

Meeting Minutes

AIA Massachusetts – Government Affairs Committee (GAC)

Date: Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Location: Virtual (Zoom)

Topic: Housing Policy and Review of (5) High Priority Bills

Attendance: Approximately 43 registered; 35 present during meeting

Chair: Russ Feldman, AIA & Larry Spang, AIA

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chairs Russ Feldman and Larry Spang, who set the focus on housing policy and the five priority bills identified by the Housing Working Group for potential AIA MA comment and support.

2. Legislative & Regulatory Update

Presented by John Nunnari. Key points included:

- Increasing urgency on Beacon Hill as the Governor, House Speaker, and Senate President work to advance major housing, climate, and public-safety items before the mid-December recess.
- A \$2.3B supplemental budget enacted to offset federal shutdown impacts.
- Ongoing debate on zoning reform, shelter funding, health-care costs, library access, and transit worker protections.
- **BBRS Update:**
 - Advancing administrative transparency and creating a written process for issuing code interpretations.
 - Solar setback regulations remain under administrative review.
 - BBRS confirmed NFPA 72 (2019) is equivalent to NFPA 720 (2015) for carbon monoxide detection, resolving a longstanding conflict.
 - Continuing proposals include revising the high-rise definition and allowing single-stair multifamily buildings up to six stories.
- **BFPR (Fire Prevention) Update:**
 - Work underway on the 2026 MA Fire Code, with expected adoption mid-2026.
- **MAAB Update:**
 - Variance discussions included MIT's 233 Mass. Ave. project; Board emphasized full accessibility and scrutiny of hardship claims.

3. Website Navigation Update

Mr. Nunnari demonstrated AIA MA's updated ([homepage](#)) website features, including simplified access to meeting agendas, registration links, legislative/regulatory reports, and archived session videos.

4. Housing Policy Working Group – Review of Five Priority Bills

John presented the five bills prioritized by the Housing Working Group, followed by discussion.

- **HB 309 / SB 1021 – Expansion of Chapter 40R Incentives**
 - Doubles density bonus payments for municipalities.
 - Broad support from the Working Group; considered “easy to support.”
 - Discussion noted fiscal uncertainties but consensus that funding mechanisms are outside AIA's scope.
- **HB 1478 – Social Housing Revolving Loan Fund (\$100M)**

- Would establish a state-backed loan fund for mixed-income social housing.
 - Recognized as aspirational; Working Group supported concept due to its potential to expand tools for housing authorities and mission-driven development.
 - Acknowledgment that bonding authority may face fiscal or political hurdles.
- **HB 1515 / SB 988 – Permanent Supportive Housing & Shelter System Modernization**
 - Requires a statewide needs-assessment and 5-year plan, emphasizing modular construction, hotel conversions, and micro-units.
 - Members raised concerns about feasibility of a one-year study timeline and lack of funding, but supported advancing innovation in construction and design solutions for vulnerable populations.
- **HB 1516 – Multifamily Zoning / ADU & Cluster Development Reform (Chair Honan)**
 - Would require as-of-right multifamily zoning on at least 1.5% of developable land statewide.
 - Discussion focused on the bill's relationship to the new ADU law, potential redundancy, and municipal impacts.
 - Members emphasized need for regulatory simplification to enable more housing production and recognized higher likelihood of movement due to committee chair sponsorship.
- **SB 981 – Mandatory Land-Use Board Training Program**
 - Would require land-use board and commission members to complete state-created training within six months of appointment and every four years thereafter.
 - Mixed reactions: general support for baseline competency, but concerns over feasibility, mandate enforcement, and political viability.
 - Considered lowest priority of the five bills.

5. Additional Topic: Energy Bill Discussion

Members discussed Rep. Cusack's House-only poll on a sweeping energy bill. Key points:

- Proposal would convert the 2030 emissions target from a statutory mandate to an aspirational goal.
- Concerns raised about impacts on Mass Save incentives, electrification costs, and renewable generation timelines.
- Recognition that Senate is unlikely to adopt the House's approach, but members agreed it warrants monitoring given potential impacts on architectural practice.

6. Next Steps & Action Items

Mr. Nunnari to draft letters on the five priority bills, starting with those most likely to move:

1. H.309/S.1021 (40R incentives)
2. H.1515/S.988 (Supportive housing needs-assessment bill)

Draft letters to be circulated for comment.

Continue tracking the energy bill and provide update at the December GAC meeting.

7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at approximately 10:48 AM. Next meeting scheduled for **December 10, 2025**.