms. Raitt provided an overview of the types of funds and what the MAHTF might look like. She referenced the MAHTF Guide that was posted with this agenda item and explained that the Trust goals would be part of the charter. Mr. Benson said the guidebook was very helpful and the Trust Fund is a good idea to give the Town another tool and more flexibility to spend on affordable housing.

Mr. Benson said he is concerned if any decisions to access the funds would have to go back to Town Meeting for approval. Mr. Benson said he would not like it if the Town was to take funds from developers so they do not have to build affordable housing units. Mr. Benson said that it is a great opportunity for the Town.

Ms. Zsembery asked what specifically are we trying to accomplish with the MAHTF and where will the funds be coming from. Ms. Raitt explained the goals to ultimately create and preserve affordable housing and the range of potential funding sources that might be part of the Trust Fund.

The Chair said he would like the Board to be able to review any Trust Fund plan and make recommendations to the Select Board if necessary. The Chair said the Trust Fund would provide another resource and may encourage affordable housing development in town.

The Chair introduced the third Agenda Item, Potential Zoning Bylaw amendments for 2020 Annual Town Meeting. Ms. Raitt said her memo is an overview of potential zoning amendments from the Town led initiatives from groups or committees that the DPCD is working with, which includes mostly administrative items that need updating. Ms. Raitt said that she included memos from Chris Loretto and Patricia Worden. Ms. Raitt said she also included an update of the work the DPCD is doing on the Town's Stormwater bylaw along with compliance with the MS4 General Permit. Ms. Raitt said items that the Board may need to address include amendments to the Environmental Design Review criteria and other items recommended by Horsley Witten Group.

Ms. Raitt said that a follow up is required to the conversation started at spring Town Meeting regarding housing

recommendations, the status of the recommendations, what will be happening next, and the status of the ARB meeting with the Select Board. Ms. Raitt said the joint ARB and SB meeting is intended to be an opportunity to discuss the plan for how to move forward regarding housing actions, some zoning and some non-zoning, in addition to the community participation plan.

Mr. Benson said the current EDR standards are broad enough where the Board may want to draft a guidance document once the Stormwater bylaw is completed. Mr. Benson said that there may not be a need for a change to the bylaw. Mr. Benson said that the Clean Energy Future Committee is doing a good job considering what we can do to improve existing infrastructure to increase energy efficiency and lower greenhouse gas emissions. Mr. Benson said that is he disappointed the Town is missing an opportunity to update the bylaw regarding new construction regulations to ensure new construction meets the standards the Town wants met. Mr. Benson said he feels that the Town should follow the Watertown ordinance requiring solar on larger buildings and no longer allow fossil fuel infrastructure for new development. Ms. Raitt said the Brookline bylaw is still pending the Attorney General's office approval.

Mr. Watson said he is cautious about recommending the articles to put on the warrant when we do not have a clear understanding of what the actual warrant article will be as that has complicated the Board's progress in the past. Mr. Watson said that he did wish the Board could have met with the Select Board earlier and moved forward with the public engagement around housing and zoning leading up to last year's Town Meeting. Mr. Watson said that he is worried that the Board is pushing the limits of the level of being able to do the type of engagement the Board envisioned before next fall.

Mr. Lau asked if the Board could set up an agenda item to discuss any potential warrant articles. The Chair asked to add time for the Board discuss potential warrant articles during the January, 6, 2020 ARB meeting. Mr. Lau said he would like to opportunity to discuss Planned Unit Developments or PUDs. Mr. Benson agreed, as the students' presentation showed that some of the area needs to be rezoned to allow for development. Ms. Raitt noted that the Select Board voted to change the order of the warrant articles for Town Meeting and that zoning will be last.

The Chair opened the floor to the public to comment regarding any zoning items. Ms. Worden asked that the Board include a request to clarify the definition of the term foundation in the Zoning Bylaw.

Chris Lorette wanted clarify the Board understood that the suggestions Mr. Lorette made for proposed zoning changes including changes to tables and suggested update to the definition of mixed-use.

The Chair introduced the Fourth Agenda Item, Meeting Minutes 11/4/19. Mr. Benson moved to accept the minutes for November, 4, 2019 with amendments suggested by the Board, Ms. Zsembery seconded, all voted in favor 5-0.

The Chair introduced the Fifth Agenda Item, Open Forum. The Chair opened the floor to the public for comments.

Mr. Benson moved to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Watson seconded, all voted in favor 5-0.

Meeting adjourned.