



Large House Review (LHR) Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, August 25, 2025
7:00 p.m.

Committee Members Present:

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

1. Welcome and Introductions

Introductions of Committee members present were made.

2. Modeling presentation.

Oscar Mertz reviewed the updated modeling presentation.

3. Review of spreadsheet prepared by Ed Quinlan and Paul McGovern comparing Needham to Lexington, Concord & Wellesley allowable built area.

The Committee discussed the spreadsheet comparing Needham to Lexington, Concord, and Wellesley in terms of allowable built area. This includes FAR comparisons of 20 houses. The FAR for Needham includes the first floor, second floor, third floor, and the garage. The livable calculation counts all the livable space that is marketable, including approximately 90% of the basement, outside of the mechanical space, but not including the garage. The FAR includes areas above grade. Lexington has a slightly different calculation, in that they include the basement in their FAR calculation. The Committee discussed how to make this a fair comparison between the

towns. Concord considers an FAR which is specific to a certain lot size. The proposal is for Needham to copy this sliding scale instead of making arbitrary decisions. Lexington makes changes to the FAR based on the ranges of the lot sizes. Wellesley creates an arbitrary maximum square footage for each zone which could have lots in a large range of sizes. The calculations for Lexington will be revised prior to the Committee reviewing the spreadsheets again.

It was explained that the intention is to take House 1 (7,000 s.f.) and House 3 (10,000 s.f.) and complete a fiscal impact analysis on the base model, the second, and the third reduction.

4. Discussion of potential recommendations for dimensional controls.

There was discussion regarding creating a range for lot coverage and FAR in order to make sure that houses are built in a size that is appropriate to the size of a lot. As a lot size increases, the FAR should decrease. The Committee discussed potential environmental restrictions in order to make sure that lots are treated appropriately. There was also discussion regarding garage setback sizes from the facades of houses.

The Committee discussed flat roof houses and height/massing concerns. Additional refinements to the Committee's recommendation may be needed regarding flat roofs, sloping sites, side setbacks in terms of eave heights, etc.

5. Discussion: Agenda for September 15 Community meeting and outreach protocol.

It was noted that the Committee will host a community meeting on September 15th. Public outreach includes a flyer that will be presented through the website, social media, and posted at Town buildings. At the Committee's meeting on September 8th, there can be additional discussion regarding topics for the community meeting.

Upon motion duly made by Heidi Frail and seconded by Oscar Mertz, it was voted to adjourn at 8:48 p.m. By roll call, the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristan Patenaude