

**SOUTH HADLEY PLANNING BOARD VIRTUAL MEETING
MEETING MINUTES JANUARY 12, 2026**

Present: Diane Mulvaney, Chair; Nate Therien, Vice-Chair; Brad Hutchison, Clerk; Rob Watchilla, Member; Bob Szklarz, Member; Anne Capra, Director of Planning and Conservation; and Colleen Canning, Planning/Conservation Coordinator

Virtual location: Zoom Webinar

5 attendees were present as identified on the Zoom Webinar attendance report (attached).

Chair Mulvaney called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM and reviewed the meeting protocols.

Agenda Item #1 --- Open Comment Period

No comments were heard during the open comment period.

Agenda Item #2--- Minutes

Draft minutes of the following meeting were sent to the Board for review: 1) November 10 Regular Meeting; 2) November 10 Public Hearing - 11 Brockway Ln ADU; 3) November 24 Regular Meeting; 4) November 24 Public Hearing - 180 Willimansett St Secondhand Car Sales; and 5) November 24 Public Hearing - 17 Stanton Ave Solar Array. Spelling and grammar errors were identified in the drafts.

Motion: Member Szklarz moved to approve the minutes as discussed and revised. Member Watchilla seconded the motion. Five (5) out of five (5) members voted in favor of the motion through roll call vote.

Agenda Item #3 --- Correspondence

Correspondence was sent to the Board prior to the meeting.

Agenda Item #4 --- Decision on applications for Special Permit and Stormwater Management filed by 136 East Street, LLC c/o Gerald Coderre for a Flexible Residential Development consisting of 6 duplexes and 2 single-family homes at 136 East Street, Assessor's Map 35 Parcel 6

The Board closed the public hearing regarding applications for Flexible Development at 136 East Street at a previous meeting, and were now tasked with issuing their decision. Director Capra provided members with a drafted decision for their review and endorsement.

Members reviewed findings as drafted and indicated their agreement, and continued with review of the drafted decision and special conditions. Vice-Chair Therien considered if the mowed pathway in the Open Space should be identified in the special conditions. Director Capra

responded that the pathway was present on the permitting plans, but it could also be identified as a special condition.

Members reviewed drafted special conditions associated with stormwater management permitting. Director Capra noted that a performance guarantee would be required for both stormwater management and landscaping, but the Board needed to issue their decision before any such guarantee could be defined.

Member Hutchison identified that a partial waiver from sidewalk installation had been issued, but the change was not yet reflected in the permitting plans. Director Capra stated that plan revision could be incorporated on the Form H plan, and would be reviewed and endorsed by the Board prior to commencement of work.

Chair Mulvaney and Member Watchilla identified that the roadway would remain private in perpetuity, and recommend that special conditioning explicitly identify the requirement.

Motion: Member Szklarz moved to issue Special Permit approval with conditions as discussed for the Flexible Development at 136 East Street. Member Watchilla seconded the motion. Five (5) out of five (5) members voted in favor of the motion through roll call vote.

Motion: Clerk Hutchison moved to issue a Stormwater Management Permit with conditions as discussed for the Flexible Development at 136 East Street. Member Watchilla seconded the motion. Five (5) out of five (5) members voted in favor of the motion through roll call vote.

Agenda Item #5 --- Discussion on Sign Bylaw Amendments

The Board previously hosted a public hearing to consider sign bylaw amendments, but decided to table further discussion and endorsement due to the complexity of regulation. Since that hearing, Director Capra conducted additional research and provided the Board with a revised draft. Director Capra also provided the Board with photographs of existing signs in Town, including sign dimensions, as a visual aide to better understand size and scale of commonplace signs. The Board would need to consider how temporary signs would be defined as opposed to permanent signs. They could also consider allowance of additional sign types not allowed under current zoning, such as blade signs and vertical banner signs.

Members reviewed the revised draft and supported removing language regarding bylaw interpretation and liability.

Members discussed regulation of sign illumination. Member Szklarz considered if downcast lighting or solar lighting would qualify as sign illumination, and further considered the permissibility of illuminated temporary signs. Members continued with discussion of flashing signs, and recalled previous approvals at the High School. They considered if these sign types should be prohibited, or if they should be permitted through special permitting or through demonstration of serving public interest. Discussion would be ongoing.

