

Background Materials April 22, 2024– Planning Board Meeting

Prepared by Anne Capra, Director of Planning and Conservation, 4/19/24

Cable Access Channel 15 –The Cable Studio has indicated that this meeting will be live streamed on Channel 15.

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Background Reports for all Planning Board meetings are posted online:

<https://www.southhadley.org/1274/Agenda-Background-Materials>

AGENDA ITEM #1 Introduction of New Planning Board Member – Rob Watchilla

Welcome Rob! Rob Watchilla, AICP, has been a practicing Planner in Massachusetts since 2021 working previously as the Planning Director in Ware, and now as a Planner for the Town of Amherst. He has lived in South Hadley since 2022 and became a homeowner in the fall of 2023. Rob’s experience with planning includes code/zoning review, development/site plan analysis, several zoning amendments, and strong familiarity with Massachusetts Land Use Permitting. Rob is a forward-thinking individual who wants to help his community grow while preserving the unique parts of South Hadley that make it a great place to call home.

AGENDA ITEM #2 Open Comment Period

This 10-minute period is set aside for the public to offer comments on items not on the posted agenda, in accordance with the adopted policy, as amended 9/11/23, posted on the Town of South Hadley Planning and Conservation Department webpage here:

<https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/11705/Policy-on-Open-Comment-Period---As-Adopted-2023-09-11>

Action Needed: Allow members of the public to offer comments to the Board.

AGENDA ITEM #3 Minutes

Planning and Conservation Coordinator Colleen Canning will forward minutes separately.

Action Needed: Vote to approve the minutes.

AGENDA ITEM #4 Correspondence

Correspondence are attached.

Action Needed: No action needed.

AGENDA ITEM #5 Planning Board Reorganization

The start of the new terms for Board members requires Board reorganization and election of a Chair, Vice Chair and Clerk. Members shall motion and vote for each position. The reorganization shall take effect immediately.

Action Needed: The Board must elect a Chair, Vice Chair and Clerk.

AGENDA ITEM #6 Flexible Development Bylaw Amendment Public Listening Session

The Board invites the public to an open discussion on potential amendments to the Flexible Development Bylaw. The Board began discussion of these bylaw amendments in January and has developed a draft bylaw for initial public comment. Planning and Conservation Director Anne Capra will give a brief presentation regarding the amendments that are under discussion and open it up to questions and comments from the public. *This is not a public hearing and the Board has not proposed final amendments. This information is for discussion only.*

A draft amended bylaw inclusive of criteria under discussion is online here:

https://southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/12832/255-31-Flexible-Development-Bylaw---Proposed-Amendments_31124

<https://southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/12834/Flexible-Development-Bylaw---Proposed-Density-Changes---32524>

Additional supporting information online here: <https://southhadley.org/1318/ProposedDraft-Bylaws>

Action Needed: Conduct the listening session and take questions and comments from the public.

AGENDA ITEM #7

Planning & Conservation Department Report on Planning Projects and Development Updates

A. Climate Resilience Planning - Community Feedback Needed!

South Hadley is engaged in a new project to improve the community's resilience to the impacts of climate change by better understanding how people's lives are affected by extreme weather.

Community input can be provided in one of two ways:

1. Attend an upcoming community event and share your thoughts. Attendees will receive dinner and a \$10 gift card to Big Y!
 - **Thursday, April 25th 6-8pm – South Hadley Public Library, 2 Canal Street**
 - **Wednesday, May 15th 6-8pm – Council on Aging, 45 Dayton Street**
 - **Tuesday, June 4th 6-8pm – BATTERY BROOK PARK LOG CABIN, 123 WILLIMANSETT STREET**
2. An online survey was previously available online however it appears that AI bots have been responding to so we have closed the survey.

Where did this project come from?

Funding for our project is through an MVP 2.0 Grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. The Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program

provides support for cities and towns in Massachusetts to build resilience to climate change. In May 2020, the community identified the top climate vulnerabilities for South Hadley and developed an action plan for building resilience to these (MVP 1.0). Several projects have been completed and/or are underway to address the vulnerabilities identified. The MVP 2.0 program expands on the work of South Hadley to date and provides new methods, tools and resources for building climate resilience within South Hadley. In particular, MVP 2.0 focuses on updating community resilience priorities with a focus on social equity and translating these priorities into action through project development and implementation.

The social equity components of this project are focused on conducting outreach to members of the community that may be under represented in community planning projects for a number of reasons. Other target populations include people and families that may not have regular access to transportation, low income, families with young children, food and/or housing insecure, people with disabilities, and seniors that may also meet some of these other criteria.

Our community outreach will have three phases:

Phase I – Gather feedback from people about their top priorities related to how they are impacted by extreme weather.

Phase II – Share the community priorities and identify possible “seed projects” to address some impact of climate change.

Phase III – Share possible seed project concepts and identify final seed project to be implemented.

A Seed Project is a project selected by the Core Team that will advance the community’s resilience priorities, and that can be completed in 9-10 months. We received \$50,000 from the grant to complete a Seed Project.

