

Background Materials – April 28, 2025 – Planning Board Meeting

Prepared by Anne Capra, Director of Planning and Conservation, 4/25/25

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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 Appointment of PVPC Representative and Alternate

New representatives to the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission for Commissioner and Alternate need to be made. I am checking on the length of the term.

Action Needed: Appoint a PVPC Commissioner and Alternate Commissioner.

6:30 PM Public Hearing Continuation

AGENDA ITEM #5 MHC Energy Center Site Plan Review, 9 Woodbridge Street

Project plans online: <https://www.southhadley.org/1476/Woodbridge-Street-9---MHC-Energy-Center>

New Submittals

Stormwater Operation and Maintenance Plan:

<https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14051/MHC-Energy-Center---Stormwater-Operation-and-Maintenance-Plan-April-2025>

Acoustics Report: <https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14050/MHC-Energy-Center---Acoustics-Report---4232025>

See the attached updated background report. The purpose of the public hearing continuation was to allow the Board time to review the late submittals for the 4/14/25 meeting. The applicant has also submitted an updated Acoustics Report and a Stormwater Operation and Maintenance Plan (construction and post-construction).

Action Needed: The Board should continue the public hearing, discuss any questions or comments with the applicant, allow public comment, and vote on issuance of Site Plan Approval.

Recommended Motion: Move to grant Site Plan Approval for the Mount Holyoke College Energy Center project located at 9 Woodbridge Street.

AGENDA ITEM #6 Discussion Village District Zoning Bylaw Amendment Report to Town Meeting

Draft Report to Town Meeting online here:

<https://southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14054/Village-District-Zoning-Bylaw-Report-to-Town-Meeting---Draft-42525>

The Board should review the report, offer any edits, and then vote to approve the report.

Action Needed: The Board should discuss any comments on the draft report, recommend any changes needed, and vote on acceptance of the Report so that it may be issued to the public and Town Meeting.

Recommended Motion: I move to approve the Village District Zoning Bylaw Report to Town Meeting.

AGENDA ITEM #7 Discussion Old Lyman Road Zoning Map Amendment Report to Town Meeting

Draft Report to Town Meeting online here:

<https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14056/Old-Lyman-Road-Zoning-Map-Amendment-Report-to-Town-Meeting---Draft-42525>

The Board should review the report, offer any edits, and then vote to approve the report.

Action Needed: The Board should discuss any comments on the draft report, recommend any changes needed, and vote on acceptance of the Report so that it may be issued to the public and Town Meeting.

Recommended Motion: I move to approve the Old Lyman Road Zoning Map Amendment Report to Town Meeting.

AGENDA ITEM #8 Skinnerwoods Stormwater Performance Guarantee Release Request

Materials online here: <https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14057/Stormwater-Performance-Guarantee-Release-Request-Materials---42525>

The developer of the Skinner Woods condominium development has requested a partial release of their Stormwater Management Performance Guarantee. Condition #9 of the Special Permit and Stormwater Management Permit issued on 12/16/19, as recorded in the Hampshire County of Deeds in Book 13891, Page 18, pertains to the Performance Guarantee held by the Town. The Guarantee is in the form of an Irrevocable Standby Letter of Credit issued by Alden Credit Union on 6/29/2021 in the amount of \$270,910. Of that amount, \$182,550 is a Stormwater Management Guarantee, and \$88,360 is a Landscaping Guarantee. The guarantee is for the entire construction cost of the stormwater system inclusive of construction of the roadway. Per Condition #9(c), the guarantee shall not be released until Certificates of Occupancy (CO) have been issued for 75% of the dwellings, or 8 out of 10.

The Building Commission certifies that COs have been issued for 8 units, and building permits for the last two units (units 1 and 2) have been issued. I performed a site visit on 4/14/25 with Tom and Leah Spring to review the condition of the property and the stormwater system. My observations were as follows:

- Base layer of pavement was installed; topcoat paving not installed.
- No sediment was observed in the detention basin; no erosion in the detention basin or its inlet or outlet.
- Minor sediment and debris observed in catchbasin (StormBasin?).
- Manhole cover partially covered by mulch and landscaped bed.

Landscape Plan:

- Area to be restored as meadow along east side of property had been rototilled in the Fall but not seeded. Chopped up turf visible.
- 30 evergreen tree species planted along the north boundary line; 11 of those trees dead (planted late Fall and did not survive the winter).

Documents related to the request are as follows:

- As-built Survey, Durkee, White, Towne, and Chapdelaine Civil Engineers and Land Surveyors, 6/23/2022
- Stormwater Operation and Maintenance Logs – I have asked for clarification on the catchbasin versus the StormBasin. No maintenance has been performed on the StormBasin.
- Topcoat asphalt quote from Kent Brothers Excavating \$18,000 (1 ½" thick) – Cost estimate approved by DPW Director John Broderick. He states that the existing stormwater rims are set for 1 ½" topcoat, and he is aware they are contracting with Ondrick for the paving and he has spoken with the foreman.
- Photos of partially installed landscaping along north property line.
- Photos of area to be restored as meadow in protected open space.



