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Director

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## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** January 25, 2019

**TO:** Councilor Susan Albright, Chair, Zoning and Planning Committee  
Members of the Zoning and Planning Committee

**FROM:** Barney Heath, Director, Department of Planning and Development  
James Freas, Deputy Director of Planning  
Rachel Nadkarni, Long Range Planner

**RE:** **#518-18 Discussion and review relative to the draft Zoning Ordinance**  
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING requesting review, discussion, and direction relative to the  
draft Zoning Ordinance.  
**Village Districts Discussion Summary – January 14, 2019**

**MEETING:** January 28, 2019

**CC:** Planning and Development Board  
John Lojek, Commissioner of Inspectional Services  
Marie Lawlor and Jonah Temple, Law Department

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Attached is a meeting summary of the discussion on residential districts from the November 26th meeting. Staff will be creating a meeting summary like this for each topic regarding the First Draft Zoning Ordinance to track work flow, next steps, and to digitize the notes taken during the discussion.

At the January 28<sup>th</sup> meeting, staff will briefly present the meeting summary, and take note of any additional thoughts that the Committee has reflecting back on the previous discussion.

# Zoning Redesign Meeting Summary

Topic: Village Districts

Date: January 14, 2018

## Part 1: Staff Summary (Points of General Agreement)

During the discussion of village districts, staff introduced several topics related to the development of, and modification to, properties in the Newton's village centers. Staff have attempted to summarize those points of agreement that were noted in the meeting and other areas where there appeared to be general agreement, understanding that details on these topics still need further discussion. These notes will be used to direct work flow over the next months and do not represent any decision of the Committee members.

### Standards for Lots and Building Types

- Building width - There was general agreement that the building widths on some of the larger buildings, the ones that have a current maximum of 200 ft, may be too wide still. Staff will continue to investigate building widths in Newton's village centers and explore changes to the maximum on all of the building types where this is the maximum.
- Principal Entrance Spacing – there was general agreement that this tool was a positive addition.
- Standards for Vibrant Sidewalks – there was general agreement that the tools included in the first draft to ensure that new buildings create a more continuous and active street edge were a positive addition to the draft, among the tools pointed out was the requirement for frequent building entrances. There was also a discussion of the front setback, and if the front setback default should be more than 0 ft in order to ensure that sidewalks are widened when new buildings come in. Staff will continue to explore the interplay of the front setback, frontage buildout, and building fenestration tools in the village districts to build on the goal of creating vibrant sidewalks in the village centers.
- Parking setbacks – there seemed to be general agreement that the parking setback tool, which requires parking to either be alongside or behind buildings in the village districts was the correct direction to move forward with.

### Uses in the Village Districts

- Formula Retail and Restaurants – after a robust discussion about the tools described in the first draft ordinance to place strict standards on formula or chain retail and restaurants and the successes as well as challenges such rules have faced in other Massachusetts communities, there was general agreement that staff should continue to pursue tools to reduce the negative externalities of formula restaurant and retail uses in the village districts.
- Banks – there was also general agreement that staff should further explore and provide standards for banks in the village center. Among the ideas discussed were requiring a Special Permit for anything on the ground floor, setting a by-right size limit on the ground floor, and setting a proximity rule. Staff will investigate the range of tools available and provide a recommended set of standards for banks in the second draft.

### **Topics needing more discussion**

- Residential Unit Factor – staff understood that the committee is looking for more information on the recommended residential unit factor and how the standards for the residential unit factor in the first draft ordinance relate to recent projects.
- Outdoor amenity space – staff understood that the committee is also looking for more information on the recommended standard for outdoor amenity space (24 sf for every unit) and how this relates to the amenity spaces provided by recent development projects.
- Appointment-based Personal Services – there was a robust discussion of appointment based personal service uses and whether they can appropriately work on the ground floor or are better suited to upper stories (where available). Staff understood that this topic merited further discussion, particularly in the context of the window transparency requirements. Staff will highlight how the window transparency requirements in village districts may affect the direction on this set of uses during the development standards discussion.
- Futureproofing the Use Categories – the committee discussion on futureproofing the diversity of uses allowed in the zoning ordinance is a discussion that needs more time. As the review of the first draft continues, staff asks the Committee, and will more broadly ask the business community, to assist us in identifying any uses that should be included at this point so that the use table is relatively future proofed for the next several years, understanding that it will be impossible to anticipate all possible future use categories.

## Part 2: Meeting Facilitation Notes Documented

Below is the Zoning Redesign Notes Matrix from the Village Districts Discussion at the Zoning and Planning Committee Meeting on January 14<sup>th</sup>.

### Recorded Zoning Redesign Facilitated Discussion Matrix

<p><b>Points of Agreement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building widths may be too wide – revisit the 200’ maximum building width</li> <li>• Frequent entrances are beneficial</li> <li>• Village street frontage is important - continuous street wall</li> <li>• Parking setbacks – make sense to have behind or in line with building</li> <li>• Pursue keeping chain stores out of villages – by SPGA only?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Proposed Modifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ground floor – consider no personal service in village – could fenestration requirement help? What about places without 2<sup>nd</sup> floors? (example: 2<sup>nd</sup> floor yoga)</li> <li>• Determining complex mix of uses in a business – ISD can determine Principle uses vs. Accessory uses – across space and time</li> <li>• Balconies – maybe don’t require, some locations (e.g. adjacent to golf course) are problematic</li> </ul>
<p><b>Points to Discuss Next Time</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For each village...what does this mean?</li> <li>• Residential Unit Factor- need more info, example lots and buildings</li> </ul>	<p><b>Points that need Staff Research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Banks – 1<sup>st</sup> floor square footage restriction, security deposit boxes</li> <li>• Built out analysis for villages</li> <li>• Uses and new uses in future</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ideas to Come Back to</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signs – will discuss during development standards meeting</li> <li>• Fence design standards – height (fence standards are not in the zoning ordinance)</li> <li>• Curb cuts affect public safety</li> <li>• Coliving –do we need to include? Does this differ from association of persons?</li> </ul>	