

**Residential Compatibility Standards Subcommittee**  
**July 10, 2025 @ 6:00 PM**  
**REMOTE MEETING**

**Residential Compatibility Standards Subcommittee Members Present Remotely:** Tracy Shriver, Gary Tondorf-Dick, Joe Fisher, Jed Ruccio, Eric Smoczynski, Lexy Lefort, Charles Hayes

**Residential Compatibility Standards Subcommittee Members Absent:** Anna McGarry, Mary Ann Donaldson

**Also Present:** Emily Wentworth, Community Planning Director

At 6:03 PM Chair Shriver called the Residential Compatibility Standards Subcommittee meeting to order and stated the following:

*“This meeting is being held remotely as an alternate means of public access pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025 suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law. You are hereby advised that this meeting and all communications during this meeting may be recorded by the Town of Hingham in accordance with the Open Meeting Law. If any participant wishes to record this meeting, please notify me at the start of the meeting in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, § 20(f) so that I, as Chair, may inform all other participants of said recording.”*

Chair Shriver confirmed no other attendees requested to record the meeting.

Chair Shriver took roll call attendance of other members present including Gary Tondorf-Dick, Jed Ruccio, Joe Fisher, Eric Smoczynski, and Lexy Lefort.

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Chair Shriver opened the meeting and welcomed new member Lexy Lefort to the committee and asked her to give a brief background. Following Ms. Lefort, the other Subcommittee members and Ms. Wentworth introduced themselves.

Chair Shriver restated the Subcommittee’s purpose. He explained that current zoning bylaws lack specific size restrictions beyond setbacks and height limits. He suggested the Subcommittee use this meeting to develop a work plan and noted that the analysis and outreach could focus on specific neighborhoods as suggested by Member Tondorf-Dick. He continued that the Subcommittee will provide recommendations to the Planning Board, focusing on potential zoning amendments related to lot coverage ratio, floor area ratio, minimum open space and dimensional standards. He also noted that the Subcommittee acknowledged the potential need for more time to draft recommendations, given the aggressive timeline for town meeting, and discussed the possibility of including warrant articles for more modest changes to the bylaw as an interim solution.

Chair Shriver asked the Subcommittee identify developers, realtors, local commissions, and residents who could share their thoughts and experiences with the subcommittee. Members gave their suggestions, which included the Historic Districts Commission, Sewer Commission, Board of Health, and Zoning Board of Appeals among others. A member asked about the zoning amendment process. A brief discussion followed about the required steps before Town Meeting.

Member Tondorf-Dick presented his thoughts on neighborhoods that should be considered a priority over others. He suggested that reconstruction and expansion projects are creating significant increases in size of homes in neighborhoods, such as Crow Point, Cushing Street, and others. He said that change in some neighborhoods, such as Hingham Center, may be better controlled through the Historic Districts Commission design review process.

Member Fisher suggested the Subcommittee get a schedule out to promote public participation and give residents more than one week to prepare. He wondered if the Subcommittee would find that only 10 % of the community are unhappy with change and 90% are ok with it and that it would be good to know the broad segment opinion. He also said it would be helpful to understand the benchmarks and how other towns have dealt with them. He liked the idea of incremental changes given time constraints as well as the focus on neighborhoods.

Ms. Wentworth shared that she also liked the idea of focusing on neighborhoods, but noted that zoning is intended to be uniform throughout districts. She said and there are options besides zoning to address specific issues and that examples may include a neighborhood conservation district, an overlay district, or changes to the underlying zoning.

The Subcommittee discussed potential outreach options including a survey. It was additionally noted that all residents that expressed interest in the Subcommittee would be notified of upcoming meetings and all materials presented as well as meeting minutes would be available to the public through the website. In terms of the neighborhood level analysis, Ms. Wentworth noted that the Town no longer had a GIS coordinator; as a result, the Subcommittee may need additional resources to complete that work. Member Fisher asked if the Planning Board budget could be utilized. Ms. Wentworth confirmed that it likely could in part, but noted that the consulting budget was also substantially reduced this year.

Member Fisher suggested starting with the builders and realtors then go on to the neighborhoods taking into account summer travel schedules. Ms. Wentworth offered to present some background on past attempts to control residential development that were unsuccessful.

Member Ruccio also suggested taking into consideration resident schedules. He thought it would be a good idea to get the word out that the Subcommittee was starting with the developers and other professionals out of a concerns for residents' schedules. He suggested setting up the neighborhood-focused meetings after Labor Day. He offered to assist in the data collection from GIS. Member Ruccio suggested they also look at the Massachusetts Municipal Association's site to see if there are any materials that could be utilized.

Chair Shriver referenced some benchmark community research done by planning staff that is on the website for all to view. Member Tondorf-Dick mentioned he often refers to Wellesley and Needham Planning Boards as they face similar issues. Member Ruccio asked if representatives from those communities would consider sharing their experiences in one of the meetings.

A brief discussion about a floor area ratio approach followed. Chair Shriver showed a map of lot sizes in town and a listing of neighborhoods that could serve as a starting point.

Member Tondorf-Dick mentioned houses in historic districts had the benefit of design review and as a result the majority of changes in these districts are additions and not tear downs somewhat controlling the change in character and scale in these districts. He pointed to Wompatuck Road and Bel Air Road in Crow Point, and World's End, as pressure points due to the significant redevelopment, particularly near

water. He also noted that Liberty Pole and Bradley Woods were mentioned as potential study areas. Chair Shriver proposed also looking at the Middle Street historic district to understand how managed development can preserve character.

Chair Shriver moved on to discuss scheduling and noted he would pull together some data points on 3 or 4 of the neighborhoods identified earlier. Member Tondorf–Dick volunteered to reach out to the peer towns. Member Fisher volunteered to reach out to developers and builders. Chair Shriver and Ms. Wentworth noted they would work on the schedule. He asked the Subcommittee to think about how they would reach out to the neighborhoods to let them know about the meetings. Member Fisher suggested the Hingham Anchor and offered to make the arrangements. Member Smoczynski asked if maybe along with the Anchor Facebook groups could be utilized. He also offered to put together a list of the more successful historic district design moves.

Chair Shriver revisited the meeting schedule. It was agreed that a 6 PM start worked for all as well as meeting every two weeks. The Subcommittee planned to meet next on July 24, August 7 and tentatively August 28.

Joe Fisher then made a motion, seconded by Gary Tondorf-Dick, to adjourn the meeting at 7:28 PM.

The motion passed by roll call vote.

- In Favor:** Joe Fisher, Eric Smoczynski, Jed Ruccio, Gary Tondorf-Dick, Lexy Lefort, Charles Hayes and Tracy Shriver
- Opposed:** None