

**Arlington Redevelopment Board**  
**September 11, 2021, 8:00 AM**  
**Arlington Police Department, Community Room**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**PRESENT:** Rachel Zsembery (Chair), Eugene Benson, Kin Lau, Melisa Tintocalis, Steve Revilak

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

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The Chair called the meeting to order.

Raitt welcomed Revilak, the Board's new gubernatorial designee. Raitt reviewed first agenda item and discussed Department of Planning and Community Development objectives for this fiscal year as well as accomplishments from last fiscal year. She reviewed the Town's Annual Budget and Financial Plan documents related to the Department and Redevelopment Board. The Board is interested in weighing in on a plan in progress, especially when zoning recommendations are discussed. The Board requested that Raitt add Net Zero Action Plan and Connect Arlington to a future ARB agenda for the Board to endorse the Net Zero Action Plan and to adopt the Connect Arlington plan. The Board also requested that Raitt add Working Group reports to future meeting agendas. They also suggested creating a calendar with specific times for updates. Benson requested a focus on the inclusionary zoning study. Raitt explained that it would not be prudent to hire a consultant at this time and wondered if the Town would learn anything new about the bylaw versus the need to produce more housing to trigger any inclusionary requirement. Raitt suggested that there are amendments that the Board could make to the bylaw that would not require a consultant, including amending the payment in lieu of housing section and the related calculation for payment to the Town. Lau agreed. The Board agreed not to move forward with hiring a consultant at this time.

Lau introduced the importance of focusing on economic development and zoning that can help address commercial uses along the Mass Ave and Broadway corridors. He suggested focusing on amendments to the bylaw to increase floor-area-ratios (FAR) in business districts. Other suggestions included amending parking requirements for residential uses, a bylaw amendment to help create starter homes, and an update to existing design standards. The Board agreed that it was important to pursue an appropriation at next Town Meeting to update the Arlington Design Standards relative to commercial areas. The new industrial zoning incorporated design standards into the bylaw. The Board also agreed to focus on Housing Plan goals and implementation of strategies related to zoning once the plan is complete. Raitt outlined a Town-led application modernization project, which will move the Town to a completely technology-based application format for all Town boards and commissions engaged in project/ application reviews and approvals. Revilak agreed to serve as a rep from the Board on this project.

Given the Board's interest in economic development issues, Raitt mentioned that a new working group will be formed to focus on economic development. The group would include representatives from many groups working on economic development efforts across town. The working group will not be solely focused on zoning, but on multiple issues facing the business districts. The Board discussed several other potential zoning recommendations for the commercial areas, including establishing a minimum percentage of commercial in mixed-use projects and addressing setbacks. There may also be opportunities to amend the zoning map and reduce the number of business districts. This zoning work may occur because of the MBTA Communities planning work. However, municipalities across the state are awaiting guidance from the MBTA and DHCD regarding the substantive changes that will be required to be compliant as an MBTA community. The timeline for releasing that guidance is unclear. Other potential zoning amendments included a suggestion from a member of the Zoning Bylaw Working Group regarding addressing buildings in floodplains by allowing for taller buildings to elevate basements.

Revilak suggested that this and other resiliency zoning efforts are important for the Board to consider.

For a future meeting, the Board would like to have a discussion with Town Counsel regarding their statutory powers and authority around MGL 40A and MGL 121B. At this meeting, it would also be helpful to discuss urban renewal powers in relation to moving forward with redevelopment proposals in the town.

Additionally, the Board would like to discuss the Town Meeting warrant article process at the next meeting. The Board will also make committee appointments at the next meeting and devise a calendar for approximate times when Board members will be required to provide regular reports from committee work. Lau also requested that additional time be added to future public hearings for special permit applications under consideration. He often feels that there is not enough time provided for a full discussion. The Board will also discuss an update to their goals for this current fiscal year.

Mr. Lau moved to adjourn, Ms. Tintocalis seconded, all voted in favor (5-0).

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.