



# TOWN OF MEDFIELD

*Office of the*

## PLANNING BOARD

TOWN HOUSE, 459 MAIN STREET  
MEDFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS 02052-2009

MEETING OF:  
**January 20, 2026**  
MINUTES

**Planning Board Members Present:** Teresa James, Chair; Seth Meehan, Member; Corinne Schieffer, Member; Doug Larence, Member; Seth Meehan, Member; Sean Tiernan, Associate Member

**Member Planning Board Members Absent:** Paul McKechnie, Member

**Staff Present:** Maria De La Fuente, Director of Land Use

**Others Present:** Ted Brovitz (Consultant)

**Location:** Zoom

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Ms. James opened the Planning Board's meeting of January 20, 2026, at 7:32 PM, conducted roll call, and reviewed the agenda.

Roll call:

- Ms. James – Present
- Mr. Larence – Present
- Ms. Schieffer – Present
- Mr. Meehan – Present
- Mr. Tiernan – Present

### **Mixed-Use Overlay District Review and Revisions**

Ms. James stated that the purpose of the meeting was to continue the Board's review of the Mixed-Use Overlay District (MUOD) zoning language, building on the extensive discussion from January 5. She noted that consultant Ted Brovitz and Ms. De La Fuente had prepared a revised draft reflecting prior feedback and invited Mr. Brovitz to begin his review.

Mr. Brovitz identified the document as Version 7.0, subsequently updated to Version 7.1 to incorporate additional edits from Ms. De La Fuente. He stated that the overall structure remained

largely unchanged, as many substantive issues had already been resolved, and proceeded to review the document section by section.

Mr. Brovitz explained that the Purpose and Intent section and the overlay district mapping remained unchanged. In response to a question from Ms. De La Fuente, he confirmed that MBTA-related language had been relocated and that a missing “Applicability” heading had been added under Section 22.3, with subsequent sections renumbered for consistency. He stated that the special permit review process, departmental consultation requirements, and references to design guidelines were largely unchanged. He highlighted the primary substantive change as new language clarifying the distinction between the MUOD and the MBTA Communities zoning district, intended to clearly differentiate the two frameworks.

Ms. James expressed support for the clarification, stating that it helped explain why a developer might pursue one framework over the other and provided important context. Ms. De La Fuente stated that Town Counsel had advised strengthening this distinction to avoid the MUOD being misconstrued as regulating multifamily housing, which could complicate Attorney General review of the Town’s MBTA zoning. She explained that references to “multifamily” had been replaced with “mixed-use” to make clear that the MUOD was not intended to permit standalone multifamily development, but rather projects combining residential and commercial uses. Ms. James emphasized the importance of ensuring the MUOD clearly read as a mixed-use bylaw.

Ms. James then raised comments received regarding mapping and district boundaries, including recommendations from Select Board Member Osler “Pete” Peterson. She summarized his suggestions, including inclusion of the Montrose parcel, expanding the district to include certain church properties along South Street, and avoiding gaps in the district. Ms. De La Fuente discussed the Dover Amendment and explained that active religious uses already had zoning protections, but inclusion in the MUOD could provide redevelopment flexibility if properties changed ownership or use. She noted that many church buildings were historic and that MUOD design standards would be sensitive to historic character. Mr. Brovitz agreed and cited examples of successful church conversions elsewhere.

Mr. Meehan stated that Mr. Peterson’s recommendations generally made sense, particularly for the Baptist Church property, but expressed concern that expanding the MUOD too broadly could jeopardize voter support. He stated support for the district south of Route 109 and remained open to further discussion regarding Montrose. Ms. James noted that inclusion of adjacent residential properties had been discussed previously as a way to maintain a continuous district.

Ms. De La Fuente stated that the Select Board had emphasized diversifying the tax base and that the mapping recommendations were likely intended to advance that goal. She stated that she could revise the map following the meeting based on Board direction. She then discussed public outreach, offering to send mailers to affected residents in advance of the formal hearing process and explaining that outreach could include rezoned properties and a buffer area, potentially using a 300-foot radius. Ms. James expressed a preference for broader outreach. Mr. Meehan suggested returning to outreach and next steps later in the meeting, and Ms. James directed the group to continue reviewing the text.

Mr. Brovitz reviewed Section 22.4, noting that zoning map performance standards remained largely unchanged, including transitional buffer requirements where the overlay abuts residential districts. He reviewed pedestrian frontage standards, explaining that ground-floor commercial uses were required along Main Street to maintain an active streetscape, with residential uses permitted above or toward the rear.

In reviewing Section 22.5, Mr. Brovitz stated that dimensional standards were aligned with existing zoning. He noted that multiple principal buildings were allowed on a site and that the Build-To Zone concept remained, though the 30-foot dimension from the right-of-way had been inadvertently omitted and would be restored. He reviewed Build-To Occupancy requirements, corner building standards, and the 35-foot maximum building height. In response to a question from Ms. James, Ms. De La Fuente suggested simplifying remaining height references to avoid confusion related to multifamily terminology, and Mr. Brovitz agreed.

