

**Arlington Redevelopment Board**  
**Monday, May 5, 2025, at 7:00 PM**  
**Town Hall Annex, First Floor Conference Room**  
**730 Massachusetts Ave, Arlington, MA 02476**  
**Meeting Minutes**

This meeting was recorded by ACMI.

**PRESENT:** Rachel Zsemlery (Chair), Eugene Benson, Shaina Korman-Houston, Stephen Revilak

**ABSENT:** Kin Lau

**STAFF:** Claire Ricker, Director of Planning and Community Development; Sarah Suarez, Assistant Director of Planning and Community Development

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The Chair called the meeting of the Board to order.

The Chair opened with **Agenda Item 1 – Review Meeting Minutes.**

April 7, 2025 – The Board members discussed the accuracy of the section of the minutes about Article 41, and they decided to make no changes to the minutes. The Chair requested a motion to approve the April 7 minutes as submitted. Mr. Benson so moved, Ms. Korman-Houston seconded, and the Board voted unanimously in favor.

April 10, 2025 – The Board members made no changes to the minutes. The Chair requested a motion to approve the April 10 minutes as submitted. Mr. Benson so moved, Ms. Korman-Houston, and the Board voted unanimously in favor.

April 14, 2025 – The Board members made no changes to the minutes. The Chair requested a motion to approve the April 14 minutes as submitted. Mr. Benson so moved, Ms. Korman-Houston, and the Board voted unanimously in favor.

The Chair moved to **Agenda Item 2 – Public Hearing: Docket #3831, 1323 Massachusetts Ave (continued from March 17, 2025).**

Ms. Ricker said that she spoke with the applicant, Asael Sanchez, and he assured her that he will remove the illegal window signage and will submit photos showing that he has done so. He is working with his sign company, but they have not yet submitted new sign drawings. She informed the applicant that if he does not remove the window signage, the Inspectional Services Department would be notified, and he would be subject to fees and citations for non-conforming signage. He agreed to submit new drawings in advance of a continued hearing on July 7, 2025.

Mr. Benson and the Chair both said that they have recently seen the property, and the illegal window signs are still up. Mr. Benson said that it would be a good idea to put the Board's concerns in writing to the applicant.

The Chair asked for a motion to continue the public hearing for Docket 3831 to July 7, 2025. Mr. Benson so moved, Ms. Korman-Houston seconded, and the Board voted unanimously in favor.

The Chair moved to **Agenda Item 3 – Town Meeting Discussion.**

The Chair noted that amendments or substitute motions have been submitted for Articles 25, 26, 38, and 41. Typically, Town Meeting asks the Board if it has any position on amendments, substitute motions, or other actions proposed for zoning articles.

**Article 26**

Vincent Baudoin submitted an amendment to Article 26, to add cargo bicycle parking as a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategy. One Town Meeting member asked the Chair if she had concerns about having two TDM

strategies related to bicycle parking. She said that the Board thoroughly considers TDM plans, and they work with applicants to make sure that the most appropriate TDM measures for the site are applied.

Mr. Revilak said that he supports this amendment. He understands the concern about double-counting the same bicycle parking spaces as two different TDM strategies. He would expect that if an applicant proposes two bicycle TDM strategies, they would be non-intersecting.

Ms. Korman-Houston said that she also supports this amendment, and she thinks that cargo bicycles meet a need that is distinct from traditional bicycles.

Mr. Benson said that he thinks that as a TDM strategy, parking for cargo bicycles should be long-term. Mr. Revilak said that he thinks that it depends on the use case. For example, at a day care, short-term cargo bicycle parking would be useful. Mr. Benson said that standard outdoor bicycle racks work for cargo bicycle parking as well. The only difference would be in long-term parking, where larger spaces and greater maneuverability in an indoor or covered space would be required. For residential uses, specifically, the requirement should be for long-term parking. The Chair noted that the Board would still have the flexibility to require long-term cargo bicycle parking if they felt the specific use warranted it. Mr. Benson agreed, but he said that he would prefer to have greater clarity in the bylaw, so that the need for long-term cargo bicycle parking is clear to applicants. He said that if other Board members are comfortable with the more general wording, he is willing to support it.

Ms. Korman-Houston noted that the zoning bylaw does not define cargo bicycle parking. Ms. Benson said that the Board should update the bicycle parking standards to include cargo bicycles.

The Chair asked for a motion to support the proposed amendment to Article 26 from Vincent Baudoin. Mr. Benson so moved, Mr. Revilak seconded, and the Board voted unanimously in favor.

## **Article 25**

Wynelle Evans submitted an amendment to Article 26, requiring that Accessible Dwelling Units (ADUs) have at least a six-foot setback from the property line.

Mr. Revilak noted that Article 26 proposes removing the six-foot setback and replacing it with the setback requirements of the district in which the ADU is located. He thinks that makes more sense than requiring a six-foot setback in all districts.

Mr. Revilak also noted that in the zoning bylaw, residential districts allow “accessory buildings and garage structures,” while business districts allow “other permitted structures.” He requested clarification that the setbacks applying to any of those additional structures would apply to ADUs. Mr. Benson confirmed that.

Mr. Benson said that he does not support the amendment requiring a six-foot setback in all districts. He thinks that the six-foot rule in the proposed amendment might violate the new state law, because it is potentially more restrictive than the underlying zoning, but he would need to look into it.

