



Council of Economic Advisors
Town Hall
1471 Highland Avenue
Needham, MA 02492
(781) 455-7500 x 255

Minutes
Council of Economic Advisors
District Focused Subcommittee Meeting
November 3, 2021 at 4 pm

Members Present: Adam Block, Robert Hentschel, Adam Meixner, Rick Putprush

Others Present: Amy Haelsen, Economic Development Manager

Part 2 of Walking Tour: Chestnut Street Business District Observations:

- There is an opportunity to create more density on Chestnut Street as several buildings are just one or two stories high. The zoning for the Lower Chestnut Street Overlay District allows for up to 48 feet (3 stories/37 feet or 3 + 1 stories for 48 feet) by special permit for lots having the required minimum frontage on Chestnut Street. The front setback requirement for this district is “Lesser of 5 feet from front property line or the average setback of abutting buildings within 100 feet on the same side of the street as the proposed development”. Members discussed the potential of increasing the height to 4 stories and questioned the practicality of the 3 + 1 stories if the top floor is being used for ornamental purposes or HVAC.
- Some of the existing properties have very large setbacks. Should consideration be made to reduce the setbacks in this district? Examples of very large setbacks include the three buildings from 214 to 260 Chestnut Street which contain several types of businesses from medical offices, salons to fast food (Domino’s and Dunkin’) and are located between Beth Israel Deaconess Needham’s main building and the large mixed-use building located just before Chestnut Plaza.
- It would be helpful to know what the plans are for future growth for Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital – Needham as it relates to the redevelopment of Chestnut Street.
- What can be done to make Chestnut Street more aesthetically appealing? Consider more street trees or required landscaping between the parking areas and the sidewalks in addition to reduced setbacks. Will Chestnut Street be included in any of the phases of the Town’s downtown streetscape improvements?

Next Steps: The group will meet to discuss their observations of both Needham Center and Chestnut Street and whether they will recommend any changes to the zoning in these districts.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 pm