Mr. Brovitz reviewed façade and architectural standards, provisions for infill and vertical additions, and standards for historic building retrofits, noting coordination with the Historic Commission. He then reviewed outdoor amenity space standards, clarifying the categorization of frontage plazas as publicly oriented private space. He explained that where on-site open space was infeasible, the bylaw allowed contributions toward nearby open space. Ms. De La Fuente stated that she revised this section to reflect Town Counsel guidance, clarifying that the Planning Board could consult with, but not delegate authority to, the Select Board.

Mr. Brovitz reviewed parking provisions, emphasizing shared parking, off-site parking within 700 feet, and strategies to reduce over-parking. Ms. De La Fuente stated that her edits were limited to clarifying the definition of “reasonable distance,” which the Board agreed should be consistently defined as 700 feet. Mr. Brovitz also reviewed supplemental parking strategies, including tandem parking, bicycle parking, and structured parking. Ms. James noted a formatting inconsistency in the supplemental parking list, which Mr. Brovitz agreed to correct.

Mr. Brovitz then reviewed the allowed uses and building types table, stating that all uses were allowed by special permit from the Planning Board. Ms. James asked whether multifamily or townhouse buildings were intended to occur only as part of a mixed-use outcome. Ms. De La Fuente confirmed that intent and stated that the table had been revised to make the special permit requirement unmistakable.

Mr. Brovitz reviewed the residential density table, explaining base and bonus densities by building type. Ms. James questioned whether “base” implied a minimum density. Mr. Brovitz clarified that it represented a maximum without bonus. Ms. De La Fuente suggested revising the table or adding a clarifying note to eliminate confusion, particularly given MBTA zoning’s minimum density requirements. Mr. Brovitz agreed to revise the table accordingly.

Mr. Brovitz summarized the density bonus framework and eligible public benefits. Mr. Larence raised questions about how MUOD density compared to MBTA zoning and how the Town should explain that distinction publicly. Ms. De La Fuente stated that MBTA zoning imposed a minimum density, while MUOD did not, and that MUOD projects would be constrained by

design intent, site conditions, and market factors. Mr. Brovitz noted that higher density allowances were often necessary for financial feasibility but that actual outcomes would scale with lot size.

Mr. Meehan stated that the Board's long-standing objective had been to promote mixed-use development and expressed concern about how the density table might be perceived by Town Meeting voters. He emphasized the importance of clearly communicating that the MUOD was intended to produce mixed-use, "top-of-shop" outcomes rather than primarily residential development.

Ms. James continued the Planning Board's discussion of the MUOD draft by returning to how the bylaw would communicate mixed-use intent, density, and key public-facing concepts.

Mr. Brovitz stated that the MUOD's intent was to require a commercial component, but noted that mixed-use could be achieved either vertically (commercial below with residential above) or horizontally (a commercial building near the street with residential buildings, including townhouses, behind it on the same lot). He stated that the bylaw language should be reinforced to make the commercial requirement unmistakable. Ms. James agreed and stated that the table's references to townhouses or multifamily could be misread without an explicit statement adjacent to the chart making clear that the MUOD required "commercial plus" residential. Mr. Brovitz agreed and stated the language should be revised accordingly.

Ms. Schieffer stated that "mixed-use" inherently involves both commercial and residential components and suggested the Town could rely on that definition, though she agreed the document should still clearly describe both vertical and horizontal mixed-use so readers did not assume a single building form. Ms. James requested a layout change so the explanatory paragraph about mixed-use intent would print immediately next to the table for readers who jump directly to the chart. Mr. Brovitz agreed to adjust the formatting.

Ms. De La Fuente summarized the MUOD's public-facing benefits, stating it was intended to yield lower-density outcomes than large multifamily-only development by permitting options such as townhouses and by emphasizing walkability, public and green spaces, and community amenities. She stated that MUOD could attract mixed-use developers rather than large-scale multifamily developers, and that the Town's challenge would be clearly communicating that distinction in terms that resonated with residents.

Ms. Schieffer, drawing on her real estate experience, stated that she had recently worked on a condominium sale in Canton where units under 2,000 square feet sold quickly, including one-bedroom-plus-office layouts. She stated that approximately 1,200 to 2,000 square feet was a strong market range for condominiums, and that buyers seeking more than 2,000 square feet typically prefer single-family homes. She noted that Foxborough market dynamics may differ but stated that Medfield could see demand for smaller, well-designed units addressing "missing middle" needs. Ms. De La Fuente thanked Ms. Schieffer and stated the local market insight was helpful.

