

Economic Development Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

February 2, 2022

EDC Members:	Councilor Melanie Hamblen, Chair; Councilor Cobi Frongillo, Vice Chair; Councilors Glenn Jones & Patrick Sheridan
Other Members of the Steering Committee:	Bruce Hunchard, Zoning Board Chair; Greg Rondeau, Planning Board Chair
Town Staff:	Jamie Hellen, Town Administrator; Alecia Alleyne, Assistant to the Town Administrator; Bryan Taberner, Director - Planning and Community Development; Amy Love, Town Planner
Other Participants:	Emma Battaglia & Sasha Padrodi, MAPC - via Zoom

Chair Hamblen called the meeting to order at 5:49 p.m. and read announcements. Chair Hamblen stated that this is an EDC Plus Steering Committee meeting, as well as a meeting to discuss the priorities of the EDC.

1. EDC + Steering Committee: Franklin For All: Discussion from MAPC about the “Franklin For All” zoning reform project for Franklin Center, including the Downtown Commercial District and adjacent neighborhoods

Emma Battaglia w/ MAPC referenced that the group last met a month ago and in the meantime they have been preparing for the forum and held focus group meetings. Most recent focus group was with business owners in the downtown area.

Presentation “Franklin For All” by Emma Battaglia, MAPC [Presentation Attached]

Ms. Battaglia gave a presentation on the rezoning project, highlighting the following topics:

- Public Forum Planning
 - March 7th Forum - first opportunity to share the Franklin For All (FFA) project with the public, encourage engagement, questions, feedback and introduce online survey
- Communications Strategy & Outreach Toolkit
 - Key Messages
 - ◆ Overview of why we are doing this work
 - ◆ Zoning as a tool for neighborhood enhancement
 - ◆ Housing need in Franklin
 - ◆ Zoning as economic development tool
 - Messaging Formats (Digital / Print)
 - Timeline for Content Release
 - Promotional Materials
 - Distribution Roles (MAPC / Town Staff / Steering Committee)
 - Outreach Toolkit
 - Discussion
 - ◆ Question / discussion regarding funding of this project and DHCD’s guidelines regarding MBTA Communities
 - ◆ Question / discussion regarding a zoning study that was done in 2003 and what resulted from it
 - ◆ Discussions regarding key messaging and adding to our outreach toolkit
 - ◆ Question / discussion regarding focus groups: dates, participants, topics
 - ◆ Question / discussion regarding the current population of rezoning area and anticipated population after this is all complete
- Next Steps
 - Planning, promoting and holding public forum and focus group meetings

2. 2022-2023 EDC Prioritization Discussion

- a. **Approved EDC goals for 2022-2023** - Town Administrator Jamie Hellen (TA Hellen) discussed that the Town Council formally adopted goals for this two-year legislative session at its last meeting, and the goals for the EDC are attached to tonight's meeting agenda so that the Committee can provide feedback and discuss prioritization.

2022-2023 Town Council and Town Administration Goals

The following are a list of goals approved by the EDC subcommittee of the Town Council for the 2022-2023 session.

Economic & Community Development (To the EDC)

- Facilitate the "Franklin For All" Downtown Franklin and Franklin Crossing zoning diagnostics study and implement the studies' recommendations.
 - The EDC will serve as members of the The "EDC+ Steering Committee" with two members of the Planning Board and one member of the ZBA.
 - Considered priority by Vice Chair Frongillo
- Revise the public downtown parking lots bylaw.
 - Question / discussion regarding this bylaw revision and whether it would come through the Franklin For All project. TA Hellen stated that there is a fee associated with quarterly passes to reserve commuter rail spots in the downtown, but commuters have been requesting daily, weekly, or other increments of passes other than quarterly. Because the bylaw only allows for quarterly passes as it is written, it will need to be revised. Research on alternative models is being conducted.
- Review sidewalk snow removal bylaw.
- Implement housing production plan recommendations.
 - Considered priority by Vice Chair Frongillo.
- Consider policy development on the redevelopment of North Grove Economic Development Area (aka Nu style).
- Facilitate a branding & marketing analysis.
 - Considered priority by Chair Hamblen and Vice Chair Frongillo.
- Support the process toward a new town Master Plan beginning in 2023.
- Research changes to the home occupation business bylaw.
 - Considered priority by Chair Hamblen and Vice Chair Frongillo.
- Review the marijuana overlay district.
 - Question / discussion regarding if the State's recent actions relative to cannabis will have any effect on our overlay district. TA Hellen provided background information that the Legislative Committee put out a cleanup bill of provisions in the cannabis law and stated that it will have no effect on the overlay district which is still left up to local government. The one exception which may affect the overlay district is the social consumption issue - the cleanup bill will have guidance and regulation surrounding whether or not cities and towns want to allow consumption on site at stores.
- Support a process to update the Open Space Plan, which expires in 2023.
- Review the cell phone tower overlay district and consider a 5G local permitting bylaw.
 - Question / discussion on timeline of this project. TA Hellen will look into getting an estimated timeline.
- Further "lot line cleanups" project.
 - Question / discussion regarding status, how much is left. Mr. Taberner stated that there are a couple hundred more lots all over town and discussed the rough plan for completion.

