

Background Materials – February 23, 2026 – Planning Board Meeting

Prepared by Anne Capra, Director of Planning and Conservation, 2/20/26

Meeting will be live streamed on [Cable Access Channel 15](#).

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Background Reports for Planning Board meetings are posted online:
<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.

4) Discussion Sign Bylaw Amendment

New DRAFT Bylaw online: <https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14838/Sign-Bylaw-Amendment---DRAFT-21826>

Existing Zoning Bylaw 255-85 Signs: <https://ecode360.com/30053735#30053735>

A new draft sign bylaw has been prepared for the Board's consideration based on a review of municipal sign bylaws from the City of Holyoke and others made available through the American Planning Association in their content neutral sign bylaw guidance materials.

The primary standard by which we should evaluate content neutrality is if you need to "read the sign to know of to regulate it" it doesn't meet the standard established in the Reed v. Gilbert (2015) Supreme

Court ruling, known as the “need to read” test. The draft bylaw has some content standards highlighted that we need to discuss further and consider how to eliminate it. What is permissible is regulating “time, place and manner”. For example, a content neutral sign bylaw may regulate the following:

- **Locations**
- **Maximum Sign Size**
- **Materials**
- **Lighting**
- **Moving Parts**
- **Portability**
- **Banning Or Regulating Signs in the Public Right-Of-Way**
- **Distinguishing Freestanding and Attached Signs**
- **Distinguishing Fixed versus Changeable Electronic Signs**
- **Regulating Signs Differently by Zoning District**
- **Total Number of Signs Allowed Per Frontage or Area**
- **Time Restrictions on Advertising a One-Time Event**
- **Governmental Signs**
- **On-Premise Signs Distinguished from Off-Premise Signs (Billboards)**

Action Needed:

Review draft bylaw and consider scheduling a public hearing for public comment and inclusion on the Town Meeting Warrant for adoption.

5) **Planning & Conservation Department Report on Planning Projects and Development Updates**

Falls Digest – February 2026 Edition

The Redevelopment Authority has released their 4th quarterly newsletter called the Falls Digest. The newsletter promotes the people, businesses and history of the Falls.

[Redevelopment Authority | South Hadley, MA - Official Website](https://southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14707/February-2026-Newsletter)

<https://southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14707/February-2026-Newsletter>

Upcoming Meetings

3/9/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 577 Granby Road – SPR and Stormwater Permit – Professional Office Buildings • Floodplain Bylaw Public Hearing - Draft bylaw: 255-91-Floodplain-Regulations---Draft-Amendment---2526 • Agricultural Bylaw Amendments Discussion
3/23/26	• Agricultural Bylaw Amendments Public Listening Session
4/13/26	
4/27/26	
5/4/26	
5/13/26	<i>Annual Town Meeting</i>
5/18/26	

6) 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
FEBRUARY 23, 2026 REGULAR MEETING**

Letters and Memos

- February 15 email (attached) from Marc Desrosiers, Amherst Road, regarding proposed changes agricultural uses in the zoning bylaw.
- February 15 email (attached) from Martha Terry, 25 Brainard Street, regarding proposed changes to agricultural uses in the zoning bylaw.

Legal Notices

Amherst

●

Chicopee

- Notice from the Chicopee Planning Board for a public hearing on March 5 to consider a preliminary site plan with waivers for construction of three business service buildings and associated site improvements at 0 East Main Street.

Granby

●

Hadley

- Notice from the Hadley Planning Board for filing the following decisions: 1) approval of small definitive subdivision plan at 145 Bay Road; 2) site plan approval for H&M Auto Sales used car dealership at 132 Russell Street; 3) approval of home occupation special permit for an attorney's office at 136 Middle Street; and 4) site plan approval for Rocky Hill Solar Agrivolatic Array.
- Notice from the Hadley Planning Board for a public hearing on March 17 to consider amendments to the zoning bylaw regarding accessory buildings, accessory dwelling units, large scale solar screening, and retail buildings.