Mr. Brovitz stated that while condominiums could succeed, he expected rental demand to be significant. He referenced communities such as Burlington, where historic resistance to apartments had contributed to pent-up demand, and stated that if both MUOD and MBTA zoning were adopted, apartment proposals would likely be common. He described demand in many markets as concentrated in smaller one- and two-bedroom units, often serving younger households or those not yet ready for homeownership.

Mr. Meehan referenced prior Senior Center survey feedback indicating interest in smaller, single-level homes walkable to downtown, though he noted the price point remained challenging. He stated that residents respond positively to plans that emphasize public benefit and flexibility, and said a key “selling point” for MUOD was preserving Planning Board discretion through the special permit process. Mr. Brovitz added that the same demand dynamics also explained the popularity of cottage court developments, describing smaller units organized around shared open space that tend to lease or sell quickly.

Ms. De La Fuente stated that the Town’s MBTA consultant had framed MBTA zoning as one tool among many, alongside Chapter 40B, smaller lot development that can reduce costs through unit size, vouchers, and other programs. She described MUOD as an additional tool intended to expand housing options while also delivering amenities and mixed-use value. Ms. James asked whether mixed-use buildings provide financial resilience by diversifying income streams. Ms. De La Fuente agreed, stating that diversified revenue can support long-term project stability.

Mr. Brovitz cautioned, however, that many developers prefer all-residential projects due to market demand and often resist commercial components. He stated that preserving commercial frontage is critical in historic downtowns to maintain walkability and economic vitality. He contrasted this with underperforming shopping plazas, where full residential redevelopment may be more appropriate, and warned that residential-only conversions along main streets can erode downtown vibrancy over time.

Mr. Meehan stated that this reinforced why MUOD was a valuable alternative to MBTA zoning, noting that the state framework emphasized residential development by right and made mixed-use more difficult. He stated that MUOD was the Town’s preferred lever to promote mixed-use outcomes and preserve businesses and active ground-floor uses. Mr. Brovitz agreed and stated that residential units above storefronts create built-in customers for downtown businesses.

Mr. Brovitz then moved to the next section and stated that the density bonus provisions had not changed significantly. Mr. Meehan noted that affordable housing was referenced earlier than its later discussion and said the numbering appeared misaligned. Mr. Brovitz acknowledged the issue, stating that affordable housing was listed later among the benefit improvements. Ms. De La Fuente confirmed it was a cross-reference error, explaining that the bottom of page 15 referenced Section 22.11 but should reference Section 22.12, and stated it was a numbering correction rather than a substantive change. Mr. Brovitz acknowledged the correction, and Mr. Meehan remarked that he wanted credit for reading closely.

Mr. Brovitz referenced the affordable housing requirement of 15 percent. Ms. James asked whether the threshold—triggering the requirement for developments with more than seven residential units—was consistent with other Town bylaws, noting she believed another bylaw used a six-unit threshold. Ms. De La Fuente stated she believed the other bylaw applied to developments with more than six units and said she would verify. Mr. Brovitz stated he believed the threshold was seven but acknowledged he could be mistaken. Mr. Meehan commented that no one had raised the discrepancy yet, and Ms. James stated it would likely come up eventually.

Ms. De La Fuente then confirmed that under the Town's inclusionary zoning, developments of six to twenty units required 15 percent affordable units. She stated she believed keeping MUOD's threshold at seven units was acceptable and could serve as an inducement by allowing developers to remain below the trigger by proposing five units. She asked for the Board's view. Mr. Brovitz stated the seven-unit threshold was fairly standard. Mr. Meehan stated it was a good inducement. Ms. James stated she was comfortable with it and said she raised the issue only to flag the discrepancy.

Mr. Brovitz stated that the bylaw designated the Planning Board as the special permit granting authority and noted minor edits intended to streamline review criteria. He stated that Ms. De La Fuente had removed certain language and asked her to explain. Ms. De La Fuente stated that after review with Town Counsel she removed redundant statements that special permits are discretionary, because special permits are inherently discretionary. She also stated that design waiver or alternative language required legally defensible criteria and that she aligned the waiver provision to point to the established review criteria rather than leaving waiver standards undefined.

Ms. De La Fuente stated that the MUOD review criteria section had previously repeated standards already contained in Section 14.10(E) of the zoning bylaw addressing drainage, traffic, neighborhood aesthetics, noise, and light pollution. She stated that Town Counsel advised against restating those criteria in slightly different wording, describing Section 14.10(E) as the base "nuisance-avoidance" criteria and stating that MUOD should instead add district-specific criteria. She stated that the MUOD's additional criteria included consistency with the MUOD bylaw and waiver standards, serving community needs including expanded housing choice, improved pedestrian comfort and safety, and attention to fiscal impacts. She stated that pedestrian experience was central to downtown mixed-use and not typically emphasized in standard special permit criteria, and stated that the "would not be detrimental" standard should remain. She acknowledged that the baseline criteria she referenced originated in the Zoning Board's special permit criteria, but stated they were more robust and more frequently used, while the Planning Board's criteria were more limited.

