

## **Excerpt from BOS [11-20-20 minutes](#) on Downtown District zoning for multifamily and affordable housing**

Ms. Barrett explained the benefits to having multifamily housing in the downtown district and how it positively impacts economic development. Ms. Connelly agreed with Ms. Barrett and described her concerns regarding diversity in housing stock. Ms. Duca was in support of multifamily housing in the downtown area. Mr. Morris stated he was in support of this section of the proposed bylaw. It was pointed out that it should read, “up to twelve units” allowed under a special permit. Ms. Malinowski summarized her concerns that it would be challenging for any project to hit the affordable housing threshold and therefore would essentially negate the affordable housing section of the proposed bylaw. Mr. Shea agreed with the consensus. Mr. Stivers agreed as well and spoke of his concerns regarding the feasibility of affordable housing in the downtown district. Mr. McCay stated he agreed with the sentiment that mixed-use and multifamily housing is the whole purpose of the downtown zoning and encouraged to release some control in order for projects to be executed. He suggested design guidelines as a way to encourage developers.

Ms. Barrett summarized her feelings on the affordable housing section of the proposed bylaw. She stated that in her experience developers of smaller projects are not usually inclined to build to affordable housing thresholds due to the work, time and funds involved. She said that there may not be any affordable housing opportunity in the downtown area as the size is limited as are the number of lots with split zoning. Ms. Jasinski stated she had the same concerns. She described her reservations on access issues for seniors with residential units allowed only on the second floor and felt that living above a retail unit will dissuade young families from moving to this area. She added that she did not see this area as a viable option for affordable housing. Ms. Malinowski stated she would like to see an affordability component that is achievable and was not sure this area will be able to do so. She stated she also did not want to turn off builders from wanting to build in this area. Mr. Morris suggested removing the affordability component from the proposed draft bylaw. There was discussion regarding removing the language, raising the threshold and workforce housing. Ms. Barrett explained the implications of each. The consensus agreed to raise the multifamily affordable housing threshold to eight units from six. Mr. Stivers added that there will not be a significant impact in the 10% affordable housing threshold from the downtown district.

### **Proposed bylaw includes:**

Affordable housing. In any multifamily or mixed-use building with eight or more units, at least 12.5 percent of the units shall be affordable housing that is eligible for the Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) in accordance with the Chapter 40B regulations and Guidelines of the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). In consultation with the Southborough Housing Opportunity Partnership Committee (SHOPC), the Planning Board may adopt a guidance document interpreting the Chapter 40B Guidelines as they apply to development under this section.