B. Route 202/33 Corridor Rezoning Advisory Committee Appointed

The Town Administrator has appointed a five member advisory committee to work with the selected project consultant, Innes Associates, and the Director of Planning and Conservation to develop recommended new zoning and design guidelines for the corridor. A summary of the project and scope of work is online on the Planning Board webpage: <https://southhadley.org/1400/Route-202-33-Corridor-Re-Zoning>

Advisory members include: Dan Luis, Michael Beauchemin, Martha Terry, Ken LeBlanc, and Nate Therien.

C. Business A-1 Zoning Amendment -Town Meeting Warrant

Town Counsel has reviewed the Business A-1 Zoning Amendment and has determined that it meets the simple majority voting threshold as established under the amendments to MGL Chapter 40A Sec 5. She will be issuing a formal opinion to the Town Moderator.

"Next, 40A sec 5 provides in part a simple majority is allowed where:

- (1) an amendment to a zoning ordinance or by-law to allow any of the following as of right: (a) multifamily housing or mixed-use development in an eligible location;

(this seems like it would be an eligible location. "Eligible locations", areas that by virtue of their infrastructure, transportation access, existing underutilized facilities or location make highly suitable locations for residential or

mixed use smart growth zoning districts or starter home zoning districts, including without limitation: (i) areas near transit stations, including rapid transit, commuter rail and bus and ferry terminals; or (ii) areas of concentrated development, including town and city centers, other existing commercial districts in cities and towns and existing rural village districts.)"

Article # Change – Due to additions to the TM Warrant, this Article was changed from 25 to 27.
 Planning Board Report to Town Meeting online here:

<https://southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/12830/Article-27---Planning-Board-Report-to-Town-Meeting---Business-A-1-Zoning-Amendment>

D. Next Planning Board Meetings and Other Important Dates

Planning Board typically meets the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month.

5/6 – PB Mtg	6:30 Public Hearing – Short Term Rental - Non-owner Occupied - Special Permit, 112 River Road 7:00 Public Hearing – Short Term Rental - Owner Occupied - Site Plan Review, 5 Pine Street
5/8/24	Annual Town Meeting
5/20 – PB Mtg	
6/10/24 – PB Mtg	
6/24/24 – PB Mtg	
7/8/24 & 7/22/24	
8/12/24 & 8/26/24	
9/9/24 & 9/23/24	

E. FY25 Budget and Municipal Reorganization

The proposed FY25 budget as well as additional information on the proposed reorganization of several municipal departments can be found online here: <https://www.southhadley.org/679/Budget-Town-Meeting-Documents> This reorganization includes the proposed renaming of the Planning and Conservation Department to Planning and Community Development. The intent is to elevate the inclusion of other aspects of community planning including housing and economic development. There are not any proposed reductions or changes in programming, budget or services for conservation related community planning, Wetlands Protection Act and South Hadley Wetlands Bylaw administration or conservation area stewardship.

F. Arbor Day Celebration - Friday April 26th from 9:30-10:30 at the Hahn Warner Arboretum

AGENDA ITEM #7 Other New Business (topics which the Chair could not reasonably expect to be discussed/considered as of the date of this notice)

No additional business has been submitted to me as of the date of this notice.

**SOUTH HADLEY PLANNING BOARD
LIST OF CORRESPONDENCES
APRIL 22, 2024 MEETING**

Letters & Memos

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Legal Notices

Amherst

- Notice from Amherst Planning Board for a public hearing on May 1 to consider a Site Plan filed by the Emily Dickinson Museum for a 2-story building and related site work at 81 Lessey Street.
- Notice from the Amherst Zoning Board of Appeals for a public hearing on April 11 to consider a Special Permit modification to change the occupancy status of a dwelling at 50 McClellan Street.
- Notice from the Amherst Zoning Board of Appeals for a public hearing on April 25 to consider a Special Permit to allow construction of a single-family home on a flag lot at 386A Shays St.
- Notice from the Amherst Zoning Board of Appeals for approving the following: 1) Special Permit for an Accessory Dwelling Unit over 50% of the principal structure at 10 Paige Street; 2) Special Permit for an Accessory Dwelling Unit over 50% of the principal structure on Wildflower Drive; and 3) Special Permit to construct structures in the Flood Prone Zone for boardwalks at the former Hickory Ridge Golf Course, 191 West Pomeroy Lane.

Chicopee

- Notice from the Chicopee Planning Board for the following public hearings on May 2 to consider the following: 1) Liquor License Alteration to allow for the addition of a patio at Falls Pizza, 185 Grove St; 2) Site Plan for a metal building and site improvements at 41 Robbins Road; and 3) Zone Change from Residential A and Business B to Residential B with Mill Conversion and Commercial Center Overlay District for the entire property at 0 and 455 Chicopee Street to have consist zoning.

Granby

- Notice from the Granby Zoning Board of Appeals and Planning Board for a joint public hearing on April 29 to consider a Special Permit for a private garage or stable at 70 Chicopee Street.

Hadley

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Holyoke

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