Ms. James asked about an internal cross-reference in the design waiver provision, noting that the last sentence referenced "300-22.12," which appeared to address affordable housing. Ms. De La Fuente stated that numbering had shifted after MBTA-related content was moved into its own section and that internal references needed to be updated. Mr. Brovitz agreed and stated the numbering would be corrected. Ms. De La Fuente stated they would need to verify internal cross-references throughout the document. Mr. Brovitz added that numbering issues were

compounded by earlier formatting corrections, including adding the missing “Applicability” title under Section 22.3.

Ms. James asked whether any remaining portions might confuse a first-time reader. Ms. De La Fuente identified the design guidelines as a major potential source of confusion because they were referenced throughout the bylaw. She stated that the 75-page design guidelines were largely aspirational and could be unenforceable, and expressed concern they might create contradictions with codified bylaws. She cited shared parking and curb-cut requirements as an example, stating the guidelines encouraged shared parking while existing zoning could still require a variance for shared arrangements. She also cited signage, stating the design guidelines encouraged multiple sign types while the Town’s sign bylaw limited businesses to no more than two sign types. She stated that applicants might ignore the guidelines or attempt to follow them without recognizing conflicts that could trigger additional approvals. She stated that the MUOD bylaw itself was strong and enforceable and that pairing it with an extensive guideline document could appear intimidating or deter applicants. She stated she would not support adopting the guidelines as written and suggested that if guidelines were desired, they should be shorter, prioritized, and carefully referenced if the Town intended them to be enforceable or to apply automatically to future revisions. She asked for Board input and for Mr. Brovitz’s perspective.

Mr. Brovitz stated that design guidelines can be valuable for large, complex projects but are less useful for smaller mixed-use buildings. He cited Burlington as an example where major, multi-building projects benefitted from detailed guidelines, but stated that in Medfield guidelines should be more streamlined and illustrative, showing what the community is trying to achieve rather than functioning as a burdensome manual. He stated he had examples of simpler mixed-use guidelines and offered to share them with Ms. De La Fuente.

Ms. De La Fuente stated that if the MUOD area were larger and more broadly developable, extensive guidelines might be more justified, but she expected downtown to evolve incrementally over many years through small-lot turnover and modest additions, with many parcels approximately 5,000 to 10,000 square feet. She suggested that a five- to ten-page prioritized guidance document would be more proportionate and asked for Board feedback, inviting Ms. Schieffer to comment based on her experience with developers. She stated that a developer considering a small downtown project might view the MBTA pathway as more attractive if MUOD required reviewing a lengthy guidance package, and stated her goal was to keep MUOD scale-appropriate and attractive.

Ms. Schieffer stated that the length could be intimidating but noted that the bylaw included waiver provisions, which she characterized as a type of loophole. She stated she had not read the full guidelines but was reviewing the design waiver language and noted the “300-22.12” cross-reference. Ms. De La Fuente clarified that the waiver provisions were tied to the codified bylaw standards, while the design guidelines extended to broader aesthetic and advisory topics, increasing the risk of contradiction with enforceable regulations. Ms. Schieffer agreed and stated the issue was not only intimidation but the need for cohesive, consistent messaging and avoidance of self-contradiction.

Ms. De La Fuente stated that limited guidance aligned with existing Town standards could be helpful, but urged prioritizing what the Town truly cared about rather than adopting excessive prescriptive detail. She stated that overly specific standards can be counterproductive and reduce room for negotiation. Mr. Brovitz agreed and stated that he could provide simplified guideline examples. He noted that the existing guideline document was longer in part because it included OSRD-related content. He added that diagrams and illustrations can help communicate concepts such as open space types and design intent, but agreed that guidelines must be appropriate to Medfield's scale and not overwhelm applicants or the Board.

Mr. Meehan stated that the breadth of the current guidelines was partially his responsibility, noting that earlier MUOD drafts had been longer and that guideline-type content had originally been embedded in the bylaw before being moved into a guideline document to allow updates outside the annual Town Meeting cycle. He stated he agreed the bylaw text was in good shape and should move forward, and suggested the guidelines could be refined separately. He stated that some guideline content could potentially be adapted into broader, town-wide guidance beyond MUOD. He also stated that Town Meeting voters would primarily see the warrant article and bylaw text and that the guidelines would not necessarily be central to the vote, describing the guidelines as a starting point that could be adjusted without Town Meeting action.

Ms. James stated that the critical issue was how the bylaw referenced the design guidelines and cited supplemental parking as an example, noting that the bylaw pointed to specific guideline section numbers. She questioned whether embedding section-level references was prudent because reorganizing the guideline document could force future zoning amendments. She stated that vague references might be unhelpful, but specific citations would create ongoing maintenance problems and undermine the purpose of allowing guideline updates outside zoning amendments. Ms. De La Fuente agreed.