Members discussed the challenges with the existing draft, and the difficulty interpreting the permitting pathway for different sign types. Given the persistent challenges in review, members were supportive of developing a new sign bylaw framework rather than continuing to modify the existing draft. An updated draft bylaw would be brought to the Board at a future meeting.

Agenda Item #6 --- Discussion on Floodplain Bylaw Amendment

Director Capra provided members with a drafted model floodplain bylaw amendment. The amendments were required to bring the Town’s existing regulations into conformance with current standards. Members were expected to review the drafted amendments and host a public hearing over the upcoming months. The amendments would require adoption at Town Meeting.

Clerk Hutchison considered if the bylaw should be implemented within the zoning bylaw, or within the general bylaw. Discussion would be ongoing.

Agenda Item #7 -- Planning & Conservation Department Report on Planning Projects and Development Updates

Director Capra detailed the following items:

- *Agricultural Uses* – An advisory committee had been established to review zoning amendments for agricultural uses. A report would be provided to the Planning Board with recommended action.
- *EV Charging Stations* – A webinar would be held on January 27 to present findings from a recent feasibility study for electric vehicle charging stations in South Hadley Falls.
- *Remote Meetings* – The allowance for remote public meetings had been extended to June 2027 through action of the Governor’s Office.

Agenda Item #8--- Other New Business

There was no new business to discuss.

Agenda Item #9 --- Adjournment

Motion: Member Szklarz moved to adjourn the meeting. Member Watchilla seconded the motion. Five (5) out of five (5) members voted in favor of the motion through roll call vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:34 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Colleen Canning, Planning/Conservation Coordinator

Appendix

Document	Document Location
Zoom Attendance Report	Attached
136 East Street Flexible Development – Draft Decision and Findings	Planning Files

Draft Sign Bylaw (11.19.25)	Planning Files
Local Examples of Signs (12.1.25)	Planning Files
MA Model Floodplain Bylaw (2020 -Version 2)	Planning Files

Attendee Report

Report generated 2/27/2026 16:41

time

Topic	Webinar ID	Actual Duration (minutes)	Unique Viewers	Total Users	Max Concurrent Views
Planning Board Meeting	847 9797 3240	137	6	15	5

Host Details

Attended	User Name (Original Name)	Join Time	Leave Time	Time in Session (minutes)	Is Guest
Yes	Colleen Canning# Staff (Town of South Hadley 2)	1/12/2026 18:17	1/12/2026 20:34	137	No

Panelist Details

Attended	User Name (Original Name)	Join Time	Leave Time	Time in Session (minutes)	Is Guest
Yes	Gerald Coderre	1/12/2026 18:39	1/12/2026 18:41	2	Yes
Yes	Member Rob Watchilla	1/12/2026 18:25	1/12/2026 20:34	130	Yes
Yes	Member Bob Szklarz	1/12/2026 18:17	1/12/2026 20:34	137	Yes
Yes	Clerk Brad Hutchison	1/12/2026 18:20	1/12/2026 20:34	134	Yes
Yes	Chair Diane Mulvaney	1/12/2026 18:17	1/12/2026 20:34	137	Yes
Yes	Vice-Chair Nate Therien	1/12/2026 18:23	1/12/2026 20:34	132	Yes
Yes	Director Anne Capra	1/12/2026 18:17	1/12/2026 20:34	137	Yes
Yes	Planning Board Live Stream on SHCTV 15 (Mike Maresca)	1/12/2026 18:17	1/12/2026 20:34	137	Yes

Attendee Details

Attended	User Name (Original Name)	Join Time	Leave Time	Time in Session (minutes)	Is Guest
Yes	Gerald Coderre	1/12/2026 18:27	1/12/2026 18:39	12	Yes
Yes	Linda Young	1/12/2026 18:37	1/12/2026 20:34	117	Yes
Yes	Joanna Brown	1/12/2026 18:37	1/12/2026 20:34	117	Yes
Yes	SHCTV-LIVE STREAM	1/12/2026 18:17	1/12/2026 20:34	137	Yes
Yes	Michael Laurin	1/12/2026 18:26	1/12/2026 19:10	44	Yes
Yes	Gerald Coderre	1/12/2026 18:41	1/12/2026 19:09	29	Yes