

Background Materials – January 26, 2026 – Planning Board Meeting

Prepared by Anne Capra, Director of Planning and Conservation, 1/23/26

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

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.

2) Minutes

Planning and Conservation Coordinator Colleen Canning will forward minutes separately.

Action Needed: Vote to approve the minutes.

3) Correspondence

Correspondence is attached.

Action Needed: No action needed.

6:30PM Public Hearing Continuation

5) 506 Granby Road – SPR and Stormwater Management Permit

Revised application materials 1/14/26 online:

<https://www.southhadley.org/1500/Granby-Road-506---7-Duplex-14-Unit-Townh>

Revised Materials - 1/14/26

- [Groundwater Mounding Analysis Memo](#)
- [Water Distribution Capacity Memo](#)
- [Revised Site Plan](#)
- [Revised Stormwater Report](#)
- [Culvert Inspection Report](#)
- [Culvert Capacity Analysis](#)
- [Invasive Species Management Plan](#)
- [Waiver Requests](#)
- [List of Revisions](#)
- [Response to Peer-Review](#)
- [Peer Review Report #2 1/21/26](#)

Public Hearing Status

Public hearing was opened on 10/6/25, continued to 10/20/25 and 11/10/25. Member Watchilla was absent from the hearing on 10/6 and then recused himself on 10/20. Therefore, the application requires a minimum of three (3) of the four (4) board members to vote in favor of Site Plan Approval and the Stormwater Management Permit.

Background

SAI Shyam, Inc., owner of the 4.02 +/- site at 506 Granby Road (Assessor's Map 32, Parcel 52), is seeking site plan approval to develop 14 dwellings, comprised of 7 detached duplexes constructed as townhomes, on the southerly portion of the site to be accessed by Conti Drive. The site is fully within the Business A-1 zoning district, and also includes Liquor Town, a commercial store and parking lot along the Granby Road frontage. Concurrent with the Site Plan Review application, they have submitted a Stormwater Management Permit and a Notice of Intent to the Conservation Commission. The application states that the approximately 800 SF units will be rental units. Each duplex is designed with a walkout basement in the rear, and two upper-level floors for living space. The housing units surround centralized parking area that has a stormwater infiltration chamber underneath it.

Due to shallow depth to groundwater on the site (approx. 3' below grade), the project proposes to build all components above grade. Beginning at Conti Drive on the south side of the culvert at an intermittent stream, the road elevation would be re-designed with a hump such that the base elevation would be raised approximately 3 feet to the proposed driveway to the housing development, and then graded back down to the existing elevation as the road continues south to the other lots at the rear. These lots have commercial tenants – Pages' Automotive and a landscaping company. The elevation within the driveway and parking lot continues to be elevated to approximately 8' above grade. The duplexes encircle the raised central parking lot thereby necessitating walkout basements in the rear of the units. Between the duplexes, the ground is steeply sloped and proposed to be vegetated with grass.

Applicable Bylaws and Regulations for Planning Board Review:

- **Site Plan Review** [Town of South Hadley, MA Site Plan Review](#)
- **Business A-1 Amendment (ATM May 2024)** – *NOTE: Bylaw and regulation amendments are only incorporated into Ecode once per year through the Town Clerk's Office. The update for bylaws/regulations adopted since May 2023 are currently underway. Therefore, the Town Clerk has advised that the public rely on the Report to Town Meeting related to the Business A-1 amendment. Refer to Attachment B on page 8 of the following report:*
[Article-27---Planning-Board-Report-to-Town-Meeting---Business-A-1-Zoning-Amendment-rev](#)
- **Business A-1 Design Guidelines** [PowerPoint Presentation](#)
- **Chapter 200 Stormwater Management** [Town of South Hadley, MA Stormwater Management](#)
- **Chapter 360 Subdivision Regulations** [Town of South Hadley, MA Subdivision Regulations](#)

Because the project is multiple dwellings for residential purposes on a single parcel, a Form H Plan approval is required. This will be filed for after the SPR appeal period is over.

