

Background Materials January 13, 2025– Planning Board Meeting

Prepared by Anne Capra, Director of Planning and Conservation, 1/10/25

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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 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 #2 Minutes

Planning and Conservation Coordinator Colleen Canning will forward minutes separately.

Action Needed: Vote to approve the minutes.

AGENDA ITEM #3 Correspondence

Correspondence are attached.

Action Needed: No action needed.

AGENDA ITEM #4 Village Commons ANR

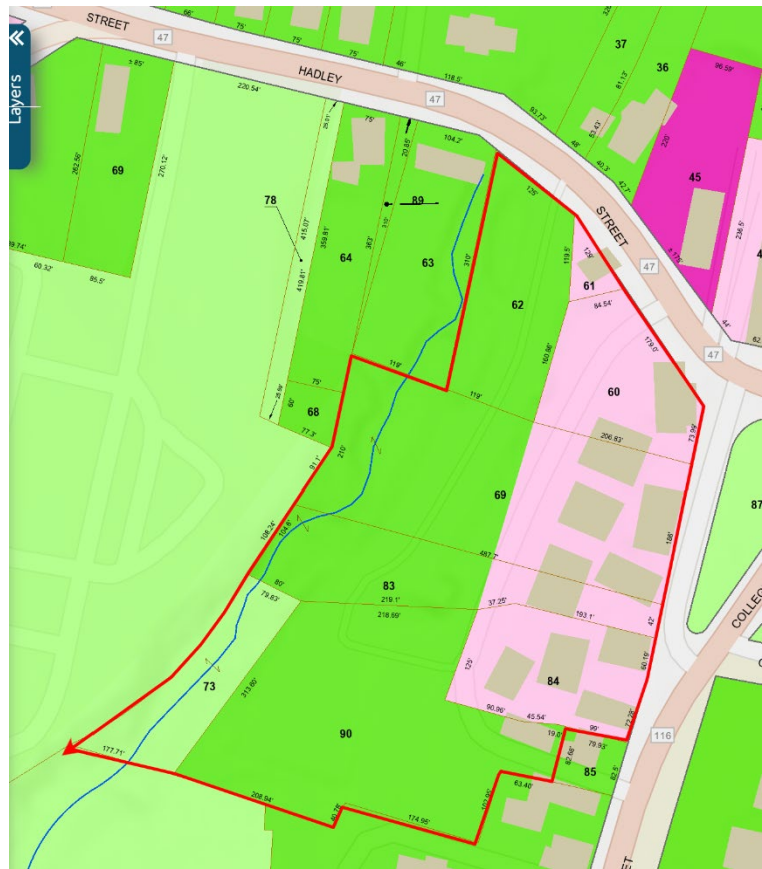
Plans are online here: <https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/13617/Village-Commons-2024-12-10-ANR-Plan---Final-For-submission-2024-12-03?bidId=>

The Center Redevelopment Corporation, owner of The Village Commons, is seeking endorsement of the ANR plan that combines all eight (8) of their parcels that comprise this mixed use development into one (1) parcel. The standards for ANR endorsement are as follows:

