



OBSERVER REPORT

FAIR HOUSING COMMITTEE (FHC) & HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN (HPP) IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE – 1-14-25

Hybrid Meeting – Not recorded

LWVM Observer – Bonnie Grenier

Attendees from FHC: Thatcher Kezer, Debra Larkin, Mimi Hollister, Kurt James, Alex Eitler, Dan Fox, Cathy Hoog, Ramon Garcia

Attendees from HPPIC – Kurt James, Thatcher Kezer, Cathy Hoog, Alex Eitler, Dan Fox, Nisha Austin

MBTA COMMUNITIES ACT

- The Massachusetts Supreme Court has ruled that the MBTA Zoning law is legal and towns/cities must comply. The Attorney General has the power to enforce the law.
- It appears that many of those who voted against the article at town meeting did so out of concern that the law might be illegal. Since that issue has now been resolved there may be less resistance to supporting a warrant article in favor.
- It will be up to the Planning Board to hold public meetings on this and then vote on whether to endorse or not. (Any change to zoning bylaws must be approved by the Planning Board). In this case they would have to vote in favor of the MBTA Communities Act for an article to be put on the town warrant for 2025.
- Official regulations have not been issued by the state, only guidelines which can't be enforced. Official regulations should be coming out in the near future.

COFFIN SCHOOL

- The School Committee will have a warrant article to turn the Coffin School over to the town since it is no longer needed for educational purposes. The school sits on approximately five acres of land.
- Once the school comes under the Select Board there will be an RFP to engage consultants to go through the envisioning process to determine what are the possible uses for the property. Input will be sought from neighbors and the community at large.
- The greatest likelihood is repurposing the school for housing although there is no guarantee this will be the case; however, the property is in an area zoned residential.
- There are many grants available to hire consultants and for construction of housing. The town will actively pursue these.

For the near future the Fair Housing Committee and Housing Production Plan Implementation Committee will continue to meet together since there is significant overlap in their responsibilities. Eventually the two committees may be merged. This would require a vote of the Select Board.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

A woman who has lived on West Shore Drive for 28 years spoke to the significant increase in traffic over the years. She and her dog have nearly been hit several times while trying to cross the street. With the possible development of Tioga Way and the Coffin School for residential properties, she suggested that traffic-calming initiatives be an important consideration in the process.