

Memorandum



To: Councilor Deborah Crossley, Chair, Zoning and Planning Committee
From: Councilor Pam Wright
Subject: Zoning Redesign ZAP meeting 3/23/20
Date: March 22, 2020
Cc: City Council, Barney Heath, Planning Director, Jennifer Caira, Planning Deputy Director, Zack LeMel

I have read the assigned documents for ZAP meeting 3/22/20 and have 11 comments/questions on the 3/14/20 memo and 21 comments/questions on the 2/22/19 build out memo. I also think we should be reviewing the 92 page Planning Dept presentation on build out analysis dated 2/28/19 [here](#) which includes much more information and the deep dive tables that support this [here](#). Both materials were part of the original build out memo and make a more complete analysis.

But before we jump into all of this, I think we first need to address questions/comments and concerns from our previous ZAP meeting. I have 64 questions on the previous reading material that I have forwarded to you and the planning department. Jennifer Caira, Zack LeMel and I will discuss these items Thursday or Friday later this week. Most of the items can fall in the below 7 categories. I suggest that we discuss these categories this Monday before moving on to the build out analysis.

One, a table documenting the changes from our current zoning and proposed zoning. This would come from the planning department and has been requested many times from different councilors. I know it's comparing apples to oranges but comparisons can still be made. Also, would like to see examples using the proposed zoning versus current zoning dimensional standards including FAR. Having the information in one chart will be helpful for all to get their heads around the proposed changes. This table could be completed for all the districts from SR1 to BU5 to MU4 and everything in between. Showing what each district will be changing to will be helpful too. For example, SR1 to R1, SR2 and SR3 to R2 and so forth.

Two, more discussion on courtyard clusters. Courtyard clusters are allowed everywhere in the city. The density greatly increases. It appears that courtyard cluster will incentivize developers to combine lots, tear down multiple home and build many more dwelling units. This was never addressed in the build out analysis. I would like to see this done and analyze the data. Also, further discussions are needed on the subdivision of lots and the effect on the city.

Three, I still don't see in the documentation how this proposed context based zoning will save the cape neighborhoods. Councilor Ryan's 1100 sf cape could be replaced by a 3500 sf home "by right". When you add the finished basement the new home could be 4900 sf. I would like to understand what is preventing the teardowns of these homes.

Four, further discussion and the reasoning behind why 2 unit buildings are 50% larger than proposed 3 unit buildings. Many of the present 2 family homes in Newton were built between 1900-1930 and are typically 2200 to 3000 sf. Allowing 2 unit buildings to be 6000 sf by right seems very large.

Five, further discussion on removing parking requirements for all 1 and 2 unit buildings and allowing on-street parking counted towards the parking requirement. Does this eliminate the overnight winter parking ban?

Six, discussion going from approximately 132 zoning districts to 7. Newton is large with many different lot sizes. The present 7 zoning districts: SRs and MRs have a sliding FAR scale applied dependent on lot area so basically, we have 132 zoning districts.

Seven, further discussion of an appointed body, the planning board, approving all special permits except for lots with greater than 20 units or 20,000 sf of floor space. Some work has been done of this already but we took a step back.

Thank you for the consideration.