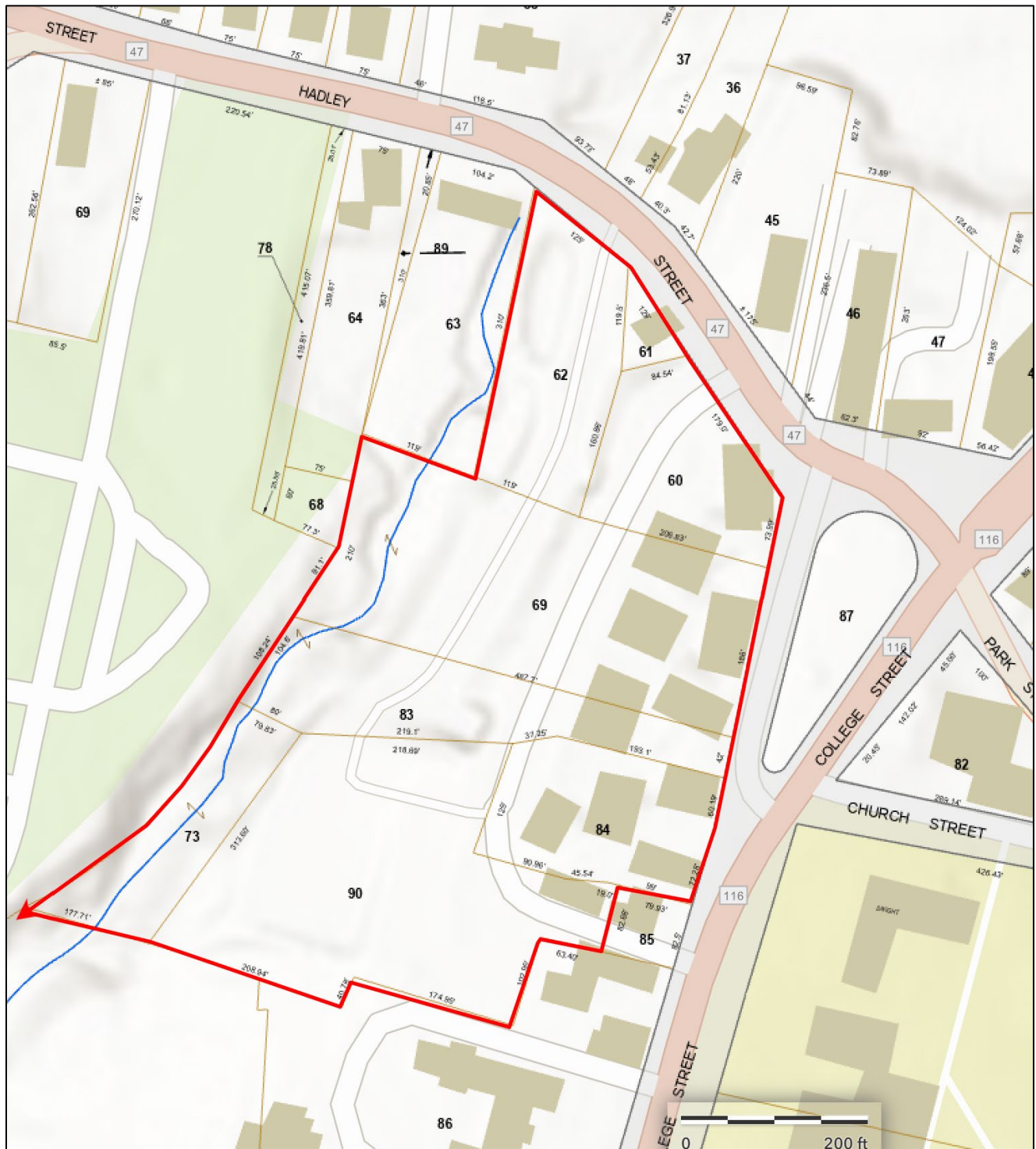
1. **Type of Way:** Both College Street and Hadley Street (State Route 47) are public ways maintained by the Town. Therefore, this standard is met.

2. Minimum frontage requirements for zoning district: The zoning on the property is currently mixed (RA1, RA2, and BA), however, road frontage only exists in the RA2 and BA districts. Minimum frontage requirements for RA2 is 100'; the combined parcel will retain 125' of frontage in RA2. Minimum frontage in BA is 75'; the combined parcel will retain 688.94' of frontage in BA. Therefore, this standard is met.

3. Vital access: The combined has frontage will not alter access to the site from Hadley Street or College Street, two publicly owned and maintained roadways. The existing driveways on College Street and Hadley Street will remain. Therefore, this standard is met.