Recommendation: At this time, the applicant has met the 8-unit CO threshold for a partial release of the Stormwater Performance Guarantee. Based on the paving estimate in the amount of \$18,000, I recommend retaining \$18,000 + 20% (\$3,600) for a total of \$21,600, and issuing a partial release in the amount of \$160,950. No release of the Landscaping Guarantee should be made. However I recommend continuing this discussion to the next meeting after submittal of updated maintenance logs have been submitted and appropriate identification of structures indicated.

Action Needed: The Board should review the materials and vote as to whether or not to make a partial release the Performance Guarantee.

AGENDA ITEM #9

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.

5/5/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business A-1 Design Guidelines & Route 202/33 Corridor Design Guidelines Discussion – Innes Associates & Route 202/33 Rezoning Advisory Committee • Anthony’s Dance Club Special Permit - Public Hearing continuation • Home Occupation II SPR Public Hearing – 81 East Street, Home Bakery
5/14/25	Annual Town Meeting
5/19/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business A-1 Design Guidelines Public Hearing (w/ Innes Associates)
6/1/2025	Business A-1 Mixed Use Permitting Moratorium Expires - Design Guidelines Adoption Due
June – 6/9 <i>Nate absent 6/9</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed Use Development Special Permit Public Hearing – 36 Bridge Street • Finalize Business A-1 Design Guidelines – Board vote to adopt
June – 6/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural Uses Amendment Discussion • Sign Bylaw Amendment Discussion
July – 7/14 & 7/28	Subdivision Regulations Public Hearing
August – 8/11 & 8/25	Sign Bylaw Amendment Public Hearing Agricultural Uses Amendment Public Hearing
September	Route 202/33 Zoning Public Hearing (Special November Town Meeting Warrant)

AGENDA ITEM #10 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.

**Mount Holyoke College Energy Center
9 Woodbridge Street
Site Plan Review Application – April 25, 2025 – Updated Project Background**

Application materials are online here: <https://www.southhadley.org/1476/Woodbridge-Street-9---MHC-Energy-Center>

New Submittals

Stormwater Operation and Maintenance Plan:

<https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14051/MHC-Energy-Center---Stormwater-Operation-and-Maintenance-Plan-April-2025>

Acoustics Report: <https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14050/MHC-Energy-Center---Acoustics-Report---4232025>

The purpose of the public hearing continuation was to allow the Board time to review the late submittals for the 4/14/25 meeting. The applicant has also submitted an updated Acoustics Report and a Stormwater Operation and Maintenance Plan (construction and post-construction) in response to questions and comments at the 4/14/25 hearing.

Project Summary

Mount Holyoke College initiated a large-scale geothermal construction project in 2023 as part of their effort to meet their carbon neutrality goals by 2037. Learn more about the campus wide project here: <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/geothermal-project> This application for Site Plan Review pertains to the construction of a new 6,158 sq.ft. energy center building which will eventually be the mechanical heart of the geothermal heating and cooling system. The existing heating plant and steam distribution is being phased out over time as new heat pump equipment becomes available. The goal for the existing heating plant is to replace the natural gas steam boilers with the equipment being installed in the Energy Center (EC) building. New natural gas condensing hot water boilers are planned to be installed in the heating plant in a phased manner aligned with the decommissioning of the existing steam boilers. The new hot water boilers will be used to supplement the heat pump equipment in the EC during the campus peak demand. These will also be used as redundant equipment should the EC come offline during a power outage or other emergency type events.

The subject property is 0.57 acres located at 9 Woodbridge Street (Assessor's Map 49, Parcel 53), at the corner of Dunlap Place on the Mount Holyoke College Campus. The site is within the Residence B zoning district and is currently a parking lot with approximately 40 spaces and a small shed. The site was previously a gas station and bike shop that was demolished in 1997.

Exempt Project under MGL C40A, Sec. 3 (a.k.a. Dover Amendment)

Construction of the energy center is exempt under MGL C.40A sec 3 because it is part of the educational institution's campus facility, but it is subject to reasonable regulations concerning the ***bulk and height of structures and determining yard sizes, lot area, setbacks, open space, parking and building coverage requirements.*** Per the South Hadley Zoning Use Regulations Schedule, development of noneducational use facilities in the Res B district are subject to site plan review, consistent with the Dover Amendment.

