

NEEDHAM PLANNING BOARD

Monday, May 3, 2021

12:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting using Zoom

Meeting ID: **826-5899-3198**

(Instructions for accessing below)

To view and participate in this virtual meeting on your phone, download the “Zoom Cloud Meetings” app in any app store or at www.zoom.us. At the above date and time, click on “Join a Meeting” and enter the following Meeting ID: **826-5899-3198**

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US: +1 312 626 6799 or +1 646 558 8656 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 669 900 9128 or +1 253 215 8782 Then enter ID: **826-5899-3198**

Direct Link to meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82658993198>

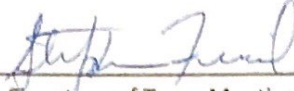
1. Discussion of Annual & Special Town Meeting warrant articles.
2. Minutes.
3. Correspondence.
4. Report from Planning Director and Board members.

(Items for which a specific time has not been assigned may be taken out of order.)

TOWN OF NEEDHAM

2021 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The following motion to amend is offered by



Signature of Town Meeting Member

ARTICLE 5:

MOVED: that the main motion under Article 5 be amended by:

1. Deleting the sentence "(e) The proposed development should incorporate as many green building standards as practical, given the type of building and proposed use;" from the paragraph under 4.11.3, and inserting in its place the sentence "The proposed development should be built to the most energy efficient building standards (e.g., stretch building codes) approved by the State of Massachusetts at the time the special permit is requested, regardless of whether the Town of Needham has adopted those standards for town-wide use."

TOWN OF NEEDHAM
2021 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING



The following motion to amend is offered by _____

Signature of Town Meeting Member
Barry Pollack, Precinct J

ARTICLE 5:

MOVED: that the main motion under Article 5 be amended by:

1. Deleting the number "25%" in Paragraph 5, specifically in the first sentence of 4.11.1(4) and inserting in its place the number "30%."
2. Deleting the number "1.35" in Paragraph 5, in the first sentence of 4.11.1(5) and inserting in place thereof the number "1.0," and inserting at the end of the paragraph a new sentence stating: "To encourage mixed-use development, when considering a special permit the Planning Board can give favorable consideration to mixed-use plans that devote a substantial amount of the floor area, beyond that allowed by right, to (i) dwelling units, and (ii) indoor athletic, exercise, fitness, or skating rink uses that can substantially benefit Needham students and support or supplement school programs."

**MOTION TO AMEND THE MAIN MOTION UNDER ARTICLE 5 AMEND ZONING
BY-LAW – HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL 1 ZONING DISTRICT**

Mr. Ed Scheideler, Town Meeting Member, hereby moves to amend the main motion under Article 5 Amend Zoning By-law – Highway Commercial 1 Zoning District by deleting subsection (2) of Section 3.2.7.2 (m) under Paragraph 2, which subsection (2) provides that no more than 240 dwelling units shall be permitted in the Highway Commercial 1 District, and by renumbering the subsequent subsections from (3) and (4) to (2) and (3).

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Ed Scheideler", is written above a horizontal line.

Signature of Town Meeting Member, Mr. Ed Scheideler

MOTION TO AMEND THE MAIN MOTION UNDER ARTICLE 5 AMEND ZONING BY-LAW – HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL 1 ZONING DISTRICT

Mr. Ed Scheideler, Town Meeting Member, hereby moves to amend the main motion under Article 5 Amend Zoning By-law – Highway Commercial 1 Zoning District, as follows: In Paragraph 8, titled “Amend Section 6.12, Affordable Housing....,”

by replacing the fourth sentence:

The requirements detailed in paragraphs (a), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), and (h) below shall apply to a development that includes affordable units in the Highway Commercial 1 District.”

with

“The requirements detailed in paragraphs (a), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h) and (j) below shall apply to a development that includes affordable units in the Highway Commercial 1 District.”

and by adding to Section 6.12 new subsection (j) as follows:

“(j) To create a window of opportunity for households seeking affordable ownership units and to provide rental units affordable for households at a range of incomes, the following provisions shall apply:

(1) In a homeownership project, the affordable unit(s) must be made available to households with annual gross incomes at or below 80% of the area median income (AMI). These units must be priced for affordability to households having annual gross incomes of not more than 70% of AMI at the time of marketing. The monthly housing costs, inclusive of mortgage principal and interest, private mortgage insurance, property taxes, condominium and/or homeowner’s association fees, hazard insurance, and parking must not exceed 30% of the 70% AMI limit for that unit.

(2) In a rental project, the affordable units must be made available to households with annual gross incomes at or below 80% of the area median income (AMI), such that the AMI used for establishing rent and income limits for all the affordable units must average no more than 65% of AMI. Alternatively, at least 50% of such units may have income limits at 50% of AMI and the remaining affordable units may have income limits at 80% AMI.

