CITY OF WOBURN
WOBURN CITY COUNCIL
ORDINANCES, CHARTER & RULES COMMITTEE
COMMITTEE ROOM
WOBURN CITY HALL
MONDAY, APRIL 13, 2026 – 6:08 p.m.

Voting members present: Chair Joseph E. Demers, Councilor Robert Ferullo Jr., Councilor Lou DiMambro, and Councilor Charles Viola. Absent: Councilor Darlene A. Mercer-Bruen

Non-voting members present: President Robert F. Toro Jr., Councilor Yano Amara, and Councilor William J. Pappalardo. Absent: Councilor Jeffrey Dillon

Also present: Mayor Michael Concannon

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Reading and approval of previous meeting minutes: Motion made by Councilor Viola and seconded by Councilor DiMambro to waive the reading of and approve the minutes of the meeting of March 30, 2026; approved, 4-0-1.

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Pulte Homes of New England, LLC proposed zoning amendment to amend Section 28 Technology and Business Mixed Use Overlay District (TBOD) to the Technology and Business/Residential Mixed Use Overlay District (TBROD), as well as other amendments to Section 28: Representing the applicant were Attorney Joseph Tarby, Rubin Rudman, 500 Unicorn Park Drive, Woburn, MA; Mark Mastroianni, Vice President of Land Planning and Entitlements for Pulte Homes of New England LLC, 1900 West Park Drive, Suite 180, Westborough, MA; Essex Petrie, Senior Manager of Land Planning and Entitlements for Pulte Homes of New England LLC, 1900 West Park Drive, Suite 180, Westborough, MA; Matthew Leidner, P.E. Principal, Civil Design Group LLC, 21 High Street, Suite 305B, North Andover, MA; Robert Nagi, Traffic Consultant, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, 101 Walnut Street, Watertown, MA; Robert Dickey, Executive Vice President and Partner, Leggat McCall Properties, 10 Post Office Square, Boston, MA; and Sam Cole, Senior Vice President and Partner, Leggat McCall Properties, 10 Post Office Square, Boston, MA. Attorney Tarby said the public hearing resumes next Tuesday. He said the applicant has provided a memorandum regarding the status of the life sciences market. He said at the last committee meeting on March 30 the applicant provided a list of community benefits, which he reiterated as follows: 1.) New growth and real estate taxes; 2.) Provision of affordable housing; 3.) 70 percent of the affordable units to the extent permitted by state and local regulations can be purchased by eligible Woburn residents; 4.) Age restricted units will have a minimal impact on school population; 5.) Less traffic than the full build out; 6.) Less impact on water and sewer services, and; 7.) Increased household spending. He estimated captured spending will be $4 million per year to local businesses. He said the proposed project will provide revenue and a cushion for the city of Woburn for affordable housing. He said the applicant is proposing 504 units with a density of 15 units, which compares favorably with other recent residential housing developments. He said the applicant will agree to set aside 12 percent or 61 units as affordable housing. Motion made by Councilor Viola and seconded by Councilor