Ms. James stated she would remove section-level references to avoid triggering zoning amendments if the guidelines were renumbered. Mr. Brovitz suggested the bylaw could reference companion design guidelines generally as examples and illustrations without tying them to specific sections. Mr. Meehan agreed and stated that where the bylaw referenced specific guideline sections, those references could be deleted. Ms. De La Fuente stated her intent would be to reference the guidelines generally rather than by section number, allowing applicants to use keyword searches.

Ms. De La Fuente stated that if the bylaw referenced design guidelines and the guidelines were presented alongside MUOD, she believed the Planning Board would need to hold a public hearing to adopt the guidelines as official Planning Board material. She stated the reference structure would need to be finalized quickly if the Board intended to rely on the guidelines. She asked whether Mr. Brovitz could prepare a significantly shorter set of guidelines for the final revision, and proposed an alternative of omitting all guideline references from the MUOD for the current Town Meeting cycle while continuing work on broader design guidelines separately.

Mr. Meehan asked whether guidelines needed to be ready for Town Meeting or could be finalized later during Attorney General review. Ms. De La Fuente stated she believed they

needed to be ready by Town Meeting if the bylaw referenced them, because reviewers would need to understand what the bylaw incorporated. Mr. Larence stated that any design guidelines should apply broadly to development regardless of zoning pathway and argued that comprehensive guidelines should be decoupled from MUOD because MUOD already contained specific standards. Mr. Brovitz agreed and stated that because the guidelines were not finalized, including them would complicate MUOD adoption. He suggested removing guideline references for now and developing an appropriate guideline tool over several months, with future adoption through a public hearing as part of the Planning Board's rules and regulations.

Mr. Meehan asked how the Board would handle a future MUOD applicant if guidelines were not referenced and the applicant declined to follow them. Ms. De La Fuente stated that guidelines were not necessary for enforceability because the bylaw already contained essential requirements and the review framework, including parking expectations, waiver criteria, desired project features, and density bonus eligibility. She stated that the current guideline document could be scrapped for this cycle and replaced with a town-wide design guideline document applicable to all Planning Board reviews, noting that the existing document included OSRD-related content that would require substantial reworking. She also noted that legal advertisement for the MUOD public hearing would need to be posted by mid-February, limiting time to rewrite guidelines.

Ms. James asked how the Board could later communicate that design principles should be considered in special permit review if guidelines were not attached to the bylaw, without overstating enforceability. Ms. De La Fuente stated she believed there was language in the zoning bylaw allowing a board to adopt guidelines "from time to time," and said she thought it was in Section 14.10, which could provide a basis for adopting guidelines later as part of review practice. Mr. Larence reiterated that if design guidelines were adopted, they should apply regardless of whether a project proceeded under MUOD, MBTA zoning, or another pathway. Mr. Brovitz stated that guidelines can be written to apply broadly or to specific categories, noting that prior work had contemplated MUOD and OSRD applicability but was not completed.

Ms. De La Fuente cited Section 14.15(D) of the zoning bylaw, stating that the Planning Board shall adopt and amend rules relative to issuance of special permits and file them with the Town Clerk. She stated that because MUOD approvals would be Planning Board special permits, the Board could incorporate design guidelines into its rules and regulations through a public hearing process. She noted that the Board already maintained rules addressing lighting and landscaping, and stated that amendments could apply MUOD-specific guidance or broader design standards. She added that incorporating guidance into rules and regulations could also benefit site plan approval review, which the Board conducted more often than special permits.

Mr. Brovitz agreed and stated that design guidelines are typically adopted through Planning Board rules and regulations and that if Medfield already had relevant standards, the Board could build from them. Mr. Meehan observed that the rules and regulations were often viewed as procedural, but Mr. Brovitz stated that substantive guidance such as design guidelines is often included even where procedure is the core.

Ms. James summarized that under this approach, design guidelines would become an insert to the Planning Board's rules and regulations and could apply broadly across MUOD, MBTA zoning, and other Planning Board reviews. Mr. Brovitz stated that this was his understanding, subject to confirmation with Town Counsel. Mr. Meehan agreed that confirmation would be helpful and noted that the rules and regulations already included provisions related to fees, reporting, and potentially tree standards. Ms. De La Fuente stated she believed some tree standards existed, and Mr. Brovitz stated that native species standards are commonly included in planning rules and regulations or subdivision regulations.

Ms. James asked whether there was consensus to remove all references to the design guidelines from the MUOD document and asked Ms. Schieffer whether doing so would reduce complexity. Ms. Schieffer stated that it would and said she could not identify a reason not to remove them. Ms. De La Fuente stated that Town Counsel supported that approach, and Ms. Schieffer reiterated her agreement.