Mr. Revilak noted that this amendment would also create a gray area in business districts, in which the underlying zoning for “other permitted structures” requires at least a 10-foot setback. If an ADU were planned with a setback larger than 10 feet, it could be built by right, and if it were planned with less than a six-foot setback, it would require a Special Permit. But it is not clear what would happen if it were planned with a setback between six and 10 feet.

The Chair suggested that the Board members be prepared to speak to their concerns at Town Meeting, but not take a formal vote on the amendment. The other members agreed.

## **Article 38**

Andrew Greenspon submitted a substitute motion for Article 38, which is very similar to the Article he originally proposed on which the Board voted No Action.

Mr. Benson explained that Mr. Greenspon slightly amended his prior proposal in response to a question from the Town Moderator about whether part of it was out of scope of the warrant article.

The Chair said that she still has the same problems with this proposal that initially led her to vote not to support it; the business uses to be allowed in the R3 to R7 districts are too large, and it does not support the creation of small, home-based businesses.

Mr. Benson noted that there are approximately 1,900 parcels zoned R3 to R7, which presumably include some of the less expensive rental units in the town. He is concerned that allowing more business uses in those districts could result in the displacement of renters. Mr. Revilak noted that the Board will have to grapple with this issue as they consider expanding business districts. Mr. Benson agreed but said that it would be better to do so as part of a comprehensive process.

Mr. Revilak supported the substitute motion for the same reasons that led him to support the original main motion.

The Chair suggested that the Board members be prepared to speak to their concerns at Town Meeting, but not take a formal vote on the amendment. The other members agreed.

#### **Article 41**

Greg Dennis submitted a Motion to Commit for Article 41, proposing the creation of an Affordable Housing Overlay Committee to study the issue, conduct community outreach, and prepare one or more warrant articles to create such an overlay district for 2026 Annual Town Meeting. In addition, the Town would pay for all legal noticing.

Ms. Ricker said that the Motion to Commit specifies that much of the work for organizing the committee, and the responsibility for public notice, would rest on DPCD. Typically, DPCD works for the Redevelopment Board, not citizen petitioners, which raises the question of whether any resulting warrant articles would be taken up by the Board, or if they would be submitted as citizen petitions. The Board has expressed interest in looking at how best to create an affordable housing overlay district.

Mr. Benson said that he thinks that the provision in the Motion to Commit requiring that the report and recommendations of the committee go to Town Meeting violates state law. M.G.L. Chapter 40A Section 5 requires that amendments to the Zoning Bylaw (ZBL) go to the Redevelopment Board, which must then hold a public hearing. So a committee created to propose changes to the ZBL should report and make recommendations to the Board rather than to Town Meeting. He has emailed Mr. Dennis to raise these concerns, copying Town Counsel Michael Cunningham and Town Moderator Greg Cristiana, but has not yet received had a response.

Mr. Benson also noted that an Affordable Housing Overlay District is not the only way to provide more opportunities for affordable housing, but the way the Motion to Commit is worded would require discussion of an overlay and would not allow discussion of any other strategies.

The Chair noted that the Board and DPCD have made multiple commitments for Town Meeting in 2026, and she is concerned about their ability to do the work required within the next year. She also thinks that it is too restrictive to limit the work of the committee to creating an overlay district and not allow it to consider other methods of incentivizing affordable housing.

Ms. Korman-Houston noted that an affordable housing overlay has been articulated as a priority for a significant number of people, and the Board has stated that it is something they want to consider. The Board should in some way facilitate the work of a group that wants to create an affordable housing overlay, and it should support bringing a warrant article to Town Meeting.

Mr. Revilak agreed with Ms. Korman-Houston. He noted that many people expressed an interest in an affordable housing overlay district during the MBTA Communities process. There was also a non-binding resolution asking the Town to create such a district. He thinks that it would be acceptable if the proposal is not technically an overlay district but an alternative method for increasing affordable housing. He sees this Motion to Commit as a nudge to the Board to address an issue that it has said it will work on.

Mr. Benson noted that the Motion to Commit may have specified an overlay district because it had to be within the scope of Article 41. He thinks that using a motion based on Article 41 is not the right way to go about addressing the

issue of affordable housing. He also noted that the motion requires DPCD to send out notice as soon as the committee recommends changes to the Zoning Map, even before the recommendations have gone through any sort of process.

Mr. Benson also said that the Board has committed to addressing affordable housing, but it has never specifically committed to creating an overlay district. The Chair also noted that the Board has also never committed to having a proposal ready for Town Meeting in 2026.

Ms. Korman-Houston said that if this motion is not the best way to approach the issue, she would like the Board to decide what the right approach is and commit to pursuing it.

Mr. Benson said that the Board has committed to business rezoning in Arlington Heights and East Arlington for 2026 Town Meeting, and the Board is also involved in the Comprehensive Plan Update process. An affordable housing overlay would require a significant amount of work, and the Board and DPCD will not be able to take that on while fulfilling its other commitments for the coming year.

The Chair asked for a motion to adjourn to Town Meeting. Mr. Benson so moved, and Ms. Korman-Houston seconded, and the Board voted unanimously in favor.

Meeting **Adjourned** at 7:50 pm.

#### **Documents used:**

Agenda Item 1     DRAFT ARB Minutes – April 7, 2025  
                         DRAFT ARB Minutes – April 10, 2025  
                         DRAFT ARB Minutes – April 14, 2025

Agenda Item 3     Amendment – Article 26

Correspondence   Warrant Article 26:  
                             • V. Baudoin, 4/16/2025  
  
                             1500 Mass Ave:  
                             • D. Seltzer, 4/30/2025