DiMambro to receive and make part of the permanent record a document from Attorney Tarby entitled "Exhibit A" of an amendment to the proposed Section 28 of the WZO; approved, 4-0-1. Attorney Tarby said the applicant's hope is to advance the proposed zoning change to the full City Council. Chair Demers said Councilor Dillon sent and email to the committee, which he read as follows: "Thank you Councilor Demers AKA Chair of (the) Committee on Ordinances, Charter and Rules for reading into the public record of my support for the petition by Pulte Homes of New England LLC proposed zoning amendment to amend Section 28 TBOD to the TBROD as well as other amendments to Section 28. I will still keep an open mind to any concerns or suggestions of my fellow City Council members. I will speak more on this when it is in front of the City Council in Chambers on April 21, 2026. Sincerely, Jeff Dillon, Ward 3 City Councilor." Motion made by Councilor Viola and seconded by Councilor DiMambro to receive the email from Councilor Dillon with the subject line "Committee meeting" and dated Monday, April 13, at 3:06:26 p.m. and make it part of the permanent record; approved, 4-0-1. Councilor DiMambro asked if the 61 units that are going to be classified as affordable will be open to any age or if that is still subject to the 55-and-older restriction. Attorney Tarby said the affordable units cannot be restricted to anyone under 18 but there is still a 55-plus requirement. Councilor DiMambro asked if school-aged children can live there. Mr. Mastroianni said the affordable units must be occupied by at least one person who is 55 or older but anyone else can be 18 or younger. He said in his experience, this type of development is not cohesive for families. He said they do not find there are a lot of children. He said the units will not be marketed to families with younger children. He said there will not be a lot of young children here, if there are any. Councilor DiMambro asked if there will be many young adult residents. Mr. Mastroianni said the smaller units are intended for empty nesters. He said they do have a lot of snowbirds. Councilor Viola asked if the affordable units will be 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom, or a mix. Mr. Mastroianni said the developer is required to provide a *pro rata* mix of 1 and 2-bedroom units that are affordable. Councilor Viola asked what happens if a snowbird sublets a unit. Mr. Mastroianni said the developer requires a lease of one year. He said they try to prevent short term rentals. Councilor DiMambro asked if a snowbird can have his college age son or daughter live there while the parents are in Florida for six months. Mr. Mastroianni said there always has to be an occupant. He said you can't let someone else live there. He said if that happens the owner would not be complying with the terms of the residency agreement. He said it is likely the neighbors will ask why the unit owner is not living there. He said the best enforcement comes from the community itself. Councilor DiMambro said he is glad to know there is a process for how these situations are dealt with. Mr. Mastroianni said there will be documentation. He said prospective buyers will have to sign off that they are aware this is an age restricted development. Motion made by Councilor Viola and seconded by Councilor Ferullo to suspend the City Council's rules to allow any member of the City Council not on the committee to address the zoning amendment; approved, 4-0-1. Councilor Pappalardo asked if there will be eight buildings. Mr. Mastroianni answered affirmatively. Councilor Pappalardo asked how quickly the buildings will get to full capacity. Mr. Mastroianni said these are ownership units with mortgage laws and rules. He said they would fill one building at a time and then start the next building. He said the phasing plan calls for two buildings to be under construction at a time. He said at least one building will be built per year. He said if the market stays strong they could build 1.5 buildings per year. He said there is a 7-8 year build out. Councilor Pappalardo asked if the $2.65 million annual tax revenue figure is accurate. Attorney Tarby said the original proposal calls for 504 units. He said with no affordable component the revenue is $3.98 million. He said with a 12 percent affordability