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/Chapter40a/Section3>

“No zoning ordinance or by-law shall regulate or restrict the interior area of a single family residential building nor shall any such ordinance or by-law prohibit, regulate or restrict the use of land or structures for religious purposes or for educational purposes on land owned or leased by the commonwealth or any of its agencies, subdivisions or bodies politic or by a religious sect or denomination, or by a nonprofit educational corporation; provided, however, that such land or structures may be subject to reasonable regulations concerning the bulk and height of structures and determining yard sizes, lot area, setbacks, open space, parking and building coverage requirements.”

Thus, the Board has no jurisdiction to regulate the aesthetic appearance of the building including such things as siding material and color, placement and size of windows, whether the building is of similar architectural style as neighboring buildings. Other concerns such as acoustics and the sound of equipment in and on the building are also outside of the jurisdiction of the Planning Board to regulate under zoning. See further discussion of this below.



Plan Review Criteria

Dimensional Standards (Bulk and height of structures, yard size, lot area, setbacks, open space, and building coverage)

See revised plans dated 4/14/25, [Sheet EC-200](#)

For corner parcels, the front yard setback applies to both streets. The site plan has been revised, shifting the building back from Woodbridge Street to meet the 15' front setback requirements on both Woodbridge and Dunlop. The proposed side yard setback is 15' and rear yard setback is 20'. Max. impervious coverage is at 41.8% and max. building coverage is at 21.8%. There are no open space requirements for the Residence B zoning. *Therefore, the plans as revised meet the required dimensional standards.*

Dimensional Standard	Residence B	Energy Center Project
Min. Lot Size	7,500 SF	24,720 SF
Min. Lot Frontage	75'	124.97
Max. Building Coverage (Principal & Accessory)	40%	21.8%
Max. Impervious Coverage	70%	41.8%
Min. Front Yard Setback	15'	15' (Woodbridge and Dunlop)
Min. Side Yard Setback	10'	>10"
Min. Rear Yard Setback	20'	>20'
Max. Height	3 stories/45'	2 stories plus penthouse and acoustic screen (37'3")

Parking

Off street parking standards per 255-85 for industrial uses are 1 parking space per 1,000 sq.ft. of enclosed building space. The proposed building is 6,158 SF which results in 6.2 required spaces. The site plan includes 7 parking spaces on the parcel and 5 more immediately adjacent to the parcel on Dunlap Place, which is part of the redevelopment of the entire parcel. *This standard is met.*

All standards for Site Plan Review for projects exempt under MGL c40A sec3 have been met. Therefore, it is recommended that the Board grant Site Plan Approval.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Stormwater Management

The applicant has submitted a Stormwater Construction and Post-Construction Operation and Management Plan. See sheets SD-1 & 2 in the Site Plan Review Narrative, and sheet EC-C400 in the plan set. The proposed system includes four yard drains around the vegetated lawn areas piped into a system connected to a hydrodynamic separator located in the southeast corner of the parking area, which also captures roof water runoff. The complete system drains to a stormwater system on Dunlap Place. Per the plan calculations for area DA-1, there is total reduction of impervious coverage from existing conditions of 0.472 acres to 0.343 acres, and an increase in pervious area from 0.356 acres to 0.485 acres. Note, these calculations also include a portion of the adjacent Dunlap Place and the reduction of parking spaces there from 10 to 5.

The system is designed to only handle the 10-year storm event and the first 0.5" of runoff, and appears to be a conveyance system only offering no onsite retention, detention or infiltration.

BOH below requested groundwater elevation data and specifications on hydrodynamic separator. The applicant provided a geotechnical report and this response:

A summary of the groundwater conditions is available in the [Geotechnical Report](#) Section 3.4. A submittal with model number for the hydrodynamic separator can be provided after bidding once a manufacturer is selected. The hydrodynamic separator will be designed to meet the criteria in detail 5/EC-C701.

Stormwater management on the site demonstrates an improvement over existing conditions.

Lighting – Building exterior and site

A photometric plan has been provided in Appendix C of the Site Plan Review Narrative. Five pole mounted lights (P) are placed around the edge of the driveway and parking lot and are indicated as dark sky compliant with little to no overcast beyond Dunlap Place and the property boundary. Exterior wall packs on the building (K and J) appear to cast downward lighting along the building at walkways and doorways.

Sound Attenuation – Roof mounted heat pumps, backup pad mounted generators, building interior mechanical operations

The applicant has submitted an [Acoustics Report](#). Regulating sound attenuation is outside of the Planning Board's jurisdiction under zoning for projects exempt under MGL c40A sec 3. The system on the roof does have a relationship to bulk and height but is limited to that, and the total height of the building with the penthouse and sound screening is under the 45' max height for buildings in the Residence B district. The Town does have the ability to regulate excessive noise per General Bylaw Chapter 179 Nuisances, sec 179-2 Noise. Town Administration did seek an amendment to this bylaw at Annual Town Meeting in May 2024 to set a limit of an increase of 10 decibels from a site as a maximum above ambient, but it was not passed by Town Meeting so that standard is not applicable.