Chair Hamblen adjourned the meeting at 6:40 p.m.



Rezoning Franklin Center for economic growth and diverse housing opportunities



Steering Committee Meeting #2

February 2, 2022

Agenda

- Welcome
- Public Forum Planning
- Communications Strategy & Outreach Toolkit
- Next Steps
- Questions?

Public Forum Planning

March 7 Forum

- The first public forum will be on **Monday, March 7 at 7 PM**
- **Hybrid event** taking place at Franklin High School Auditorium and over Zoom
- Link to register: **mapc.ma/franklin-forum1-reg**
- We are asking registrants to indicate if they plan to attend in-person or remotely so we have an idea about where turnout will be highest

What are our goals for this forum?

- Introduce the wider public to Franklin For All
- Explain why we are doing this work and what it will entail
- Provide education about how zoning can be a tool for equitable land use to meet housing demands, develop vibrant neighborhoods, and support economic investment
- Solicit feedback on the community's vision for Franklin Center
- Encourage attendees to stay engaged with this process

Approach for March 7 Forum

- Presentation:
 - Welcome & Introductions
 - Project Overview
 - Zoning 101
- Q&A session
- Introduce online survey activity to get feedback on participants' vision for Franklin Center and priorities for this process:
 - Participants can take part in the survey activity right after the meeting or at any time that is convenient for them (and pause/return to it)
 - Make hard copies of the activity available for those who need them

Recording of meeting will be available on Franklin For All website for those who cannot attend March 7 forum

Why go with this approach?

- The challenge with collecting real-time feedback in a hybrid meeting is finding activities that work well **both in-person and remotely**
- Gathering quality real-time feedback would require Town staff and Steering Committee members to facilitate small-group discussions in-person and report back to the full group while MAPC facilitates breakout sessions over Zoom
- We want to maximize participation while also gathering **substantive feedback** and prioritizing public safety

Example Questions for Survey Activity

- What are qualities of a good downtown? What other downtowns do you like to visit and why?
- What are the strengths of Franklin Center? What are the challenges?
- What places in Franklin Center are most meaningful to you?
- What kinds of new businesses should be prioritized?
- What types of new housing make sense for Franklin Center?
- What should new buildings look like?
- How would you prefer to get to/around Franklin Center?

Discussion

- What are your thoughts about this approach for the forum?
- Is there anything else we should be considering as we finalize the format for the meeting?

Communications Strategy & Outreach Toolkit

Key Messages

- In order to successfully communicate the importance of this rezoning effort, we want to utilize key messages that are most likely to resonate with the Franklin public
- Ideas for messages/topics:
 - Overview of why we are doing this work
 - Zoning as a tool for neighborhood enhancement
 - Housing need in Franklin
 - Zoning as an economic development tool

Messaging Formats

Digital Formats:

- Handout
- Promotional flyer
- Infographic
- Social media posting
- Email newsletter
- Blog posts
- Quiz/poll activity
- Short video

Print Formats:

- Handout
- Promotional flyer
- Tri-fold brochure
- Op-ed/article in the local paper
- Poster
- Lawn signs

Timeline for Content Release

- We want to release a steady stream of materials throughout the next month to spread the word about this process, encourage participation in the forum, and provide educational opportunities
- So far, we have created a double-sided handout providing a project overview and a social media image promoting the forum
- Next, we plan to release a document that breaks down the components and zoning and how we can use to it promote the community's goals
- We will continue releasing materials after March 7 to keep the public engaged, promote the second forum, and gather additional feedback

Promotional Materials



The Town of Franklin is working with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) on Franklin For All, a community-driven process to establish a vision for Franklin Center and make recommendations for rezoning the area to best achieve the vision.