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Mr. Brovitz suggested that, rather than referencing design guidelines, the MUOD could reference the Planning Board's rules and regulations, allowing design guidelines to be adopted later and applied through that framework. Ms. Schieffer stated that she preferred incorporating guidance at a later date rather than creating a need for a future zoning amendment at Town Meeting.

Ms. De La Fuente reviewed the Planning Board's existing rules and regulations and stated that the site plan review section already addressed landscape considerations, including preservation of existing vegetation, minimum tree caliper standards, and planting and ground cover preferences. She stated that MUOD applications would require site plan review and that many design considerations could therefore be addressed under the existing rules. She added that she could update the MUOD draft to point to the Planning Board's special permit section rather than duplicating criteria. She stated that although the Planning Board had issued few special permits in recent years, the Planning Board and Zoning Board special permit criteria were effectively the same, and referencing the Planning Board's special permit provisions would also incorporate the Board's rules and regulations.

Ms. De La Fuente stated that relying on existing rules and regulations would create a cohesive and enforceable framework across all Planning Board actions, rather than limiting guidance to MUOD projects. Ms. Schieffer noted that Mr. Meehan appeared ready to comment. Mr. Meehan stated that he agreed with the approach and suggested revising Section C of the MUOD draft to reference Planning Board regulations. He cautioned that integrating extensive guidance into an already lengthy rules and regulations document could be challenging without an appendix, and stated that any guideline content would need to be substantially reduced.

Ms. James stated that the existing 75-page design guideline draft overlapped heavily with the MUOD bylaw and existing rules and regulations, and said the work ahead would be thinning and consolidating duplicative material. She asked about timing and whether design guideline work should begin after Town Meeting.

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Ms. De La Fuente stated that the Town was not ready to move forward with design guidelines at that time and that the Planning Board would need to review the material carefully and decide what content to retain. She suggested that summer would be an appropriate time for that work after Town Meeting season. She noted that Attorney General review would occur later in the year and added that the Zoning Board of Appeals had expressed interest in revisiting guidance, making summer a good opportunity for coordinated planning.

Ms. Schieffer asked whether design guidelines would be developed collaboratively with the Zoning Board of Appeals. Ms. De La Fuente stated that collaboration was possible, though she noted the ZBA's workload was often focused on residential additions while the Planning Board more commonly reviewed commercial and larger projects. She stated that alignment could still be beneficial, potentially through a working group, though each board would need to hold its own public hearing to adopt guidance.

Mr. Meehan stated that he was comfortable with the approach. Ms. De La Fuente stated that the Board was agreeing to remove all design guideline references from the MUOD draft and rely instead on existing Planning Board rules and regulations, noting that applicants already receive those rules when submitting site plan applications. Ms. James agreed.

Ms. De La Fuente then returned the discussion to mapping and outreach and asked whether the Board wished to address mapping changes or outreach strategy. Ms. Schieffer asked about standard outreach practices and referenced the MBTA zoning outreach process. Ms. De La Fuente stated that the Town would be required to publish a legal notice two weeks prior to the public hearing and that, to hold a mid-March hearing, the notice would need to be submitted by mid-February. She stated that affected property owners would also receive mailed notice. She suggested the mailing could include a QR code linking to a Google Drive folder containing the bylaw, maps, and an FAQ, noting that legal notices are often technical and that supplemental materials would be important for public understanding.

Ms. De La Fuente stated that MBTA outreach had combined mailers and legal notices and had been amplified by statewide attention. Mr. Meehan emphasized the value of the Town's long-term MBTA outreach through workshops, informational sessions, and one-on-one discussions, and suggested that the Town should document the history of MUOD discussions to show that the work had been underway for several years. Mr. Brovitz stated that while earlier outreach materials existed, the Town would need to restart outreach given the time that had passed. He stated that outreach would be critical and that MUOD could be framed as a tool to strengthen downtown, support economic development, and provide flexibility, adding that after MBTA discussions residents might be more receptive to density when paired with mixed-use and economic development goals.

Ms. De La Fuente stated that once the bylaw text was near final, outreach could begin in earnest. She recalled that a prior outreach session at a downtown church had been well attended, while a coffee event at Town Hall had drawn limited participation. She suggested holding one or two informal sessions in downtown locations such as cafés with a Planning Board representative

present, in addition to the formal hearing and mailed notices. She stated outreach would likely occur in March or April once the draft was stable enough to provide clear answers.

Ms. James supported expanding mailers to include abutters. Ms. De La Fuente stated the Town could mail notices to owners within 300 feet and potentially expand to 500 feet, noting that the budget could support additional mailings. Ms. Schieffer stated there was no downside to educating more people. Mr. Brovitz agreed.

