

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting No. 1

Date: June 17, 2025

Time: 6:00pm - 8:00pm

Location: East Columbia 50+ Senior Center

All meeting materials are located on the project website: [New Town Task Force](#)
[| Howard County](#)

Attendance Record:

Task Force Member	Present/Absent
Nicole Campbell	Present
Nina Basu	Present
Rene DuBois	Present
Brian England	Present
Karin Emery	Present
Greg DesRoches	Present
Ian Kennedy	Present
Michael Golibersuch	Present
Ryan Hermann	Present
Tim May	Present
Joan Lancos	Present
Collin Sullivan	Present
Judelle Campbell	Present
Kristi Smith	Present
Matt Abrams	Present
David Costello	Present
Robbyn Harris	Present
Sharon Cooper-Kerr	Present
Ashley Vaughan	Absent
Stacy Spann	Absent
Fran LoPresti	Present

Other Attendees

Department of Planning and Zoning Staff: Lynda Eisenberg, Kristin O'Connor, Sarah Latimer, Jeff DelMonico, Hannah Weber.

New Town Task Force Consultant Team (JMT): Jennifer Ray, Tobi Louise Kester, Scott Rasmussen, Cassidy Burlace.

One member of the public was in attendance.

Meeting Materials

[Agenda](#)

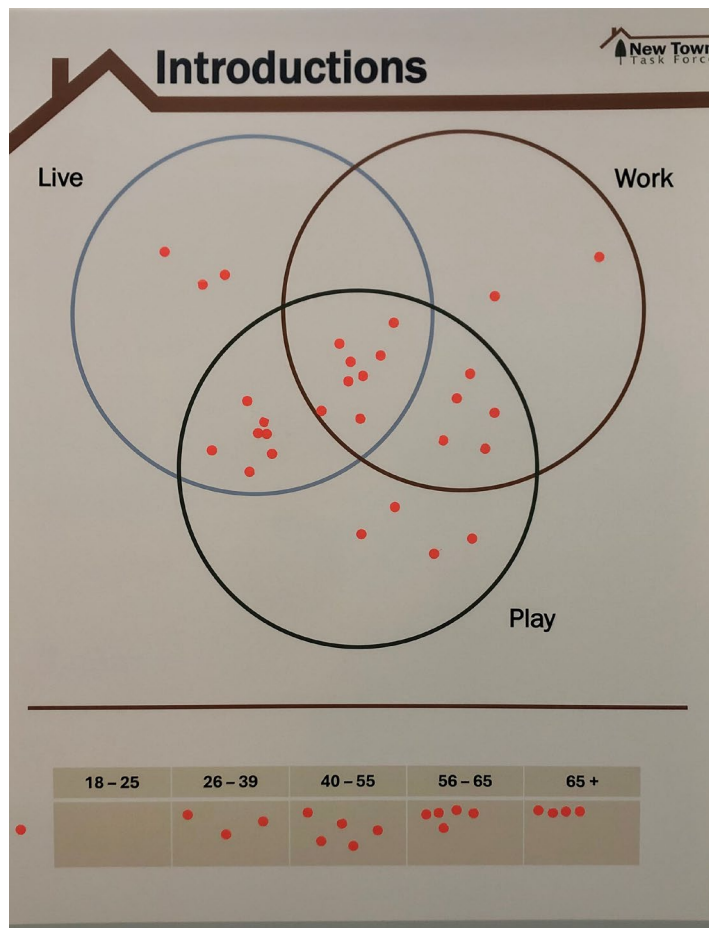
[Virtual Binder](#)

[Presentation Slides](#)

A. Welcome and Introductions

- Director of the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ), Lynda Eisenberg, AICP, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the first New Town Task Force meeting, and thanked the members for their participation in the task force. The DPZ project team introduced themselves.
- The project team introduced the materials and information posted around the room including boards for individuals to write down questions and additional information requests. She then requested that each member introduce themselves and discuss their relationship to Columbia. As members introduced themselves, they completed a dot exercise to place stickers on whether they live, work, and/or play in Columbia on a poster board.
 - The following is the photograph of the “dot activity” representing the Task Force members and their relationship with the area.
 - Three stickers are placed only in the ‘Live’ area of the Venn Diagram; Two stickers are placed only in the ‘work’ area, and four stickers are placed only in the ‘Play’ Area.
 - Seven stickers were placed in both the ‘Live’ and ‘Play’ area of the Venn Diagram; and five stickers were placed in the ‘Work’ and ‘Play’ area of the Venn Diagram.
 - Eight stickers were placed in the area of the Venn Diagram that overlaps with ‘Live’, ‘Work’, and ‘Play’.