Map	Parcel	Address	Book	Page	Zoning
47	73	Hadley Street	06331	0109	Residence A-1
49	60	7 College Street	03451	0245	Business A
49	61	6 Hadley Street	12303	0041	Business A
49	62	Hadley Street	02728	0142	Residence A-2
49	69	9-17 College Street	02728	0142	Mix: Residence A-2 & Business A
49	83	19 College Street	02728	0142	Mix: Residence A-2 & Business A
49	84	21-29 College Street	02728	0142	Business A
49	90	27 College Street	03100	0091	Residence A-2



Action Needed: The Board must either endorse the plan or file a notice of denial with the Town Clerk. If the Board votes to endorse the ANR Plan, *because we are meeting in person, each Board member will sign the ANR plan (2 hard copies, 2 mylar copies).*

AGENDA ITEM #5 40 Highland Ave and 132 Lathrop Street ANR

Plans are online here: <https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/13618/40-Highland---132-Lathrop---2024-12-30?bidId=>

Andrew Sulek (40 Highland Ave) and Krystena Sulek (132 Lathrop Street) have submitted an ANR plan to shift the boundary line between the two parcels, as indicated on the submitted plan, increasing the parcel size and frontage of 40 Highland Ave (Lot A), and decreasing the parcel size of 132 Lathrop Street (Lot B). This alteration is identified as Parcel 1 on the plan, consisting of 29' of frontage on Highland Ave and 3,326 SF.

Parcel	Address	ANR Lot	New Frontage	New Area
19-95	40 Highland Ave	Lot A	110' + 29' (Parcel 1) = 139'	21,682 SF
19-26	132 Lathrop Street	Lot B	198' (unchanged)	24,701 SF

The standards for ANR endorsement are as follows:

1. **Type of Way:** Both Highland Ave and Lathrop Street are public ways maintained by the Town. Therefore, this standard is met.
2. **Minimum frontage requirements for zoning district:** Both parcels are within the RA2 zoning district with a minimum frontage requirement of 100. Both parcels will exceed the minimum frontage requirements. Therefore, this standard is met.
3. **Vital access:** Both parcels are on public ways maintained by the Town with existing single-family residential homes and driveways. Therefore, this standard is met.



Action Needed: The Board must either endorse the plan or file a notice of denial with the Town Clerk. If the Board votes to endorse the ANR Plan, because we are meeting in person, each Board member will sign the ANR plan (2 hard copies, 2 mylar copies).

AGENDA ITEM #6 Business A-1 Design Guidelines

A proposal from Innes Associates, the consultant developing the design guidelines for the Routes 202/33 corridor, has been received. Because the Business A-1 parcels that the new design guidelines will affect are on Route 202, it may be the most efficient and comprehensive approach provide a contract amendment and have them develop the design guidelines. As part of their process for development of design guidelines for both the Route 202/33 corridor and Bus A-1, they will also review and evaluate the design guidelines for the two 40R Smart Growth Districts (Falls and Newton Street) to see if one set of comprehensive design guidelines can be created for all of these areas. The cost is

\$9,950 and would be covered by the Planning and Conservation Department budget, which had allocated funding for FY25 for such services.

I also met with the Tree Committee on 12/19/24 and invited them to provide input for landscaping guidelines, and specifically a recommending planting list. The existing Subdivision Regulations Appendix 3 is a list of recommended “Lawn Trees and Plantings”. This list is very outdated and includes non-native and invasive species. They have formed a subcommittee to work on this and have agreed to submit something for the Board’s review by March. I know members of this group are also very interested in ecological landscaping and expect their recommendations for landscaping standards will go beyond a tree and shrub list, which would be great.

Action Needed: The Board should vote as to whether or not to recommend the Town enter into contract with Innes Associates for development of design guidelines for the Business A-1 zoning district, per the scope of work and costs outlined in their proposal dated 12/9/2024.

AGENDA ITEM #6 Discussion of Subdivision Regulations

In July 2023, the Planning Board began working on updates to the 1995 Subdivision Regulations. The updates to these regulations were being undertaken as part of a comprehensive revision that included coordinated review and amendment of the Flexible Development Bylaw. Subdivisions are allowed by right and have no requirements for the protection of open space, natural, scenic or historic resources on the site (local, state and federal laws and regulations do apply). Flexible Developments do require open space and natural/scenic/historic resource protections but are permitted through discretionary Special Permits. The intended approach was to reverse this and allow for the preferred development scheme (clustered housing with open space conservation) to be permitted by right with Site Plan Review to incentivize its use and thereby discourage the less desirable form of residential development in the form of standard subdivisions. However, Town Meeting didn’t support this strategy and the amendments to the Flexible Development Bylaw, and associated supporting bylaws, were not adopted.