GET INVOLVED!

Franklin For All seeks to engage a variety of stakeholders, including Franklin residents (particularly existing residents living in Franklin Center), business owners, property owners, service providers, affordable housing advocates, and local developers to identify priorities for the future of this area. This work will be guided by a Steering Committee of local stakeholders.

The Town and MAPC will engage the community through various focus group meetings and a minimum of two public forums. **We need you to share your knowledge of Franklin Center and hopes for the future.** Here is how you can connect with the planning process:

- **Join us at one of our public forums!** The first forum will have a hybrid format and will take place on **Monday, March 7, 2022, at 7PM** at the Franklin High School Auditorium and on Zoom. **Register at mapc.ma/franklin-forum1-reg.**
- **Sign up for our email list at mapc.ma/franklin-for-all-news** for updates on engagement events and plan progress.
- **Visit the project webpage at www.mapc.org/franklin-for-all** to view materials and draft content as they are produced.
- **Email planning@franklinma.gov** if you have questions about this project or ideas for enhancing Franklin Center.

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS WORK?

Franklin is fortunate to have a compact downtown with an MBTA Commuter Rail Station, a museum, a performing arts theater, Dean College, and a mix of restaurants and retailers. There are also events throughout the year, including the Strawberry Stroll and the Harvest Festival, that draw large crowds to the area. In recent years, significant time and resources have been devoted to enhancing the area with a focus on improving vehicular circulation and safety, improving roadways, fostering a pedestrian environment, improving the overall appearance of downtown, and stimulating private sector investment.

Franklin For All seeks to build on existing assets of Franklin Center (including the Downtown Commercial District and surrounding neighborhoods) and overcome barriers that are preventing the area from fully realizing its potential as a vibrant, mixed-use destination. More people living in a walkable downtown means more spending at local businesses, less car trips and greenhouse gas emissions, and more interactions amongst residents which fosters a strong sense of community. By modifying zoning, we can remove restrictions which may be holding back high-quality projects and encourage development that directly meets the community's vision for Franklin Center.



The purpose of this work is to **unlock development** that will:



- Promote economic growth



- Support local business



- Expand housing choices

- Take advantage of new infrastructure

- Provide community benefits

- Foster vibrant mixed-use neighborhoods

The Town of Franklin is working with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) on Franklin For All, a community-driven process to establish a vision for Franklin Center and make recommendations for rezoning the area to best achieve the vision.

Join us for our first public forum on Monday, March 7 at 7PM! It will be a hybrid meeting that takes place at the Franklin High School Auditorium and over Zoom.

REGISTER FOR THE FORUM:
mapc.ma/franklin-forum1-reg

VIST WEBSITE:
www.mapc.org/franklin-for-all

JOIN EMAIL LIST:
mapc.ma/franklin-for-all-news



Distribution Roles

MAPC	Town Staff	Steering Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post on project website• Send to email listserv, including focus group participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post on Town of Franklin website• Post on Town of Franklin social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.)• Display materials and make print copies available at key locations• Send materials to local papers• Distribute to local businesses to hang in their window	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post on personal social media accounts• Send by email within your networks• Bring hard copies of materials to your monthly meetings

Outreach Toolkit

- The Outreach Toolkit includes:
 - Template language to use for email outreach
 - Template language to use for social media outreach (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn)
 - Example hashtags
- This is a document that will be updated throughout this process, depending on the event we are promoting or educational information that we want to make available

Discussion

- Are there other key messages that we can utilize to promote this process and the upcoming forum?
- What digital or print formats would be the most effective?
- Are there other digital or print formats that we are missing?
- How else do you want to be involved with promoting this effort?

Next Steps

Next Steps

- MAPC preparing for public forum on Monday, March 7 at 7PM:
 - Based on tonight's conversation, we will finalize the meeting format and create a guide for in-person and remote facilitation
 - We will continue creating promotional materials
- MAPC to continue holding focus group meetings with stakeholders and internally working on development analysis
- **Steering Committee to champion meeting promotion using the Outreach Toolkit as a guide**
 - Based on tonight's conversation, we will finalize the Communications Strategy & Outreach Toolkit and share with you

Questions?