See list of revisions: [Revision-List---REV-A---506-Granby-Road](#)

Peer reviewer Steve Lee, BETA, has submitted a review of the revised application package:

<https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14705/Peer-Review-Report---12126---BETA>

Review Status

1. Parking Standards

The applicant maintains the 1.5 parking spaces per multifamily unit standard applies (total 21 required). The revised plans extend the parking lot toward Conti Drive allowing for an additional 5 parking spaces for a total of 26, including 1 handicap parking space. *However, in the northeast corner of the parking lot, it is not possible to park a car in each of the parking spaces in front of unit 6 and unit 7/8 at the same time because the spot in front of unit 8 extends out in front of the spot in front of unit 6. And I'm not sure a vehicle in either of the 2 spaces in front of units 8 and 9 could actually back out and turn around in the parking lot. I believe they would need to back straight out of the parking lot onto Conti Drive. In reality, at best, there are 23 actual parking spaces.*

They have added a sidewalk and pedestrian bridge over the stream which provides safe passage to an overflow parking area behind the Liquor Town store at the north end of the property.

2. Pedestrian Access and Circulation

Plans include a 6' wide concrete path around the parking lot that provides access to the residential units. This walkway is elevated above the grade of the parking lot (see section on sheet C-9). This walkway connects to a concrete ramp on the south side of the parking lot, and joins a 4' wide stonedust path along the east side of Conti Drive, on the north side of the driveway. There is a crosswalk across the driveway.

3. Conti Drive Suitability of Access (including culvert)

Applicant submitted a culvert inspection report (1/14/26) and a culvert capacity analysis (1/21/26). Peer review is satisfied with these reports.

4. Open Space Calculations and Drawing – Applicant has not yet demonstrated compliance. Sheet C-3, Rev A indicates they have 72% open space.

(c) There shall be provided and maintained common open space.

- (i) The amount of open space required shall be determined as follows:
 - a. At least 50% of the portions of the development containing first floor residential dwellings units shall be devoted to open space uses, including
 - i. landscaping elements such as lawns, plantings, walks, and terraces; and
 - ii. recreational uses such as play area for children, swimming pools, tennis courts, and gardens.
- (ii) Streets, drives, and off-street parking spaces are not to be interpreted as open space.

5. Trash and Snow Removal

Sheet C-5 indicates three areas off of the parking lot and next to buildings as “snow storage areas”. It is not clear where trash barrels are being stored.

6. Stormwater Management

Peer review indicates that the revised plan and stormwater report dated 1/14/26 meets all standards. Ask applicant to describe changes to the stormwater management system. The infiltration chamber is significantly larger in the revised plans.

Department Comments

No additional comments received other than the following:

SHELD, Matt Delmonte, 1/23/26 - The revised plan still shows removal/ relocation of our pole line that services the businesses at the end of Conti Drive. SHELD has not spoken to the customer separately regarding this conflict (as they indicated). That being said, we will certainly work with the customer to find a solution. At this point, we are satisfied as long as he is aware that he is responsible for costs associated with the relocation.

FD1 Water Department, Jeff Cyr – Water pressure test sufficient for proposed development.

Conservation Commission – Issued an Order of Conditions 288-0500 on 1/21/26 for the revised plans. Requested relocation of tree in conflict with snow removal and submittal of revised plans.

Business A-1 Design Guidelines

Per 255-XX(A)(4) Multifamily Residential Development in Business A-1 Zoning District, any multifamily development in the Bus A-1 zoning district is subject to design review. The adopted [Business A-1 Design Guidelines](#) are focused on mixed use and in particular, buildings with commercial first floor and residential in upper floors. The application before the Board is for the creation of a mixed use parcel, with a new multifamily development at the rear of the site. However, the design guidelines remain applicable and should be considered. The Board has not adopted a “Planning Board Design Review Process” therefore, I recommend that the Board recognize the design guidelines under their findings below.

Subdivision Waiver Requests

Applicant has requested 10 waivers from the subdivision regulations citing that they are not creating a new roadway but rather a driveway off of an existing way. The Board needs to review each waiver and make a determination.

[506-Granby-Road-SPR-Application-Packet-less-plans---SPR-Narrative](#) (see p.61 of document/ p.59 application).

Standards and Findings

The Board needs to make findings on each of the following:

255-148 Site Plan Review

Draft findings are attached for the Board’s review.

255-XX Multifamily Residential Development in Business A-1 Zoning District

The Board adopted Design Guidelines as required by this bylaw amendment, which requires Design Review. The Board should discuss the design guidelines and make a finding about the projects conformity.

Chapter 200 Stormwater Permit

Recommended finding: *Following review of the plans, application materials, Peer Review comments, department comments, and public comments, the Planning Board finds that per the South Hadley General Bylaw Chapter 200 Stormwater Management, Section 11, the stormwater management and erosion and sediment control plan submitted with the permit application meets criteria A thru F.*

Subdivision Regulations – Waiver Requests – Form H Plan

The Board needs to make a finding on the waiver requests.

