



Large House Review (LHR) Committee Meeting

Working Group

Minutes

Tuesday, May 6, 2025

4:30 p.m.

Charles River Room, Public Services Administration Building
500 Dedham Ave, Needham, MA

Committee Members Present:

Paul McGovern - Developer appointed by the Planning Board
Oscar Mertz - Architect appointed by the Planning Board
Joe Matthews - At Large appointed by the Planning Board
Ed Quinlan - At Large appointed by the Planning Board
Moe Handel - Design Review Board Member / Design Review Board Designee (Co-Chair)
Rob Dangel – At Large appointed by the Planning Board

Staff Present:

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

Discussion of Scope of Work for Value Analysis Study.

Discussion of preparation of June 9, 2025 Community Meeting.

Discussion of scope of work for 3D modeling.

Needham Large House Review Committee

Value Analysis Study

Scope of Work

Situation: There is sentiment within Needham that the new construction single family homes that are being built on lots that are less than 10,000 sq ft, are often visually too big for their setting. The current zoning rules do not sufficiently limit what a builder can do.

Objective: The town may choose to adjust the zoning to further limit what builders can do on the town's smaller lots.

Assumption 1: If the town changes the zoning, the new homes will be smaller and will sell for less money.

Assumption 2: If the new homes sell for less money, the builders will pay less for the home they knock down.

Assumption 3: As the value to the builders goes down, at some point, the builders will pass and the homes will be sold to families or rehabbers who will fix them up rather than knocking them down.

Question: How do we figure out what the impact will be on the value of the homes that get knocked down? We have data on properties that have sold where the home has been knocked down and a new home was built in its place. We need to figure out how to use this data, and other information, to logically approach the question of value.

Qualifications: We would like to find someone who has worked with other towns to analyze their zoning regarding new construction rules. Ideally, we would find someone that has worked on this with another town in our area.