Holyoke

- Notice from the Holyoke Planning Board for a public hearing on February 10 to consider zoning amendments regarding cannabis dispensaries.
- Notice from the Holyoke Planning Board for public hearings on February 24 to consider zoning amendments regarding data centers and residential parking requirements.

Fwd: this is what a tractor pull event looks and sounds like

Anne Capra <acapra@southhadleyma.gov>
To: Colleen Canning <ccanning@southhadleyma.gov>

Sun, Feb 15, 2026 at 4:01 PM

Please add to the Board's correspondence.

FRAUD ALERT -- FAKE APPLICATION FEE REQUESTS

The Town of South Hadley has been made aware of a fraudulent scheme targeting applicants with fake requests for application fee payments. These emails and invoices are NOT from the Town of South Hadley. All application fees are handled in person at Town Hall. Do not pay any invoices or respond to these fraudulent emails and contact the Planning & Conservation Department directly.

Anne Capra, AICP
Director, Planning & Conservation
Town of South Hadley
116 Main Street | South Hadley, MA 01075
(413) 538-5030 x6128
acapra@southhadleyma.gov

Learn more about South Hadley's community plans [HERE](#).

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Martha Terry** <marthatterry25@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Feb 15, 2026 at 3:52 PM
Subject: this is what a tractor pull event looks and sounds like
To: Sharon Hart <shart@southhadleyma.gov>, Anne Capra <acapra@southhadleyma.gov>

Dear Sharon and Anne,

Please share this video with members of the Board of Health and the Planning Board, respectively.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWX2OLNQLLw>

The tractor pull competition I witnessed at McCray's was worse than anything in this video. There was much, much, much more black, billowing smoke and ear splitting noise. I had to leave the premises because of the stench, the air pollution, and the noise.

These tractor pulls are an abomination. The noise can be heard very, very long distances away. The pollution is unimaginable. These events should be deleted from the proposed Agricultural By Laws on any sized parcel of land in any district in South Hadley

Thank you for your attention to this matter,

Martha Terry
[25 Brainerd Street](#)
Town Meeting Member Precinct B

Fwd: Proposed Agricultural Bylaw changes

Anne Capra <acapra@southhadleyma.gov>
To: Colleen Canning <ccanning@southhadleyma.gov>

Sun, Feb 15, 2026 at 4:02 PM

Please add to the Board's correspondence.

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Marc Desrosiers** <310amherstroad@comcast.net>
Date: Sun, Feb 15, 2026 at 3:29 PM
Subject: Re: Proposed Agricultural Bylaw changes
To: Anne Capra <acapra@southhadleyma.gov>

On Feb 15, 2026, at 2:45 PM, Marc Desrosiers
<310amherstroad@comcast.net> wrote:

Dear Ann-

At the last Advisory Meeting, Agricultural uses accessory to residential uses as copied below was not addressed.

I feel that **“and the raising of livestock”** should be deleted. Allowing this use would be detrimental to the value of homes within the 4 residential districts. It would also become a nightmare for the Board of Health.

Picture a home in the Sycamores having either pigs or goats as an accessory use. If we have to balance the budget we need to have properties with good values to generate the most in tax revenue.

The keeping of **“livestock”** as an accessory use in these residential districts will be counter productive to both valuations and living conditions.

Although this specific paragraph was not reviewed by the Advisory Committee I feel that having covered 255-25 paragraph B their sentiments would concur with this deletion. Could you take the time to review my concerns and get back to me.

Marc Desrosiers
413-539-3725

H. Except when operated as part of an Agriculturally exempt activity, agricultural uses on parcels in the Residence A-1, Residence A-2, Residence B, or Residence C zoning districts are only permitted to be accessory to residential uses located on the same parcel.

(2) Such agricultural uses including growing of a garden, utilization of a greenhouse, **and the raising of livestock** and crops are to be primarily for the property occupant’s personal use. However, such crops or products from such agricultural uses may be offered for sale from a “nonexempt Farm Stand” if such Farm Stand is permitted in accordance with § 255-26H.

(3) Where a residential use is located in other zoning districts whether permitted or nonconforming, the provisions of this § 255-26H shall apply to conducting such agricultural use as accessory to the residential use.