Conditions of Site Plan Approval and Stormwater Management Permit

The Board needs to discuss potential conditions for approval. The applicant's representative had previously stated that the Board cannot condition Site Plan Approval. The Zoning Bylaw 255-149 clearly states that the Board has the authority to condition approval:

§ 255-149 **Planning Board decision.**

- A. Except in the case of a minor site plan application which is governed by § 255-147B above, the Planning Board shall render a decision within 90 days of the public hearing and shall file its written decision with the Town Clerk's office.
- B. The Planning Board's decision shall consist of either:
 - (1) A written approval of the proposed project;
 - (2) A written denial of the application, stating reason for such denial; or
 - (3) A written approval subject to any conditions, modifications, and restrictions as the Planning Board may deem necessary to satisfy this bylaw.

ACTION NEEDED: Discuss revised materials, discuss peer review comments, discuss special conditions, performance guarantees, make SPR findings, make Stormwater Permit standards findings, and vote on issuance of Site Plan Approval and Stormwater Management Permit.

RECOMMENDED MOTIONS:

#1 Motion Site Plan Approval – Move to issue site plan approval based on the Board's findings for criteria in 255-148, subject to conditions as stated.

#2 Motion Stormwater Management Permit – Move to issue a stormwater management permit subject to the conditions as stated.

6) Sign Bylaw Amendments

The Board decided at their last meeting to forgo reworking the draft bylaw and consider an alternative framework. The Planning Director is evaluating alternative bylaws and will present to the Board at an upcoming meeting.

ACTION NEEDED: No action needed.

7) Floodplain Bylaw Amendments

Draft Bylaw and other materials online: <https://www.southhadley.org/1318/ProposedDraft-Bylaws>

South Hadley is under mandate by FEMA and MassDCR (the State coordinating office for the National Flood Insurance Program) to update the existing floodplain regulations to meet current standards. We have been awaiting the release of updated flood maps for the lower Connecticut River before undertaking this. The currently effective FIRM maps are from 1979/1980. Preliminary maps for our area were released in August 2025 and DCR is advising municipalities to proceed utilizing these maps.

Utilizing FEMA's model bylaw, I have prepared a draft for South Hadley:

[255-91-Floodplain-Regulations Draft-Amendment-12326](#)

FEMA Map Viewer – Look up your property here and explore the online map viewer:
<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=5852ea902db44e55bfce395799315f9c>

ACTION NEEDED: Discuss draft bylaw.

7) Planning & Conservation Department Report on Planning Projects and Development Updates

EV Charging Stations in South Hadley Falls Feasibility Study and Upcoming Webinar

The Facilities Department coordinated an on-street charging stations feasibility study for South Hadley Falls. The study has been completed and we will be hosting a webinar to present the final results:

Tuesday, January 27th at 6pm

Join Zoom Webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84327003333?pwd=mxhuElugG1kHYOejTKINjLPIXVbU.1>

By Phone: +1 646 558 8656

Webinar ID: 843 2700 3333

Passcode: 415514

The study is online at the link below:

<https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14609/EV-Charging-Station-Feasibility-Study-Report-121625>

Upcoming Meetings

2/9/26 <i>Virtual</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subdivision Regulations Public Hearing• Zone Change Petition – 115 Woodbridge Street
2/23/26 <i>Virtual</i>	
3/9/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agricultural Bylaw Amendments Discussion
3/23/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agricultural Bylaw Amendments Public Listening Session
4/13/26	
4/27/26	
5/4 & 5/18/26	

Inclement Weather

From an open meeting law point of view - The board **can** have a meeting at night even if Town Hall is closed during the day due to inclement weather. Town Clerk Sarah Gmeiner cited an opinion from the Attorney General, " The complaint also alleges that weather conditions impeded the ability of the public to attend the Board's January 21, 2014 meeting. **The Open Meeting Law does not mandate any action by a public body in the face of inclement weather, leaving the decision about whether to cancel a meeting to the discretion of the public body.** We therefore do not find that the Board's failure to cancel this meeting violated the Law."

8) 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 ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENCES
JANUARY 26, 2026 REGULAR MEETING**

Letters and Memos

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Legal Notices

Amherst

•

Chicopee

•

Granby

- Notice from the Granby Planning Board for Site Plan Approval for development of a new market, Red Fire Farm, located at 34 Carver Street.

Hadley

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Holyoke

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