In updating the Subdivision Regulations, the approach should continue to be to address shortcomings identified in the Subdivision Regulations through recent project permitting and strengthen review standards with up-to-date design standards and best practices.

A revised package of Articles I thru XII was sent to Board members on 12/6/2024. The revised package includes the following changes:

- Article VIII Submission and Approval of Plans for More Than One Building for Dwelling Purposes Per Lot has been added. This is Article VI in the current Town of South Hadley Subdivision Regulations.
- Articles VIII thru XII have been renumbered to accommodate the insertion of Article noted above.
- Article XI Required Improvements for Subdivisions has been expanded to include “and Developments for More than One Building for Dwelling Purposes per Lot”

Status of Proposed Regulations Review by Article

In past meetings, the Board completed review of the following:

- Articles I thru VI, and Article VII, 360-26 and 360-27

- Article IX Design Principles and Standards (*renumbered as Article X*)
- Article X Required Improvements for Subdivisions (*renumbered as Article XI*)

****Meeting dates below are linked to the recording of that meeting; posted minutes link below date.**

Meeting Date	Topic
July 24, 2023 Minutes	Introductory presentation
September 11, 2023 Minutes	Article IX Design Principles and Standards
September 25, 2023 Minutes	Article IX Design Principles and Standards
October 2, 2023 Minutes	Article IX Design Principles and Standards
November 27, 2023 Minutes	Article X Required Improvements for Subdivisions
December 4, 2023 Minutes	Article I Authority and Purpose Article II General Article III Definitions Article IV Pre-submission Review Article V Plan Believed Not to Require Approval (ANR Plans) Article VI Preliminary Plans
December 18, 2023 Minutes	Article VII Definitive Plan (360-26 General, 360-27 Submission)

At the 12/18/24 meeting, the Board decided to table review of the regulations to begin work on the Flexible Development Bylaw and associated bylaws. After addressing incorporation of “multiple buildings for dwelling purposes on one lot” back into the regulations, we should resume review with Article VII Definitive Plan.

AGENDA ITEM #6 Planning & Conservation Department Report on Planning Projects and Development Updates

A. Next Planning Board Meetings and Other Important Dates

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

1/14/25	Dry Brook Aquifer Study Presentation – Hybrid/COA – 6pm
1/16/25	Route 202/33 Corridor Rezoning Community Forum #4 – in person/Library – 6pm
1/27/25	
2/10/25	6:30pm - Special Permit for Expansion Preexisting Nonconforming Structure – 11 Brockway Lane

	7:00pm - Special Permit for Expansion Preexisting Nonconforming Structure – 3 Roundelay Road
2/24/25	
March – 3/10 & 3/24/25	
April – 4/14 & 4/28/25	
May – 5/5 & 5/19	
June – 6/9 & 6/23	

B. Route 202/33 Corridor Rezoning Project

Project website: <https://community.innesassocltd.com/south-hadley>

[Route 202 & 33 Corridor Re-Zoning | South Hadley, MA - Official Website](#)

Next Forum #4– Thursday, January 16th at 6-8 PM
South Hadley Public Library – in person

Agenda – Presentation of draft zoning recommendations and design guidelines for discussion.

C. Planning Board 2025 Priorities

The following items are on the docket for FY25:

Item	Comments
Business A-1 Design Guidelines	Due by June 1, 2025; Moratorium on permitting under the amendment expires 6/1/25
ADU Bylaw Amendments	Amendments required for compliance with the Affordable Homes Act (Chapter 150 of the Acts of 2024). Changes to MGL c40A go into effect 2/2/25. EOHLC is currently developing regulations for the implementation of the Act and anticipates issuing them by that date. I recommend we take up compliance amendments after the regulations are promulgated so we know what the requirements are.
Route 202/33 Corridor Zoning Bylaw Amendments and Design Guidelines	The project schedule has the Advisory Committee sending these to the Planning Board in February/March for review and discussion, finalizing a draft, public hearing, and then to Town Meeting for May 2025. I’m not sure this timeframe is feasible at this point. Fall Town Meeting seems more realistic.

