

**SOUTH HADLEY PLANNING BOARD VIRTUAL MEETING
MINUTES OF JUNE 1, 2020
As Approved**

Present: Brad Hutchison, Chair; Diane Mulvaney, Vice-Chair; Joanna Brown, Clerk; Melissa O'Brien; Member; Nate Therien, Member; Richard Harris, Director of Planning and Conservation; Anne Capra, Conservation Administrator/Planner; and Colleen Canning, Senior Clerk Planning and Conservation

Chair Hutchison called the virtual meeting to order at 6:32 PM

Agenda Item #1 --- DISCUSSION/DECISION: Consideration of guidelines/protocols for active public participation in Virtual Hearings and Meetings

Chair Hutchison opened the discussion by explaining that guidelines for public participation needed to be developed under a legal framework because Planning Board decisions rendered from public discussions needed to satisfy legal requirements. Mr. Harris added that the Town Counsel reviewed the draft guidelines.

Vice-Chair Mulvaney recommended organizing the information relating to public submission of comments differently. Mr. Harris would organize the information in a table to explain the steps more clearly. He explained that he asks applicants to submit information one week prior to the hearing. Therefore, he reasoned to ask members of the public to submit comments 4 days prior to the hearing. Those who submit comments after 4 days, could not be guaranteed that their comments would be heard on the night of the hearing as virtual hearings would have a time cap. However, all questions would be addressed at a future hearing.

Member O'Brien observed that the public had multiple avenues to submit comments including: email, google chat and google forum. She inquired if that was too many for staff to handle during a Public Hearing. Mr. Harris responded that each Planning Department staff member would be tasked with monitoring a different forum.

Clerk Brown inquired if the deadline for public comments reflected business days or calendar days. Mr. Harris confirmed that it was calendar days. Clerk Brown recommended that a 'macro script' could be applied to direct emails to the google forum. Mr. Harris replied that the IT department could advise on that.

Member Therien recommended including an opening paragraph to explain the purpose of the guidelines. He also recommended adding some language to offer technical guidance on using the virtual meeting software.

Chair Hutchison inquired how technical issues would be addressed during a hearing. For instance, what would happen if a member lost internet during a hearing? Mr. Harris explained that the Board would need to establish a hearing continuation date at the opening of the virtual hearing in the event that technical issues happened.

The Board discussed how the protocols would impact the scheduled public hearing at the next meeting on June 15th. Mr. Harris would schedule a series of ‘test’ virtual meetings to allow members of the public to test their device prior to the public hearing.

Robert Pleasure, Jewett Lane, addressed the Board. He inquired if a google account was required to contribute to google forums for public hearings. Mr. Harris confirmed that a google account was not necessary to contribute. Robert Pleasure inquired if public comments would be posted on-line. Mr. Harris explained that it was not a legal requirement. He had done so for a previous project and it became difficult to administer. He added that any document submitted during the hearing would be referenced in the minutes.

Motion: Vice-Chair Mulvaney moved to approve the guidelines/protocols for active public participation in virtual meetings and hearings inclusive of modifications made during the course of the board’s discussion on the matter. Clerk Brown seconded the motion. Five (5) out of five (5) members voted in favor of the motion.

Agenda Item #2 --- DECISION: Consideration of request to Amend 2017 Site Plan Review Decision for Microbrewery with tasting room; Applicant: Drunken Rabbit, LLC. Property Location: 749 New Ludlow Road - (Assessor’s Map #8 – Parcel #76)

Mr. Harris noted that the applicant had requested to be removed from the agenda and was not present at the virtual meeting.

Agenda Item #3 --- Set meeting schedule for June – September, 2020

Mr. Harris explained that the Board needed to set a meeting schedule for the upcoming months. Historically, the Board would meet less frequently during the summer months. However, due to COVID-19 the Board had not been meeting regularly. Paired with the need for virtual meetings, Mr. Harris anticipated the Board would need to meet twice a month during the summer months.

As the Board reviewed the proposed meeting dates, some members were unsure of their availability. Therefore, the Board needed to defer considerations for some dates to a future meeting. The Board could confirm the dates that all members knew that had availability tonight.