- Below the Venn Diagram, four stickers identified Task Force Members that are over 65; five stickers identified Task Force Members between 56 and 65; five stickers identified Task Force members aged 40 to 55; and three stickers identified Task Force Members 26 to 39. One sticker was placed to the left of the age chart.



B. Expectations

- The project team asked each member what expectations they had for the process as well as this meeting.
 - A question was asked when a Chair and a Vice-Chair would be elected.
 - The project team noted that this New Town Task Force would be more informal in nature than a typical Committee, resulting in the creation of a report that will include a set of recommendations rather than a directive of any sort that would require formal voting; therefore, would not require a Chair and Vice-chair to be elected. Task force activities will be facilitated by the Consultant team (JMT) who function on behalf of and in conjunction with DPZ.

A request was made for follow-up information regarding this. The item was added to the appropriate flip chart to be revisited during Task Force Meeting No. 2

- Expectations were received from Task Force members. Members discussed their expectations for the meeting, including:
 - Request for a better understanding the schedule for the project and Task Force
 - Request for a clearer understanding of the purpose for the Task Force and what was eligible for recommendation review
 - Clarification about how covenants do/don't fit into the recommendation process
 - Want an understanding of the deliverables to be developed

C. Task Force Purpose

- The project team reviewed the Task Force purpose noting the statement made by County Executive Calvin Ball, Executive Orders 2025-09 and 2025-10, and reference to the Task Force within HoCo by Design which identified the need for this work.
- The project team reiterated that the Task Force is not actively re-writing zoning but providing recommendations to the County on the New Town Zoning District

for when a zoning re-write takes place. The County will complete the work of zoning code rewrite. This Task Force is tasked to identify the challenges and recommendations for moving Columbia forward for the next 50 years, including redevelopment.

D. Ground Rules

- The project team reviewed the ground rules within the presentation materials and noted the boards around the room that also included these rules.
 - All meetings will be run with informal Robert's Rules for the purpose of providing structure within discussion and allowing all voices to be heard.
 - The project team shared the facilitation mantra of "I bring my best, you bring your best, and together we build something even better" and spoke to the sentiment behind the statement.
 - The project team noted the great diversity in experience, villages, and backgrounds of the Task Force and how this will be an asset for everyone to bring their perspectives together for creating the recommendations.

E. Overall Schedule and Expectations

- The project team reviewed the overall schedule including the Task Force meetings, and the general process for using the ten Task Force meetings to get to the report of recommendations for the final deliverable.
 - The overall process for the Task Force will be the development of a vision statement for the work of the Task Force by which all recommendations can be measured against. This will be done during the first two meetings of the Task Force.
 - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis will be used to complete a "deep dive" of Section 125 for what is working in the zone, what may need to be revised to build relevancy for future needs, as well as any additional considerations to move New Town Zoning District into the next 50 years.
- The project team reviewed the overall expectations for Task Force members to understand time commitments for this effort.

F. Review of Available Materials

- The project team reviewed the materials available for the Task Force members to use/review to aid them in this effort.
- Materials include:
 - Task Force website: www.howardcountymd.gov/boards-commissions/new-town-task-force
 - Virtual Binder will be updated throughout the process to include future meeting presentations.
 - Howard County online resources including the interactive map (<https://data.howardcountymd.gov/InteractiveMap.html>) and New Town District Final Development Plan (FDP) resources ([https://data.howardcountymd.gov/DPZ FDP/FDP Web.aspx](https://data.howardcountymd.gov/DPZ_FDP/FDP_Web.aspx))

G. Meet and Greet Summary

- The project team summarized the stakeholder meetings coordination that had occurred prior to the Task Force meeting No. 1:
 - Twenty-three discussions were held with Task Force members and community members including individuals recommended by Task Force members (16 community members were recommended)
 - Conversations were, on average, 47 minutes long
 - Overall general themes were identified through the conversations including:
 - Columbia is a great place to be.
 - Love the concept of diversity and inclusion.
 - Mixed reactions whether this is really occurring or not.
 - Green space and open space are highly appreciated.
 - Proximity of amenities is appreciated
 - Mixed reactions regarding ability to easily access all.
 - Recognition that what built Columbia to what it is today needs to be discussed for relevancy of implementation for the future.
- Questions from the “meet and greet” discussions included:
 - Why did you say yes to the appointment?
 - What is your relationship to Columbia?

