

Economic Development Advisory Board

Minutes

May 11, 2021

8:30-10:00 AM held remotely via Zoom

EDAB Board Lab Subcommittee members in attendance (noted by Y/N)

Cliff Brown	Y
Marilyn Newman	Y
Carol Levin	Y
Paul Saner	Y

Staff present: Kara Brewton

Attendee: Jennifer Gilbert

Paul Saner opened the meeting remotely via Zoom due to COVID.

Material Reviewed: Draft Outline of Report

The Committee reviewed consolidated notes from our first 6 meetings organized by charge topic. This serves as a draft outline of our report, and was expected to further inform the sequence of remaining tasks and a timeline through the conclusion of our committee.

It was noted there have been discussions about the town formally engaging with bullfinch at 10 Brookline Place just after the Fall 2021 town meeting. This informs that we should try to finish our investigation and report this Fall. That could include regulatory concepts and perhaps drafts of zoning and licensing regulations, which would need Town Counsel's review.

Watertown's experience points to the importance of public health and safety for community acceptance of this new use,.

An entire package of warrant articles including our committee and the 10 Brookline Place study committee's recommendations is planned for the Fall of 2022.

Jennifer Gilbert indicated Bullfinch has a long-term plan since the property is under long term lease to Dana Farber. It is important for the subcommittees report to reviewed and supported as Bullfinch engages elkus and manfredi and other consultants. Bullfinch has offer to Provide the town with resources, mentioning paying for a peer review to help the health department take a final look at draft regulations for bio level one and two and how They would be implemented and operationally how that would work. . bullfinch does not need a level three. She mentioned that the Brookline Housing Authority (BHA) also has a long-term plan to redevelop its property across the street with a park component. Commercial linkage of the two projects may be possible. Bullfinch will present three massing diagrams to the Boylston Street Committee on June 21st @ noon.

Carol displayed the consolidated notes and directly edited these during the remainder of the meeting based on our discussion. Bullfinch will be provided these for comment. The committee felt the market section had good information. The question of is there some market niche that Brookline should be targeting was raised. It was agreed that given our time line the market itself will determine an opportunity at the point in time when Brookline is actually able to provide the zoning and other regulations. It is probably easier to predict what we won't be able to attract given the limitations on our site sizes. Early-stage life science as part of a possible village cluster was discussed.

Defining the zoning uses as BIO 1 and 2 is the objective. R DNA 20 years ago was the use allowed under municipal regulation. some municipalities now active in the market, like Newton, are rethinking biosafety regulations allowing broader uses. A vivarium is anticipated to be part of the licensing process. We should consider uses both in the zoning and public health context.

A priority of the committee is outlining peer municipal best practices . R DNA 20 years ago was the use allowed under municipal regulation. some municipalities now active in the market, like Newton, are rethinking biosafety regulations allowing broader uses. Watertown was cited where the special permit process looks at development and design issues separately from public health and safety. Licensing is based on the allowed zoning uses and looks at all the necessary precautions being in place. Looking at Boston and Cambridge regulations along with other municipalities was highlighted, as was considering research & development as a use.

It was decided as the next step to review relevant public health regulations from peer municipalities, preparing a topical “deconstruction” outline of key issues related to Brookline. Kara will ask The Fire Department’s emergency response coordinator about relevant HazMat procedures and timing on possibly engaging with the Committee.

It was suggested that the Monitoring section become part of Public Health & Safety, and that the Building Department be added as enforcing the noise by law. Kara will check with the deputy building Commissioner about noise related to labs.

The committee discussed that lab buildings are tall due to high floor to ceiling heights and enclosed penthouses of 20 feet. Kara felt that height should be expressed, as was the case at 2 Brookline Place, by total feet, including penthouse. While noise insulated mechanical systems and possible solar panels aren’t designed until after zoning, little if any setback should be assumed. It was noted that current zoning does limit both building height and penthouse separately, with pressure on that due to greater height required for efficient cooling systems.

There was agreement that specific lab uses within a building will be regulated by public health licensing, with zoning requiring various special permits at the building level. Those would include the customary major impact project issues such as public realm improvements, traffic studies, shadow studies, etc. The Committee will explore lab as a use being as of right, which would be a positive indication to the marketplace.

Final Draft

The report should define what we expect to be captured by the special permit process versus the licensing process. It will not suggest a specific parking ratio since that like height is a function of uses that should be considered by a study committee.

We should consider Watertown's positive experience of the community getting comfortable with this use due to public health regulations and its bio safety committee. This perspective is important to include in a full EDAB public hearing before finalizing our report. A draft report will be worked on in July, and a public hearing perhaps the week of September 20th. The question of whether the draft report would include draft zoning and/ or public health licensing regulations was raised. A goal for our next meeting would be for committee members to report on municipal licensing research. It was agreed we will continue to build out our report outline by adding as Carol did during the meeting additional items. All committee members can edit, and we will then review that document at subsequent meetings.

The Committee doesn't plan to meet with a user. Interest was expressed in hearing from an investor. At our June EDAB meeting, we by sharing the consolidated notes will invite feedback. A design question is can there be public access through a bio lab building given safety issues

The time of the next meeting on May 25th was changed to 11 am. Committee members will share findings from the public health regulation research.