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**Date:** June 16, 2022 at 3:32:00 PM EDT

**To:** Councilor Crossley <[dcrossley@newtonma.gov](mailto:dcrossley@newtonma.gov)>, Councilor Danberg <[vdanberg@newtonma.gov](mailto:vdanberg@newtonma.gov)>

**Cc:** Russel Feldman <[RFeldman@tbaarchitects.com](mailto:RFeldman@tbaarchitects.com)>, Dan Powdermaker <[dpowderm@gmail.com](mailto:dpowderm@gmail.com)>, Kathy Pillsbury <[kathy.pillsbury@gmail.com](mailto:kathy.pillsbury@gmail.com)>, Jay Walter <[Entasis@rcn.com](mailto:Entasis@rcn.com)>, Jonathan Kantar <[jonathan@sagebuilders.com](mailto:jonathan@sagebuilders.com)>

**Subject: Updated: 6.16.2022 Building Professionals Zoning Working Group Comments on 12 Village Center Zoning Proposals**

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Dear Councilors Crossley and Danberg,

Please find the updated 6.13.2022 memo, now dated 6.16.2022, for distribution with the Friday Packet tomorrow per our conversation, thank you.

As architects, preservationists, researchers, and builders, we've been closely following the discussions of the Zoning and Planning Committee as it weighs various aspects of zoning reform.

We want to share our views on the current discussion about village centers with the ZAP Committee and the entire City Council as it contemplates the proposals before you. We include a general statement below and attach specific comments on each of the proposals in the attached pdf. We would be happy to offer clarification on any items should you have any questions or comments. We appreciate the opportunity to weigh in on this important matter.

We are impressed and pleased by what we see in the zoning framework. The proposals are well-aligned with the feedback gathered during last year's community engagement. We like that these proposals acknowledge the diversity of village types while enabling a more straightforward pathway to achieve adopted housing, climate, and economic development goals and plans.

The proposed changes support what we understand to be the spirit and the intent of the new MBTA Communities legislation and the Draft Design Guidelines. We know, of course, that the final MBTA Communities Design Guidelines will not be issued until the end of this summer.

The proposed framework will become a template for development with greater clarity both for the property owners and the city. It will ease the regulatory burden on local businesses, in particular smaller ones. It will define a better pathway towards mixed-use with residential in the village centers. It will provide additional housing for people who depend upon public transit and are inclined to walk or bike rather than use a car. It recognizes that because our villages are heterogeneous, varied zoning makes sense.

We realize that the revised zoning rules do not mean that all that is allowed to be built will appear quickly, or ever. Our current zoning dating back to 1953, allows for much more building than homeowners, businesses, and developers have done. Better zoning enables future growth to coincide with current needs, desires, economic realities, and climate understanding.

Respectfully,

Russel Feldman, Jonathan Kantar, Lisa Monahan, Kathy Pillsbury, Dan Powdermaker, and Jay Walter, Chair Building Professionals Zoning Working Group

*When responding, please be aware that the Massachusetts Secretary of State has determined that most email is public record and therefore cannot be kept confidential.*