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Barney S. Heath
Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 10, 2022

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
Zachery LeMel, Chief of Long Range Planning
Nevena Pilipovic-Wengler, Community Engagement Planner

RE: **#38-22 Discussion and review relative to the draft Zoning Ordinance regarding village centers**
ZONING & PLANNING COMMITTEE requesting review, discussion and possible ordinance amendments relative to Chapter 30 zoning ordinances pertaining to Mixed Use, business districts and village districts relative to the draft Zoning Ordinance. (formerly #88-20)

MEETING: November 14, 2022

CC: City Council
Planning Board
Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer

Introduction

At the October 24, 2022 ZAP meeting, Planning staff and consultant Utile introduced the [version 1.0 maps](#) of the proposed village center zoning districts. This first draft builds upon nearly two years of research, analysis, and City Council deliberation. The maps are intentionally meant to be reviewed and updated. With that in mind, staff presented a recommended calendar guiding the City Council from version 1.0 to finalized maps and zoning text for review at future Public Hearings and consideration for adoption.

ZAP, and other City Councilors in attendance, had a productive conversation following the presentation. A summary of the presentation and the conversation can be found in the [ZAP Report](#).

Upcoming Meeting

Staff previously introduced a lot of content, understanding there would be additional meetings for continued conversations. This meeting allows for additional discussion amongst the Committee and other City Councilors. Questions and comments will be compiled by staff and added to those gathered at the October 24 meeting.

Additionally, individual meetings have been scheduled with Councilors from each Ward. Given this, staff recommend comments about specific parcels or streets be held until those meetings.

Questions Received Since Sharing the Draft Maps

- How do overlay districts function as compared to the base zoning?
- Why are you proposing overlay districts versus amendments directly to the existing zoning?
- If the overlay district is adopted, how does future development utilizing the overlay district regulations interact with existing special permits?
- Why were other areas of the city not included, like the area around the Boston College MBTA Green Line station?
- Why was VC3 not included in Nonantum?
- What is the Special Permit maximum allowance as proposed?
- What are the required setbacks as proposed?
- How does this proposal work with MBTA Communities?
- What is the fiscal impact of this proposal?
- How is historic preservation included within this proposal?
- What are the public benefits of this proposal?
- FAR was not included in the previous presentations, why was FAR not included?
- How will you notify the Newton property owners within the proposed boundaries in advance of these proposals potentially being enacted? Is there a plan for notifying abutting neighbors?

Looking Ahead

Planning staff and Utile will present the draft Village Center Overlay District zoning text at the November 28, 2022 ZAP meeting. This will include the basic dimensional standards (setbacks, building heights, etc.), as well as design standards required for any village center development (façade/entrance details, parking location, incentives for architectural features, etc.). Like the draft maps, the zoning text is a working document. Multiple iterations are expected in advance of any Public Hearings. Staff expects to answer many of the questions above through the release of the draft zoning ordinance.

Lastly, in parallel to the work going on at ZAP, staff are organizing seven public information + input sessions. These virtual meetings will provide community members with an opportunity to comment on these initial maps. All sessions will be held between 5:30pm and 6:30pm. The dates for each village center are below and the registration links can be found at <https://newtonma.gov/vcmaps>:

- Tuesday, November 29 - Upper Falls and Waban
- Wednesday, November 30 - Four Corners and Newton Highlands
- Thursday, December 1 - Newton Centre and Thompsonville
- Tuesday, December 6 - Lower Falls and Auburndale
- Wednesday, December 7 - West Newton
- Thursday, December 8 - Newtonville
- Wednesday, December 14 - Nonantum and Newton Corner