



DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Meeting Minutes
February 03, 2025
7:00 PM
Room 09, Town Hall – In Person

Present: Peter Darlow, (Chair), Holly Ben-Joseph, Tom Doolittle, David Honn, Richard Keleher

Proponent attending on behalf of Planning Division: Kristen Guichard, Planning Director

1. Opening

Chair, Peter Darlow opened the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

2. Regular Business

A. Meeting Minutes:

December 19, 2024 minutes were reviewed and unanimously approved as amended. RK will submit to the Town Clerk for posting.

B. Citizen's Concerns:

None

3. New/Special Business

A. Habitat for All initiative:

Kristen summarized the Habitat for All committee's work over the past year that has led to a proposed adjustment to how residential development will be prioritized within the town of Acton. The intent of the updated zoning will be to encourage the preservation of natural resources, requiring 60% of a land tract to be maintained undeveloped and to incentivize the development of smaller housing units and the affordability of new housing units on the 40% of the land tract to be developed. An updated PCRC or Natural Resource Protection Zoning is proposed to become the as of right subdivision development path within Acton. The traditional subdivision control law will continue to be allowed, though only by special permit, with limiting conditions to disincentive the use of this traditional control law for residential development.

Given the election to utilize the PCRC as the desired path for residential development, several improvements are proposed for how a PCRC can be developed to maximize the impact of this desired development path and to encourage the development of smaller and more affordable housing.



- The 8-acre minimum land tract requirement will be eliminated
- Natural Resource Mapping will be prioritized when determining which 60% portion of a land tract is to be preserved.
- Minimum setbacks between housing units, between housing units and the new proposed road, and between housing units and the preserved land portions will be adjusted to prioritize the benefits of allowing an increased development density to minimize the impact of development to the land tract and to the surrounding neighborhood.
- A 20-foot vegetative buffer will be required along the frontage of a land tract adjacent to the existing street.

The DRB is pleased with the direction of the Habitat for All proposal and offered the following feedback specific to questions posed by Kristen with respect to the potential language to be incorporated in the revised PCRC/Natural Resources Protection Zoning:

- The minimum setback from the existing street for new housing developed should match the existing zoning district setback.
- The minimum setback from the proposed new street for new housing developed should be 20 feet. Ideally, the minimum setback for garages should be an additional 5 feet further from the street than the residence.
- Minimum spacing between the housing units should be 20 feet.
- Encourage a more robust set of incentives for cottage-style homes and smaller homes additional to what is shown on the below inclusionary zoning for affordable housing draft table presented. Recommend not including larger homes on the table.

Housing Type	Size	Density	Affordability requirement kicks in at 5 units	Open Space
Cottage-Style Homes	1,000 - 1,500 sq. ft	3 units per acre	10% at 80% AMI	60%
Smaller Homes	1,500 - 3,000 sq. ft	2.5 units per acre	10% at 80% AMI	60%
Mid-sized Homes	3,000 - 5,000 sq. ft	2 units per acre	10% at 80% AMI	60%
Larger Homes	5,000 sq. ft+	1 unit per acre	10% at 110% AMI	60%
Multifamily (Special Permit only)	Varies	15 units per acre	10% at 80% AMI	80%

- The minimum caliper for required trees in the vegetative buffer should be 2 inches. The minimum number of trees required in the buffer should be one for every 300SF of buffer. Trees should be distributed within the vegetative buffer per a natural variable pattern in lieu of evenly spaced.



Documents reviewed:

Habitat for All PowerPoint presentation deck specific for Design Review Board, dated February 3, 2025, prepared by Planning Division and pertinent passages of the existing PCRC zoning code.

4. Adjournment

At 9:45 p.m. it was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted, The DRB