- Are you familiar with New Town Zoning? HoCo by Design? A Vision for Columbia?
 - What are the top three things that you appreciate?
 - What are the top three things that give you cause for concern?
 - Is anything missing in Columbia?
 - What is your vision for Columbia in 20 year, 30 years, 50 years from now?
 - What is your expectation for the work of this committee?
 - Are there any other key stakeholders within Columbia that you recommend we talk to?
- The project team relayed that the outcome of these discussions will be included within an overall Outreach chapter within the final recommendations report.

H. History of Columbia

- The project team introduced the history of Columbia, including acknowledging that the American Visionary Arts Museum currently has an exhibit on Jim Rouse on the second floor of their main building.
- The project team reviewed the major tenants that James Rouse held for Columbia based on the New Town planning movement, as well as the overall timeline for the development of Columbia. This information is included within the meeting presentation.

I. Understanding New Town Zoning

- The project team reviewed the materials available for the Task Force members to use/review to aid them in this effort.

J. Understanding New Town Zoning

- The project team reviewed New Town Zoning, included in Section 125.0 in the Howard County Zoning Regulations, and its associated plans for New Town Columbia, including the Preliminary Development Plan; Comprehensive Sketch Plans; Final Development Plans; and Site Development Plans.
- A task force member asked when covenants would be addressed in the process.

- The project team both noted that covenants in New Town Columbia are held between private entities and do not fall within the Task Force's scope of changes to Zoning Regulations.

K. Identity

- The project team began a conversation about identity, noting that a logo is not a brand; However, when we see an image (i.e., logo) it should conjure thoughts about the identity of a brand. Logos were shared to illustrate this with the last example being Columbia's sculpture.
- This discussion led to a group activity to identify what the Task Force wants the character of Columbia to be in the future. This will feed into the future activities to identify the Vision, by which all zoning recommendations will be measured against.
- The Task Force broke into three groups to discuss (with group output listed below):
 - Why do you live, work, play and/or learn in Columbia?
 - Group 1
 - Nature
 - Things to do
 - Community
 - Group 2
 - Environment
 - Activities
 - Sense of Community
 - Group 3
 - Education
 - Amenities/Lots of Green Space
 - What makes Columbia different than other places?
 - Group 1
 - Nature
 - Community
 - Diversity
 - Group 2

- Intentionality
- Environment
- Sense of Ownership
- Group 3
 - Street Names
 - Planned Communities
 - Diverse/Integration
 - Open Spaces / Lakes
- How do you think Columbia's identity could be made better or stronger?
 - Group 1
 - More things/events to bring people together
 - More Commerce
 - Group 2
 - Positive Community Discussion
 - Reinforcement of what Exists
 - Consistency of Enforcement
 - Group 3
 - Affordability
 - Ensuring growing "garden of people"

L. Homework for Next Meeting

- The project team explained the homework for the task force members to provide their vision statement for the next 50 years of Columbia.
- Homework assignments will be due on July 11th and will be discussed at the next Task Force meeting.

M. Wrap-Up

- The project team reviewed pending topics for discussion over the next few Task Force meetings and the overall schedule including homework being due on July 11. The next Task Force meeting will be held on July 22.

N. Open Comments

- The project team opened the discussion for comments from the Task Force:

- A comment was made about not discussing the covenants as part of the recommendations process. The project team noted that covenants are private contract agreements in place as another layer of regulation on top of the zoning regulations, and the County is not able to enforce or monitor these private contracts. Therefore, the project team noted that this effort would focus on the New Town district zoning regulations.
- Meeting notes were requested. The project team noted that meeting notes would be posted, but that they are welcome to take notes as well.
- Clarification was requested on what the task force is to look at specific to impacts within New Town Zoning, rather than the general community vision of Columbia.
- The project team was thanked for covering the amount of material in a short amount of time.

O. Closing

The project team adjourned the meeting and thanked the task force members for staying a few minutes beyond the scheduled meeting end time.