



ECDC COMMITTEE VIRTUAL MEETING

**Minutes of Monday, March 4, 2024
5:30 PM**

Committee Members participating were Chair Lynne Bermudez and members Tom Capano, Leslie Voss, Alex Qirjazi, Zillie Bhuj, Rosalee DiScipio (arrived 5:40 PM), Sarah Guido and Town Administrator Kevin Harutunian. BCTV and Dick Gandt were also in attendance.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bermudez called the meeting to order at 5:32 PM.

GOVERNOR'S ORDER

Chair Bermudez read the following announcement:

“Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting will be conducted via remote means. Members of the public who wish to watch or listen to the meeting may do so in the following manner: Video conference (see log-in information on the agenda on the website.) No in-person attendance of members of the public will be available, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post on the Topsfield website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.”

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Alex Qirjazi made a motion to approve the minutes of the ECDC meeting held 1/29/24. Tom Capano seconded the motion and it passed with a roll call vote as follows:

Lynne Bermudez	Aye
Zillie Bhuj	Aye
Tom Capano	Aye
Sarah Guido	Abstain
Leslie Voss	Aye
Kevin Harutunian	Aye
Alex Qirjazi	Aye

Proposed Zoning Articles for Annual Town Meeting

Chair Bermudez walked through the presentation that will be given by the Planning Board at the 3/6/24 Information Session in the Public Hall. This Information Session will provide residents with an understanding of the Housing Choice legislation passed by the state in 2021. This legislation requires each town or city (considered to be an “MBTA” community) to create a zoning district which allows multi-family housing by right. The proposed zoning district, and accompanying bylaw, developed by the Planning Board will be presented to Topsfield residents for a vote at the 2024 Annual Town Meeting. The 3/4/24 Information Session, as well as a public hearing on 3/20/24, will provide residents with the opportunity to learn about the MBTA District and bylaw, ask questions, and provide feedback to the Planning Board. Topsfield must have an approved MBTA District by December of 2025 or the town becomes ineligible for certain state funds. The state is currently suing the town of Milton for not being in compliance.

Chair Bermudez also walked through the proposed zoning changes which economic development as well as facilitate development of two family and multi-family housing. There are also zoning modifications considered “housekeeping” which provide clarification to existing bylaws. Discussion was held on the proposed zoning change to no longer permit vehicle sales along Rt. 1. Existing auto dealerships would be grandfathered. This grandfather status includes if an existing auto dealer wanted to sell their business to a new owner.

Master Plan Update

Town Administrator Harutunian provided an update on development of the town’s Master Plan. He recognized Member Zillie Bhuju for her role as Vice Chair of the Master Plan Steering Committee. The Master Plan process is nearing completion with the Plan expected to be given to the Planning Board for approval in April.

ADJOURN

At 5:26PM, Zillie Bhuju made a motion to adjourn. Sarah Guido seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with a roll call vote as follows:

Lynne Bermudez	Aye
Zillie Bhuju	Aye
Tom Capano	Aye
Rosalee Discipio	Aye
Sarah Guido	Aye
Kevin Harutunian	Aye
Alex Qirjazi	Aye
Leslie Voss	Aye

Respectfully Submitted,

Lynne Bermudez
Chair

DOCUMENTS

1. Agenda
2. Draft Minutes of 1/29/24 ECDC meeting
3. MBTA Information Session presentation
4. Proposed zoning article modifications for 2024 Annual Town Meeting

Pursuant to the 'Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18-25, the approval of these minutes by the Board constitutes a certification of the date, time and place of the meeting, the members present and absent, and the actions taken at the meeting. Any other description of statements made by any person, or the summary of the discussion of any matter, is included for the purpose of context only, and no certification, express or implied, is made by the Committee as to the completeness or accuracy of such statements.