Department Comments

A site visit was held on 4/9/25 and attended by the DPW Director, Conservation Administrator, Public Health Director, SHEL, Fire District 2, Planning Director, Mount Holyoke College Operations and Geothermal Project Management, and the project architect, engineers, and construction supervisor. Additional departmental comments are as follows:

Board of Health - Sharon Hart, Public Health Director – A Demolition Permit from the BOH is required. Dust control in the form of lime or water required for construction phase. BOH would like ground boring data regarding groundwater elevation/depth to groundwater pertaining to the stormwater management system design. Requesting hydrodynamic separator model # and profile diagram.

DPW – John Broderick, DPW Director –

- public way proposed path of new utility installs are the least impactful to vehicular and pedestrian travel disruptions.
- public shade trees on the Upper Common will be evaluated and may need to be protected, or removed and replaced per tree warden's assessment
- road opening/trench permits must be filed and reviewed by DPW for approval and fee considerations

- sanitary sewer connection fee must be applied for, reviewed and fees determined and approved by DPW
- pedestrian and vehicular travel impacts: traffic/travel/signage plan must be submitted to DPW for review and approval by: Police Dept/FD1 and FD2/PVTA/municipal school busing

SHELD – Matt Delmonte – SHELD does not have any comments related to this filing with the Planning Board.

Fire District 2 Fire Department - Captain O’Neill– No comments for the Planning Board.

Action Needed: The Board should conduct the public hearing continuance, discuss any questions or comments with the applicant, allow public comment, and vote on issuance of Site Plan Approval.

Recommended Motion: Move to grant Site Plan Approval for the Mount Holyoke College Energy Center project located at 9 Woodbridge Street.

**SOUTH HADLEY PLANNING BOARD
LIST OF CORRESPONDENCES
APRIL 28, 2025 REGULAR MEETING**

Letters and Memos

- April 23 letter (attached) from Barry McPhee, 3 Woodbridge Lane, expressing concern for the application for Site Plan Review filed by Mount Holyoke College for a new energy center at 9 Woodbridge Street.

Legal Notices

Amherst

-

Chicopee

- Notice from the Chicopee Planning Board for public hearings on May 1 to consider the following: 1) site plan with waivers filed by Pioneer Valley Refrigerated Warehouse for construction of a new high bay freezer building and associated stormwater management and site improvements at 149 Plainfield Street; and 2) Definitive Site Plan for the construction of a self-storage facility and office with associated stormwater and site improvement at Shawinigan Drive.

Granby

- Notice from the Granby Planning Board for a public hearing on April 28 to consider an application for Site Plan Review for construction of a building with 8 garage bays to be used to store business equipment at 119 West State Street.

Hadley

-

Holyoke

-

"30% MORE NOISE"

Barry McPhee
3 Woodbridge Street
South Hadley, Ma 01075
413 530 4323

At the April 14, 2025 planning board meeting for 9 Woodbridge Street Mount Holyoke New Energy Center we were told the noise level above ambient would increase present 35 decibels by 10 decibels. This is "30% MORE NOISE" from the equipment within and on the roof of this building. The sound data for the emergency backup generator, operating once a month for thirty minutes for testing and emergency operation were not disclosed. I question why there is no acoustic barrier shown around the generator? Also will the generators exhaust

be extended vertically with a muffler and sound attenuator high enough to decrease noise?

A new set of "corrected" construction drawings were submitted to the Town Of South Hadley hours before this meeting. I observed the "corrected" drawings, have no revision dates and they are still dated with the original date of February 28, 2025, this seems rather odd.

As part of this meeting for "Site Plan Review " there was no mention of the extensive excavation work necessary to install new underground conduits encased in concrete AKA "Duct Bank" from the building to a power pole on Woodbridge Street at the Little Common near Silver Street, this trenching will include removal of existing sidewalks and crossing the one way entrance to Silver Street. This construction zone will also present "More Noise" not to mention the disruption to sidewalk access and road

closure.

We were also told the building would be unoccupied most of the time and controlled by, I assume, a Building Management System for the Energy Centers equipment.

I was told by another opponent of this project in this location, MHC is basing planning board approval of this building, as educational use, per Mass General Law G.L.C.40A sec.3 and the "Dover Amendment"

The "Dover Amendment" embraces fully "The idea that Education is the process of preparing persons for activity and usefulness in life". I'm not sure how this is accomplished in an unoccupied building.

I urge surrounding residents to attend the next planning board meeting on April 28th at the Council on Aging in SH at 6:30pm.

Thank you

Barry McPhee