



Large House Review (LHR) Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 7, 2025
7:00 p.m.

Committee Members Present:

Artie Crocker Planning Board Member / Planning Board Designee (Co-Chair)
Moe Handel Design Review Board Member / Design Review Board Designee (Co-Chair)
Bill Paulson Real Estate Broker appointed by the Planning Board
Paul McGovern Developer appointed by the Planning Board
Oscar Mertz Architect appointed by the Planning Board
Rob Dangel At Large appointed by the Planning Board
Joe Matthews At Large appointed by the Planning Board
Ed Quinlan At Large appointed by the Planning Board
Marianne Cooley Select Board Member / Select Board Designee
Jeanne McKnight Planning Board Member / Planning Board Designee

Staff Present:

Lee Newman, Director of Planning & Community Development
Alex Clee, Assistant Planner

Committee Members Absent:

Nik Ligris Zoning Board of Appeals Member / Zoning Board of Appeals Designee
Heidi Frail Select Board Member / Select Board Designee
Tina Burgos Finance Committee Member / Finance Committee Designee
Chris Cotter At Large appointed by the Planning Board

1. Approval of meeting minutes.

None at this time.

2. Presentation and Discussion Regarding Working Group Review of Existing House Build-out on Conforming Lots.

Oscar Mertz explained that 17 single family house lots in the Single Family Residence B Zone were discussed and analyzed. These houses range from 10,000 s.f. to 32,000 s.f. with most in the 10,000-16,000 s.f. range. These lots are all new construction lots. The early lots are close to the 38% FAR. The lots get to 36% FAR when the lots switch to 12,000 s.f. lots. The intention of the study is to examine if the houses meet or exceed the sizing on the lot. There will likely be a drive by survey of the houses for Committee members to complete. The Committee's feedback will be used to inform what adjustments to house bulk/massing sizes should be considered to the examples in order to change the perception the houses. As part of this analysis, the committee will be using an outside consultant to help with the modeling of example houses to test what the possible modifications to bulk would look like – these would be set up as visual before / after

45 comparisons. This will help the Committee make determinations about the most effective tools
46 for measuring possible changes to the select example houses.

47
48 Artie Crocker stated that the Planning Board would like to understand the implications of making
49 any proposed adjustments and how those would affect the price and value of a home and of the
50 surrounding neighborhood.

51
52 In reviewing the study analysis, it was noted that it seems lot coverage numbers could likely be
53 cut back without impacting other factors. There seems to be a consensus developing within the
54 Committee that FAR should consist of first, second, and third floors, including the garage. There
55 was discussion regarding if garages contribute to the bulk of a structure. Controlling the
56 mass/bulk should also consider the height of a structure.

57 58 3. Status update (where we've been and where we are).

59
60 Joe Matthews reviewed a status update. He noted that the Committee has not discussed much
61 about trees, stormwater, or lot size. These may be concepts that are beyond the scope of the
62 Committee at this time. Design rules have come up from time to time, especially regarding eaves,
63 but these do not seem to be actionable items at this point. Regarding dimensional regulations,
64 setbacks have been mentioned but there have not yet been any clear ideas. The Committee has
65 discussed height and lot coverage, though not yet come to exact percentages. Regarding FAR,
66 there has been discussion regarding changing the definition to include at least the third floor and
67 possibly the garage, and consideration of reducing the FAR limit. There could be a potential
68 proposal to reduce the height limit to 32'6", and to require half stories to have a sloping roof on
69 the sides. There is appetite on the Committee to reduce lot coverage, though there are not
70 specific numbers for a recommendation at this time. There has been discussion regarding if the
71 definition of all interior space with a clearance of 5' or greater counts toward FAR. It would
72 appear that this is the case, as long as the space is habitable.

73
74 Joe Matthews summarized that the potential recommendations could include that third floor
75 spaces with interior ceiling heights of 5' or greater and garages count towards the FAR, that the
76 FAR limits be changed to allow only houses which are smaller than the current restrictions, that
77 the FAR limits are changed to create less of a discrepancy between houses on lot sizes, that lot
78 coverage limit be set to 22%-28% based on the lot size, that the height limit be reduced to 32'6",
79 that half stories must have sloping roofs on the sides, and that setbacks remain unchanged or
80 perhaps front setbacks are increased slightly for 100% new construction.

81
82 The group reviewed the ideas heard from Wellesley during its presentation from their
83 representative.

84 85 4. Responses to the Question on Committee Work Program Outcome.

86
87 Alex Clee stated that she will send the compilation of responses to the Committee for review.

88 89 5. Report to the Planning Board.

91 It was noted that the Committee's work will need to be completed by mid-November/early
92 December in order for the Planning Board to proceed for an Annual Town Meeting. A
93 community meeting is planned for June 2nd. The Committee reviewed the additional tentative
94 schedule for its process moving forward.

95
96 There was discussion regarding how to advertise for the community meeting in June and if a
97 public survey would be useful. The Committee agreed to review a draft survey at its next
98 meeting.

99
100 6. Schedule moving forward.

101
102 As previously discussed.

103
104 Upon motion duly made by Heidi Frail and seconded by Oscar Mertz, it was voted to adjourn at
105 8:47 p.m. By roll call, the motion passed unanimously.

106
107 *Respectfully submitted,*
108 *Kristan Patenaude*