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Barney S. Heath
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 22, 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.
Single Purpose Districts Discussion Summary – January 28, 2019

MEETING: January 28, 2019

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

Attached is a meeting summary of the discussion on single purpose districts from the January 28th 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 March 25th 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: Single Purpose Districts

Date: January 28, 2019

Staff Summary

During the discussion of single purpose districts, staff introduced several topics related to those areas of the city that stand apart from the typical fabric of villages and neighborhoods. As was discussed, the intention of these districts is to allow for modifications to existing properties, but it is not expected that these districts will be expanded to new properties in Newton.

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.

Public Use District

- The proposed public use district operates just like the public use district in the current ordinance. The Public Use district did not generate much discussion, and there were no stated recommendations from the Committee to modify the approach to the public use district for the second draft.

Recreation District

- The proposed Recreation District covers private recreation facilities (tennis clubs, golf courses, etc.) as well as the private cemetery in Newton. There was general agreement that the change of these facilities from residential zoning districts to the recreation district was positive because it offers more predictability and clarity should these facilities decide to change the use of all or part of their land.

Office District

- The Office District allows for stand-alone office buildings in an office park setting; Wells Ave being the primary location for the proposed Office District. There was a discussion about the allowed 5 stories, which would be allowed by Special Permit. There was a concern that such additional activity could result in traffic problems, and it was discussed the Special Permit would allow for in depth discussion of transportation before a 5-story office building would be allowed.

Fabrication District

- The Fabrication District is the modernization of the existing Manufacturing District with a broader range of arts and technology uses allowed. The Fabrication district did not generate much discussion, and there were no stated recommendations from the Committee to modify the approach to the Fabrication District for the second draft.

Regional Retail District

- The Regional Retail District covers facilities like the Chestnut Hill Square and the Street at Chestnut Hill. It was recommended that staff continue to review the list of allowed uses in this district and it was noted that potentially well-fitting uses like breweries and museums were not allowed in the regional retail district in the first draft. Staff will review the list of uses in this district and make modifications for the second draft.

Non-Contextual Multi-Residence District

- The non-contextual multi-residence district covers the large standalone residential complexes like the Towers at Chestnut Hill or The Gables. It was noted that there was confusing language about when a Special Permit is required in this district that staff will be reviewing for the second draft. There were no stated recommendations from the Committee to modify the approach to this district for the second draft.

Campus/Institutional District

- The Campus/Institutional district includes the university and private secondary school campuses as well as the other large institutions like the hospital. There appeared to be general agreement that only those properties being used as part of the institutional campus should be included in this district, meaning that residences owned by an institution and utilized as residences should be mapped to appropriate residential districts. Staff will review the edges of the campus districts to ensure that the campus districts are limited to those properties used for educational or institutional purposes.
- There was also a discussion of the allowed uses within the Campus District, particularly with respect to housing/services for older adults and accessory uses like community gardens. Staff will review the list of allowed uses and consider how assisted living facilities might or might not fit within the standards and purpose statements of this district, paying particular attention to the treatment of Lasell Village.
- There are two institutions in Newton, Newton Wellesley Hospital and the West Suburban YMCA, that staff is continuing to consider relative to the appropriate district. Right now the Hospital is in the Campus/Institutional District and the YMCA is in the Neighborhood General district. Each property includes a unique mix of facilities and uses that need careful consideration. Staff will continue to work on the appropriate treatment of these two properties and provide a recommendation for the second draft.

Article 7 Districts – Overlays, Parallel Districts, and Master Plan Districts

- Article 7 is a placeholder for future efforts so that location specific districts like the Washington Street zoning districts can smoothly fit into the ordinance.
- There appeared to be general agreement that the structure of this article was appropriate.

Restricted Uses

- The Restricted Uses section did not generate much discussion. As with all uses, there seems to be general agreement that further reflection and discussion is merited.