component the annual property tax revenue is reduced to $2.885 million, not including excise taxes. Councilor Pappalardo asked if is correct to say it will be eight years before the city receives the full $2.885 million in annual revenue. Mr. Mastroianni said at all times the revenue stream will be physically positive. Councilor Pappalardo said it is an illusion to say that the city is going to get $3 million in revenue right away. He said he is starting to get calls and emails about this zoning amendment. He said they see the number of units is 504 and it's alarming to them. He said he has explained to the neighbors that the council is only talking about zoning right now. He said he expects there will be a lot of pushback when the council gets to the special permit stage. He said traffic on Montvale Avenue can back up from I-93 to Wood Street during rush hour. He said the applicant is planning to add 504 units. He said traffic is going to get worse. Attorney Tarby said he travels Montvale Avenue several times a day. He said there is never a backup with traffic heading toward Woburn Center. Councilor Pappalardo said there is so much traffic he won't go out to get a pizza during rush hour. Attorney Tarby asked what the residents who are calling and emailing him would like to see. Councilor Pappalardo said they do not want to see anything. Mr. Mastroianni said hopefully the applicant can compare traffic for age restricted housing to what was previously approved. Councilor Pappalardo said that will be a hard sell to the people who live there. President Toro said he won't support 504 units. He said he is thinking about something in the 400s. He said the committee can't talk about the special permit, but it is tied to the zoning amendment. He said he would caution the council not to kick the can down the road to the special permit process by approving the zoning amendment. He said if the committee approves a zoning amendment that allows 504 units, the council is going to get 504 units. He said he has twice asked what the bottom line is for the number of units, but he hasn't gotten an answer. He said he does appreciate the increase to a 12 percent affordability component. He said he has heard from several people, some for; some against. He said 504 units is too dense. He said he is going to ask again what the developer's bottom line is. He said if the number is 504, he would like them to say that. He said he is not going to support 504 units. He said he thinks something can be done here. He said he would like to see the number of units in the 400s. Attorney Tarby said the proposed project is 15 units per acre, which is far less dense than some of the other residential developments that have been built recently. He said if the number of units is dropped from 504 to 475, then the number of affordable units drops, as well. He said the developer has tried to balance tax revenue and staying above the 10 percent affordable housing stock ratio that city has attained. Mr. Mastroianni said there is not a bottom line number. He said they are trying to balance the project so it is a win for the developer and the city. He said when they look at the 33-acre site, in their minds it can handle the density. He said the open space is like 30 percent, which he said is a lot more than the currently approved project. He said traffic is less and the impervious area is less. He said the footprint of site plan won't change and they are proposing a project with lesser impact. He said if the density is reduced, the taxes would be reduced. He said he knows that is very important. He said the committee has offered a lot of feedback. He said some members of the council have said they support 504 units. He said they are going to be mindful of all the comments. He said he thinks their proposal creates a balance. President Toro said the current City Council is vastly different than the one that approved the original proposal for the site. He said the City Council does not have to rubber stamp this. He asked Attorney Tarby about the process. He asked if the zoning amendment is sent ought to pass and it gets approved then the next step is an amendment to the development agreement. Attorney Tarby said the next step is to conduct a master plan concept and development agreement with all of mitigation that is required. He said the original proposal

involved a meeting with then-Mayor Scott Galvin, who was provided with the proposed agreement. He said former Mayor Galvin then met with the relevant department heads to compose a development agreement. He said an amended development agreement needs to be in place before the applicant proceeds with the special permit process. He said the applicant would send a working draft to the mayor and the mayor would negotiate as he sees fit. He said the mayor will get input from the department heads. He said if there is no development agreement and concept plan then the applicant can't move forward. President Toro said his fear is approving the TBROD and then a project with 504 units comes through, the council denies it and it gets overturned on appeal. He said he is trying to determine the context of the middle step of the development agreement. He asked if the project will die if the city doesn't work out a development agreement. Attorney Tarby said the City Council has to approve a master concept plan. He said if that doesn't happen, the applicant can't go forward. Councilor Viola said this is a critical time in the city's history with diminishing returns. He said budgets are increasing and the city needs to get as much revenue as possible. Councilor DiMambro asked what could be allowed by right on that property. Attorney Tarby said he is trying to remember what the underlying zoning district is. Councilor DiMambro asked if someone came in off the street, what could they propose. He said he would hate to see the Delaney project looking down on a factory. Attorney Tarby said he believes the underlying district is either IP or OP. Councilor DiMambro said he is trying to determine what could happen today. He said he would hate to see a nice development with industry down below. Attorney Tarby said there is no market whether the area is zoned for industrial or office park uses. Councilor DiMambro asked if a Costco or a 40B project could go there. Attorney Tarby said the parcel is not zoned for retail. He said the city is at the housing stock threshold for affordable housing which would preclude a Chapter 40B filing. Councilor DiMambro said the affordable housing thresholds could change. He said that is why he has a lot of concerns. He said he will have to speak to Commissioner Quinn. Chair Demers said he respects his colleagues' positions on this. He said he thinks every member of the council understands the tax shift concerns. He said this project provides the council with the ability to double down on an economic strategy that does not rely on the industries of old. He said the city has three great opportunities on New Boston Street, Commerce Way and downtown. He said those area provide opportunities for redevelopment. He said he, President Toro and Councilor Amara went to an MMA meeting with the primary focus on local aid. He said life sciences isn't coming back as quickly as municipal officials had hoped. He said this site was a calculated risk by Leggat McCall to go all in with a life sciences piece. He said the TBOD revolved around a major Boston hospital occupying the space, but when the state said the area will be oversaturated, that put the kibosh on the life sciences component. He said the applicant is offering an alternative with tax revenue and affordable housing, with less traffic. He said even with the naked eye it will be clear the city is going to have less traffic with a 55-plus component. He said he does understand there are cons. He said the way he looks at it, if the council doesn't want it to be residential, then why is there discussion about lowering the number of units and hurting the tax base. He said he appreciates his colleagues' arguments but he does not think this is a catastrophic move. He said he is asking his colleagues to keep that in their thoughts. Councilor DiMambro said he respects Chair Demers' point of view and he knows Chair Demers speaks with research behind him. He said he is more of a feel guy. He said as he drives around the city he notices there are a lot of commercial buildings that are empty. He asked why anyone would want to start a new building if there are vacancies available. He said he does not see any commercial petitioners in front of the City Council and he doesn't see anyone banging down the