Sign Bylaw Amendments	255-85 is in conflict with a 2014 Supreme Court decision (Reed v. Town of Gilbert) which addresses neutral content of signs. Planning Consultant Richard Harris has prepared a detailed review and recommendations. The Board needs to identify when they want to take this up.
Agricultural Uses in Zoning Bylaw Amendments	Agricultural uses within the zoning and general bylaws, as well as Board of Health regulations, are in conflict. Planning Consultant Richard Harris has prepared a detailed review and recommendations. The Board needs to identify when they want to take this up.
Water Supply Protection Bylaws	PVPC prepared a review of zoning and general bylaws in regards to water supply protection in 2021 (issued January 2022). The Advisory Committee decided to wait action on any items until the Dry Brook Aquifer isotopic study was completed. I will reconvene the Advisory Committee after the aquifer study presentation on 1/14/25 and report back. The Planning Board Chair was the rep to this group, but this could be assigned to another member.

D. Dry Brook Aquifer Study: UMASS has completed an isotopic tracer study of the aquifer, online:

[Geochemical-and-Environmental-Tracer-Study-of-Dry-Brook-Hill-Aquifer-South-Hadley-MA](#)

A presentation about the study will be held January 14, 2025 at 6pm at the Council on Aging and in hybrid format.

E. MVP 2.0 Seed Project - Affordable Housing Trust: The Town has received 4 applications for Trust board members. Recommendations for appointments will be made to the Selectboard.

F. Lauzier Farm APR Complete: The Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) for 205 acres of farmland at the Lauzier Farm on Alvord Street has been finalized with the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources and recorded at the Hampshire Registry of Deeds. The Town in partnership with Kestrel Land Trust raised the required \$190,000 match. \$40,000 of that came from the Conservation Commission’s Land Fund which is supported through a \$10,000 budget appropriation each year. The protected farmland will be sold to the Barstow Family who will grow feed crops for their dairy farm operation based on Hadley. The total acquisition cost of the APR was \$1.9 million. [Lauzier-Farm-Protected-Forever---Press-Release-12202024](#)

G. Falls Facade Improvement Grants Complete: Three small business owners in South Hadley Falls have completed facade improvements with ARPA funded grants: Ebenezer’s Bar and Grill, 60 Bridge Street, installed a new sign (\$5,000); Ty’s Body Shop, 3 Main Street, installed new storefront windows and a sign (\$5,100); and, Green Collar, 48 Lamb Street, installed new storefront windows (\$5,000) These grant awards were only a portion of cost of the total facade improvements each business invested in.

H. Frank DeToma South Hadley Falls Redevelopment Fund: The Redevelopment Authority has officially established this fund in honor of Frank’s vision for redevelopment, beautification and community engagement in

the Falls. Projects to be supported by the Fund may include property acquisition and/or redevelopment, creation of housing, business growth and development, and public parks and recreation facilities. To make a donation: [Frank DeToma South Hadley Falls Memorial Fund | South Hadley, MA - Official Website](#)

I. MVP Action Grant: The Town is receiving 50% of the \$1,283,063 award for the construction of the Pearl Street at Elmer Brook Culvert Replacement. Bids will be due in January.

**SOUTH HADLEY PLANNING BOARD
LIST OF CORRESPONDENCES
JANUARY 13, 2025 REGULAR MEETING**

Letters and Memos

-

Legal Notices

Amherst

-

Chicopee

- Notice from the Chicopee Planning Board for public hearings on January 2 to consider the following: 1) zone change from Residential A to Industrial for 7.5 acres on Burnett Road to eliminate split zoning, and 2) waiver of frontage to create a two-family building lot on Greenwich Street.
- Notice of decision from the Chicopee Planning Board for the following: 1) waiver of frontage to create a single-family building lot from 1601 Westover Road; and 2) approval of a definitive subdivision plan to extend Better Way into city property and create a 3-lot subdivision.

Granby

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Hadley

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Holyoke

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