

Q&A from Medfield Insider Poll

For additional information, [please check out of FAQ](#) or email mdelafuente@medfield.net

Q1: How, when, where will it affect our own town planning laws?

A1: This is a proposed Zoning Bylaw amendment. The Planning Board and Select Board voted on 04/01/24 to bring the Article to Town Meeting, which is May 6th, 2024. The Article only needs a simple majority vote to pass. If it passes on May 6th, our bylaws will be sent to the Attorney General and the Office of Housing and Livable Communities for their review and final approval. The Attorney General has 90 days to approve it, but can request an extension. Once both parties have approved it, our new bylaw is official and will apply retroactively to the date of our Town Meeting. In summary, we vote on May 6, State reviews the language and then it becomes official!

Q2. The dates of zoom meetings so close to the Easter holiday makes the schedule a bit difficult for me but I will be trying to attend one. I am surprised that no potential multi-family zoning was identified closer to the borders of the towns with the MBTA stations since that is the purpose. If I were commuting on the Walpole or Norfolk trains I would prefer to be closer to train vs. downtown Medfield. Since the zoning doesn't necessarily mean it is going to be built why not? Someone using those trains would also prefer to run errands in Walpole or Norfolk vs. downtown Medfield. Why lay the groundwork to tie up downtown Medfield with traffic for this purpose?

A2: Potential multi-family locations were originally identified near abutting Towns, but were discarded in favor of the current locations. One of the Planning Board's key reasons for placing the largest district downtown is to put housing near economic centers. If someone lives downtown, they are also more likely to walk to downtown locations, as opposed to parking in the already high-demand public parking lots. One of the Master Plan Goals is also creating a more walkable downtown, and we do that by focusing on pedestrian improvements in the downtown (which the Town is working on), and by placing housing near it to disincentivize driving. Additionally, the areas closest to Walpole and Norfolk have a lot larger lot size requirements (80,000 SF as opposed to 10,000 SF in downtown) and lower existing density. If someone were to buy a larger lot and develop multi-family housing in it, they would be able to put more units at a higher density than what's around it, and the development would not blend in as well with the neighborhood. Placing density near downtown, which is already fairly dense, would ensure a harmonious transition.

Q3. With my hearing issues, zoom meetings are a disaster and I do not attend them - hardly ever even listen to the recordings of mathematics or other meetings as the microphones and sound are variable from person to person at zoom meetings and most often not good enough even at a recording of an in person meeting. In person meetings are much preferred! That said I learn most by reading. What is important and best for me is a well written proposal for things listing pros, cons, and reasoning. Transcripts or summaries of meetings are second best. Meeting minutes are often terse summaries so for that reason I would say third best. All that said, I think just from the written information in this edition of Medfield Insider I have learned enough to vote for this proposal even though I have a couple concerns about the exact zoning boundaries - but you can't please everyone so who doesn't have a concern, and I believe this is a good compromise to everyone's concern.

A3: Thank you so much for your feedback! This is helpful to us. The Planning Board hosted two in-person workshops on MBTA zoning, one in December and one in February, but the hearings themselves were virtual. We will take your recommendation to have the hearings in person for future initiatives, or perhaps have one in person and one virtual to try to reach a wider demographic. That being said, because our hearings were virtual, **we are going to be hosting up to four Coffee with a Planner sessions in public locations around town. The ones scheduled so far are Wed 04/10, from 9 am until 11:30 pm, at the CoA. The following week we will host our info session at the Library, on Wed 04/17, from 1 pm until 4:30 pm. The Director of Land Use looks forward to meeting you in person and answering any questions you may have. Stay tuned for more details!**

Q4. I do not live in an area currently mapped to be re-zoned. I am in support of compliance with the law and plan to vote in support. I am concerned about educating the majority on the lack of choice in the matter and I am hopeful that with the appropriate framing that arguments can be avoided. I am concerned that there will be misinformation as occurred with the Dale project. Messaging matters - this has to feel like it's our choice, gaining us access to state funding.

A4: Thank you so much for your feedback! The Planning Board is working on an outreach campaign. As stated above, there will be up to four "Coffee with a Planner" info sessions around town, and Trinity Financial, the developer for the Medfield State Hospital, will be doing mailers to voters every week in April leading up to Town Meeting. Additionally, Bellforge Arts Center is helping us spread the word! And, the Town will mail the Warrant out to every household as usual, and informational handouts will be available the day of Town Meeting.