(3) Affordable rental units are to be priced to be affordable to a household having a gross annual income at the household income limit for that affordable unit. Monthly housing costs, inclusive of rent, utility costs for heat, water, hot water, and electricity, parking, and including access to all amenities that are offered to tenants in the building, must not exceed 30% of the applicable

household income limit for the affordable unit. If the utilities are separately metered, they may be paid by the tenant and the maximum allowable rent will be reduced to reflect the tenant's payment of utilities, based on the area's utility allowance for the specific unit size and type, to be secured from the Needham Housing Authority. For a household with a Section 8 voucher, the rent and income are to be established by the Needham Housing Authority with the approval of HUD."

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ed Scheideler", written in dark ink. The signature is positioned above a horizontal line.

Signature of Town Meeting Member, Mr. Ed Scheideler

**STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE TWO MOTIONS TO AMEND THE MAIN
MOTION UNDER ARTICLE 5 AMEND ZONING BY-LAW – HIGHWAY
COMMERCIAL 1 ZONING DISTRICT**

offered by Mr. Ed Scheideler

Dear Town Meeting Members,

In light of the affordable housing crisis in the Greater Boston area, we feel Needham should do its part for the region and provide more quality affordable housing, so we can share the great advantages our town offers and move toward greater economic and racial equity. Needham is facing its own housing crisis as teardowns are replaced by larger homes, leading to rising housing values and a reduction in options for young families and seniors who wish to downsize. We can reverse this trend if we approach the challenge and look for solutions. It is the responsibility of the town's governing bodies to seek opportunities for affordable housing where it is appropriate and is balanced with other needs of our community. Do we also not feel it is also our community's responsibility to begin to make amends for the historic racial exclusion that took place in suburban communities including Needham?

Mr. Ed Scheideler, Town Meeting Member, is presenting for consideration two amendments to the Article 5 - Commercial Highway -1 (MUZI) rezoning effort that is now before Town Meeting. The first amendment proposes to remove the 240 residential unit cap and the second amendment proposes to lower the affordable housing qualifying income threshold from 80% AMI (average median income in the region), to an average of 65% AMI for the required 12.5% of all units developed on the site. The 240 unit cap and the 80% AMI present in the current rezoning proposal represent unnecessary restrictions on the quantity of potential affordable housing before a developer can even make a proposal. We believe it is in Needham and the region's interest, for our town to pursue more affordable housing!

Multi-family housing does mean there is an increase in density, but being able to build densely is one way to provide more housing choice at more affordable prices. The town's increasing housing costs are directly connected to the overwhelming proportion of single-family zoning across Needham, and across many other suburban communities. Our single-family housing stock has been part of a decades-long regional trend of skyrocketing housing costs. When smaller single-family homes are replaced with larger homes, this drives the average home price higher at a rate far outpacing the economic capacity of potential buyers.

Discussions about affordable and multi-family housing often include concerns about the impact of more school-age children on our schools and the increase in traffic generated by a site's development potential. We agree that the impacts on schools and traffic should be addressed, and solutions found, in a proactive way by the town and the developer. The amendments we

are proposing do not change the fact that developers will still need to present their proposals to the town and address citizens' concerns through careful analysis and compromise.

It is not only our responsibility, but in our community's best interest to undo the historic inequity of suburban single-family zoning. One of Needham's values is being welcoming to all, but our current zoning policy limits us from fulfilling this. By thoughtfully reforming our current zoning and affordable housing policy we can reverse the trend and find solutions so Needham does not become increasingly less affordable with diminishing economic and racial diversity. We are a desirable community and can become even more accessible if we address the challenges of housing and density as an engaged and welcoming community. This is an opportunity to shift town consciousness to racial equity where it has historically been ignored in mostly white suburbs, and we urge you to focus on this critical issue. Equal Justice Needham's Housing Working Group hopes to present you with this incentive to prioritize affordable housing. We believe these two amendments present an opportunity to live up to the higher standard of being a regional trailblazer in affordable housing and addressing crises of housing and equity, and hope you will also support these amendments with that wider goal in mind.

Issues these amendments will address or benefits of the amendments:

- Allow for as many affordable units as possible.
- Meet needs of people with income lower than 80% AMI.
- Open communication with developers and signal that we are a town open to as much affordable housing as possible instead of dictating our reservations and signaling to developers that we will not compromise with them.
- Make progress toward addressing the larger housing crisis in the region and in our town.
- Stem the tide of rising housing values that shrink the economic diversity of those who can afford to live in Needham, and that force other residents to leave, take advantage of our well-equipped and capable school system to accommodate and welcome children from more racially and economically diverse households Open up the narrative to the whole town that racial justice and housing reform are a priority
- Use the opportunity of MUZI to begin a larger shift in town consciousness towards racial equity.



Signature of Town Meeting Member, Mr. Ed Scheideler