Ms. De La Fuente suggested promoting the effort through the Medfield Insider, the Town's official newsletter, and other channels, and suggested including informal Q&A session information in the abutter mailing. She stated some residents had previously preferred meeting with her directly and said multiple avenues for engagement would be beneficial. Mr. Meehan supported downtown-focused outreach and offered to assist. Ms. James suggested tabling at the Farmers Market, though Ms. Schieffer noted the Farmers Market typically begins after Town Meeting. Ms. De La Fuente suggested coordinating with the library, stating that library programs are well attended and could reach parents and other residents, and stated outreach could extend into late March or early April.

Ms. De La Fuente asked whether the Board wished to add properties to the MUOD map, including Brook Street and Montrose. Ms. James stated she supported adding the First Baptist Church property and the adjacent church-owned parcel, and Mr. Meehan agreed.

Mr. Larence asked Mr. Meehan whether he wished to revisit Brook Street. Mr. Meehan stated that he did and referenced Mr. Peterson's earlier feedback regarding properties south of Route 109, including Miller Street. He suggested including those areas in outreach discussions and stated that gathering feedback before Town Meeting would be helpful. Mr. Meehan then stated concern about including Brook Street, noting it conflicted with earlier Board direction. He described Brook Street as primarily residential and stated that it might be more effective to focus MUOD on contiguous, walkable downtown areas. He stated that Brook Street would create an isolated pocket separated from the downtown core by historic residential properties.

Mr. Larence agreed and stated that Brook Street read as a residential street with a few commercial uses that could revert to residential over time. He stated that if he lived on Brook Street he would question why his property was included, and expressed support for removing the parcels. Ms. James stated that her recollection was that the Board had previously agreed to remove Brook Street parcels and potentially reconsider them if Montrose were added in the future.

Ms. James stated that including the Montrose School property could create a more contiguous redevelopment area along Brook Street and frame the corridor as part of a cohesive block. Ms. De La Fuente asked whether the Board's consensus was to exclude both Brook Street and Montrose for the time being or to include Montrose while excluding Brook Street. Mr. Larence stated he did not agree with linking Brook Street and Montrose and stated they should be evaluated independently.

Ms. Schieffer stated that the perceived connection stemmed from prior concern that Brook Street felt like an outlier and that including Montrose could provide a connector making Brook Street feel less isolated. She asked whether the highlighted Brook Street parcels were already zoned Business/Industrial. Ms. De La Fuente confirmed they were and stated residential uses existed due to nonconforming lots. Ms. Schieffer stated Brook Street was difficult to characterize, noting multi-unit residential development, industrial uses, and limited commercial uses, and stated she did not view it as purely single-family. She stated that allowing limited retail use would not be a major departure. Ms. De La Fuente stated she agreed but noted she did not vote.

Mr. Meehan stated that while Brook Street might not represent a dramatic shift, the Town had experienced significant change in recent months. He stated his priority was adopting MUOD for downtown and ensuring the map and narrative clearly communicated MUOD as the Town's preferred approach developed over five to six years, rather than an outgrowth of state-mandated MBTA zoning. He stated he was open to reconsidering Brook Street but wanted resident feedback first. Ms. Schieffer stated she would not press Brook Street if she was an outlier and invited further member input.

Mr. Tiernan stated that he generally favored broader inclusion, noting redevelopment would likely occur incrementally over time, and stated that Brook Street's inclusion was not unusual given existing conditions. Ms. James stated she leaned toward hearing directly from affected property owners to understand whether inclusion would be viewed as beneficial or problematic.

Ms. De La Fuente asked whether she should keep Brook Street on the draft map while adding the First Baptist Church parcels and use public feedback to guide final adjustments. She stated the Board could ask questions at the public hearing and still revise the map prior to Town Meeting if decisions were made by the close of the hearing. Ms. Schieffer suggested leaving certain items in the draft as negotiation points. Mr. Larence stated that it was unclear how owners would perceive inclusion and emphasized the importance of outreach. Ms. James stated this underscored the value of public meetings.

Ms. James raised additional parcels suggested by Mr. Peterson, including parcels on Miller Street near the United Church and residential lots near the funeral home, stating that inclusion could create a more continuous redevelopment opportunity. Mr. Tiernan stated that churches might welcome flexibility and noted examples in other communities where churches had been converted to residential or mixed-use uses. Mr. Meehan proposed showing the additional parcels and possibly Montrose as the maximum extent considered rather than a final commitment, and stated that presenting a draft map would allow residents to comment on inclusions and exclusions. Ms. James agreed the map could be refined based on public input.

Ms. De La Fuente summarized the proposed edits as retaining Brook Street, adding connector parcels on Miller Street, and adding the First Baptist Church and the adjacent church-owned parcel. Mr. Meehan confirmed that Mr. Peterson's sketch included residences on both sides of the street, and Ms. De La Fuente stated she would confirm the specific parcels. Ms. De La Fuente asked whether any other church parcels should be included. Ms. James stated the Baptist Church parcels were the only ones proposed and noted another church on Pleasant Street was too distant.