door. He said real estate has been dormant for the past 3-4 years. He said he thinks there is an opportunity here. He said the city knows what it is getting. He said it seems like this project is shovel ready. Chair Demers asked what is the will of the committee. Councilor DiMambro said he would prefer to keep the matter in committee. He said he does not think the committee is there yet. Attorney Tarby said he is not sure what more the petitioner can add. Councilor DiMambro said they are missing a couple of councilors tonight and he wants to talk to Commissioner Quinn. Councilor Ferullo asked if the committee could send the matter back for action and if there is no consensus at the next City Council meeting the matter could be sent back to committee. Chair Demers said trying to amend a zoning amendment on the floor of the City Council can get very sloppy. Councilor Ferullo said statistically the reduction of the number of units isn't going to impact what the council is concerned about. He said if the council is going to reduce the number of units by 30-40, that's statistically irrelevant. He said there's not much a difference between 475 and 504 units. He said if the council starts talking about Councilor Mercer-Bruen's idea of 250 units, that's another discussion and it could last for a while. Attorney Tarby said he does not like finalizing special permit conditions on a zoning amendment on the floor, because once the public hearing closes, the applicant can't participate. He said he assumes the next committee meeting will be held on April 27. He said his client is willing to continue the public hearing until May 5. Councilor Ferullo asked if there is anything else the committee needs to hear from the petitioner. Councilor Viola said he does not see the council moving forward with 504 units. He said lowering the number of units by 30 or 40 is not going to have any impact on the traffic or infrastructure, and there will be a reduction in tax revenue. He said he is willing to send the matter back for action if the committee sees fit. Councilor Ferullo said he thinks this project will have the same impact as the development at the former New England Resins & Pigments site on New Boston Street. He said he thinks no one will know it's there. He said people are not going to see any impacts. Motion made by Councilor Viola and seconded by Councilor DiMambro to send the matter "back for action" at the City Council's meeting on April 21, 2026: Roll call – Councilor Viola, yea; Councilor DiMambro, yea; Councilor Mercer-Bruen, absent; Councilor Ferullo, yea; Chair Demers, yea; motion approved, 4-0-1.

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Motion made by Councilor Viola and seconded by Councilor DiMambro to adjourn; all in favor, 4-0-1. Chair Demers adjourned the meeting at 7:11 p.m.

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A TRUE RECORD ATTEST

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Gordon Vincent
Clerk of Committees