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**88-20**

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Barney S. Heath  
Director

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**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** November 6, 2020

**TO:** Councilor Deborah Crossley, Chair, Zoning & Planning Committee  
Members of the Zoning & Planning Committee

**FROM:** Barney Heath, Director, Department of Planning and Development  
Jennifer Caira, Deputy Director, Department of Planning and Development  
Nevena Pilipović-Wengler, Community Engagement Manager  
Zachery LeMel, Chief of Long Range Planning

**RE:** **#88-20 Discussion and review relative to the draft Zoning Ordinance**  
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING requesting review, discussion, and direction relative to the draft Zoning Ordinance.

**MEETING:** November 9, 2020

**CC:** City Council  
Planning Board  
John Lojek, Commissioner of Inspectional Services  
Neill Cronin, Chief of Current Planning  
Alissa O. Giuliani, City Solicitor  
Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer

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**Introduction to the Community Engagement Proposal**

Staff presented on a draft community engagement strategy for Zoning Redesign at the Zoning and Planning (ZAP) Committee meeting on Monday, October 26<sup>th</sup>. This memo aims to address the questions and concerns raised by ZAP Committee Members.

To reiterate, the Planning Department recognizes that another round of focused community engagement is needed. Newton residents are at different stages in how they relate to Zoning Redesign. We believe we need to conduct community engagement that establishes a baseline understanding of Zoning Redesign for the public-at-large, invites new voices into the conversation, and solicit public feedback on a more comprehensive engagement strategy.

We propose a set of efforts called 'Zoning Redesign: Where We Are Now' to kick off this phase of community engagement. (Referred to as the 'Listening Tour' at the previous ZAP meeting.)

What Is 'Zoning Redesign: Where We Are Now': This phase intends to (1) establish a baseline and accessible understanding of Zoning Redesign, (2) invite new voices into the conversation, and (3) solicit public feedback from the Newton community on how we can best engage around the Zoning Ordinance's articles in 2021. A communications effort will compliment and support this phase, including updates to the Zoning Redesign website.

What It Is Not: This phase is not intended to cover the substantive details of Zoning Redesign, but to provide an update on the process and next steps while gaining a better understanding of the public's baseline knowledge and interests related to Zoning Redesign. We intend to design comprehensive engagement strategies for the substance of Zoning Redesign based on the feedback and ideas we solicit during the 'Where We Are Now' phase. Engagement will begin in January around Article 3- Residence Districts.

The proposed timeline remains as:

- November 2020: Community Outreach for 'Zoning Redesign: Where We Are Now'
- December 2020: 'Zoning Redesign: Where We Are Now'
- January 2021:
  - Synthesis of Learnings from 'Zoning Redesign: Where We Are Now'
  - Begin public engagement on Article 3 – Residence Districts
- February – September 2021: Comprehensive Engagement Strategies for Article 3 – Residence Districts, Article 4- Village Districts, and other articles that the public expresses investment in during previous months

#### **Feedback from the Planning & Development Board**

This engagement strategy was presented to the Planning & Development Board on Monday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>. While the Planning & Development Board members had clarifying questions about the 'Where We Are Now' phase, they ultimately expressed appreciation for staff restarting community engagement on Zoning Redesign and support for the proposed strategy. In addition, the Planning & Development Board members committed to acting as facilitators for the breakout rooms of the two 'Where We Are Now' events and to reviewing material that staff create for this phase of engagement.

#### **'Where We Are Now' Events**

As presented on October 26<sup>th</sup>, the initial phase of community engagement consists of the following events and activities:

- Two public Zoom events, that consist of a presentation & break-out room discussions
- Recorded presentation, made available on the Zoning Redesign website
- Public survey

ZAP Councilors requested more information about the presentation that staff will make. Below is the presentation's current outline:

- Brief Introduction to Zoning Redesign
- What is Zoning?
- How Did We Get Here? History of Newton Zoning
- What Is Wrong with the Current Zoning Ordinance?
- How Can We Address These Issues with Zoning Redesign? (Includes timeline of Zoning Redesign)

- Role of Community Engagement in Zoning Redesign
- *\*In event, would split into break-out room discussions at this point.*
- Next Steps
- *Supportive Material*
  - *Zoning Redesign 'Dictionary'*
  - *Presentation's Bibliography*

#### **Potential Roles for ZAP's Councilors**

Staff believe the Councilors on the ZAP Committee could play the following roles for this phase of community engagement:

- Serve as facilitators of the break-out discussion groups in the two public Zoom events (each facilitator will be partnered with a staff member per group)
- Invite your constituents to engage and participate in these events (such as sharing the event flyer and RSVP form through newsletters)
- Participate in 'Zoning Redesign: Where We Are Now' by sharing ideas on how we can engage Newton constituents on the articles in 2021

#### **Soliciting Feedback**

Feedback from the ZAP Committee on the community engagement proposal as well as Councilors' potential roles would be much appreciated.