Ms. De La Fuente asked for final input on including Montrose. Ms. James supported inclusion. Mr. Meehan and Mr. Larence preferred waiting. Ms. Schieffer stated that while Montrose could make the map easier to understand, recent public issues involving Montrose could negatively affect support for MUOD, and she recommended not including it at that time. Mr. Tiernan stated he was inclined to include Montrose and said excluding it could raise questions from the property owner.

Ms. De La Fuente stated that with two members supporting inclusion and three favoring waiting, the Board would hold off on including Montrose. She stated Montrose would still receive abutter notice and that she would conduct informal outreach to gauge the school's reaction. Ms. James noted Montrose was under a long-term lease and stated that Mr. Fisher had previously expressed opposition to inclusion.

Ms. De La Fuente summarized direction for Version 8 of the MUOD: add the four homes on Miller Street; retain Brook Street as shown; add the First Baptist Church and adjacent parcel; exclude Montrose for now while conducting informal outreach; remove all references to design guidelines in favor of reliance on Planning Board rules and regulations; and incorporate minor formatting and technical edits compiled with Mr. Brovitz. Mr. Brovitz stated that he had captured the recap items.

Ms. De La Fuente raised scheduling questions and noted this was Mr. Brovitz's last budgeted meeting. The Board discussed whether to place MUOD on the February 2 agenda or schedule a separate meeting. Ms. James reviewed the February calendar and noted that February 16 was Presidents' Day. Ms. De La Fuente stated she needed near-final direction by mid-February to meet legal advertisement deadlines.

The Board agreed to hold a meeting on February 10, and members confirmed availability. Ms. James confirmed the date. Mr. Brovitz stated he would likely attend the public hearing but would be away for much of February. Ms. De La Fuente stated that Version 8 would be treated as the final draft and that Mr. Brovitz's next appearance would be at the public hearing.

Ms. James stated that she would recuse herself from the MUOD public hearing due to property ownership within the district and would ask the Vice Chair to preside. Ms. De La Fuente confirmed that arrangement. Ms. James stated that no members of the public were present, thanked Mr. Brovitz, and the members exchanged closing remarks.

Ms. James then addressed agenda planning for the February 2 meeting. The Board agreed to begin at 7:00 PM, schedule the Sign Advisory Board first, and hear Chase Bank thereafter, noting that the applicant would pay peer review costs. Ms. De La Fuente stated she would ask the Police and Fire Chiefs to attend due to safety and circulation concerns.

## **Meeting Minute Approval**

**Motion:** Ms. Schieffer made a motion to approve the January 5 meeting minutes.

**Second:** Mr. Larence seconded the motion.

### **Roll Call Vote:**

- Ms. Schieffer: Yes
- Mr. Meehan: Yes
- Mr. Larence: Yes
- Ms. James: Yes

Ms. James then introduced the January 12 minutes. Corrections were noted regarding the spelling of Bill Werner's name and Mr. Meehan's attendance status.

**Motion:** Mr. Larence made a motion to approve the January 12 minutes as corrected.

**Second:** Ms. Schieffer seconded the motion.

### **Roll Call Vote:**

- Mr. Larence: Yes
- Ms. Schieffer: Yes
- Ms. James: Yes

Mr. Meehan abstained due to absence.

### **Liaison Reports**

- **Affordable Housing Trust:** Ms. De La Fuente reported that the Medfield State Hospital project had received an additional \$4.5 million in Housing Works funding, bringing the total to approximately \$10 million toward a \$30 million goal. She stated that the funding would support initial infrastructure work for Bellforge and advance the Town's affordable housing objectives.

Ms. De La Fuente also reported on the Rosebay project, stating that a continued hearing was scheduled for January 29 and that preliminary traffic review had not identified major concerns.

- **Historical Commission:** Mr. Meehan noted a February 11 hearing for 236 South Street and 13 South Street.
- **School Building Committee:** Ms. James reported progress on the Owner's Project Manager procurement and noting an upcoming Parks and Recreation survey regarding a potential intergenerational facility.
- **Wayfinding Committee:** Ms. De La Fuente provided a Wayfinding update, stating that consultants were conducting an internal check-in before meeting with the Committee and scheduling a site visit.

Ms. De La Fuente noted upcoming Zoning Board hearings for Chase Bank and reported outreach regarding a potential Planning Board candidate. Ms. James offered to assist with outreach.

## **Adjournment**

Motion: Mr. Meehan made a motion to adjourn.

Second: Ms. Schieffer seconded the motion.

### **Roll Call Vote:**

- Mr. Larence: Yes
- Mr. Meehan: Yes
- Ms. Schieffer: Yes
- Mr. Tiernan: Yes
- Ms. James: Yes

The meeting was adjourned at 10:04 pm.

**Respectfully submitted,**

Maria De La Fuente, Director of Land Use