Clerk Brown and Member Therien expressed concern that the proposed Public Hearing dates- June 15th and June 22nd- to consider the stormwater management and definitive subdivision plan of North Pole Estates were scheduled too close together. Mr. Harris noted that, due to the complexity of the project, both hearing dates would discuss different topics. There were four main components for review which included: stormwater management, traffic analysis, hydrogeology and the definitive plan itself. Two items would be addressed at the one hearing; and the other two items would be addressed at the other.

Motion: Vice- Chair Mulvaney moved to confirm the Planning Board meeting dates of June 15, June 22, July 13, August 10, September 14 and September 28, 2020. Member O’Brien seconded the motion. Four (4) out of five (5) members voted in favor of the motion. Clerk Brown voted against the motion.

Agenda Item #4 --- Discussion of Creation of Mount Holyoke Range Resource Protection District

Mr. Harris explained that technical assistance was sought from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission to develop the district. Even though assistance was denied, creation of a Mount Holyoke Range Resource Protection District was still a priority of the Board. There needed to be a determination of what resources the board wished to protect and how protection would be administered.

Members of the Board were in support of the creation of the Mount Holyoke Range Resource Protection District. Member O'Brien sought protection of the natural aspects of the range, including: viewshed, farmland, and openspace. Vice-Chair Mulvaney was interested in discussing the regulatory process for protection of the area's assets. Clerk Brown recommended looking into historical documents and previous versions of the Town's Master Plan. Member Therien was interested in implementation and evaluating previously successful methods. Chair Hutchison recommended evaluating the area's assets and engaging community input through a questionnaire.

Robert Pleasure, Jewett Lane, addressed the Board. He recommended the Board reference the 'Model Open Space Design / Natural Resource Protection Zoning' bylaw provided by the state in developing the district. He also recommended reviewing educational documents on the Conservation Commission's webpage.

Agenda Item #5 --- Minutes

Draft minutes of the March 9, 2020 Planning Board Meeting had been previously transmitted to the Board for their review.

Motion: Vice-Chair Mulvaney moved to approve the March 9, 2020 regular Planning Board Meeting minutes. Member O'Brien seconded the motion. Five (5) out of five (5) members voted in favor of the motion by roll call.

Draft minutes of the March 23, 2020 Planning Board meeting had been previously transmitted to the board for their review. Clerk Brown noted that the phrasing of the motions were confusing. Mr. Harris responded that the language had been approved by Town Counsel. Therefore, he would need to verify that the changes could be made. Considerations for the March 23rd draft minutes would be included on a future meeting agenda.

Draft minutes of the May 18, 2020 Planning Board Meeting had been previously transmitted to the board for their review.

Motion: Vice-Chair Mulvaney moved to approve the May 18, 2020 virtual Planning Board meeting minutes. Member O'Brien seconded the motion. Five (5) out of five (5) members voted in favor of the motion by roll call.

Agenda Item #6 --- Correspondence

The list of correspondences was included in the agenda background materials for the Board to review.

Agenda Item #7 --- Planning Director’s Report on Planning Projects and Development Activities including:

a.) Master Plan Update/ Open Space and Recreation Plan

Mr. Harris explained that the state approved the Town’s Open Space and Recreation Plan. With approval, the Town now had the qualifications to apply for relevant grant funding.

Mr. Harris noted that the Town’s consultant had supplied the Planning and Conservation staff with the draft Master Plan update. After it is reviewed by staff, it will be sent to the advisory committee for review. At this time, it was unknown when and through what method the Master Plan Advisory Committee would meet next due to the COVID-19 State of Emergency.

b.) Route 202/33 Corridor Study

Mr. Harris explained that the virtual community meeting to consider the corridor was scheduled for Tuesday, June 9th at 6:00 PM.

Agenda Item #8 --- Adjournment

As there was no further discussion, Chair Hutchison inquired if there was a motion to adjourn.

Motion: Member O’Brien moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 PM. Vice-Chair Mulvaney seconded the motion. Five (5) out of five (5) members voted in favor of the motion by roll call.

Respectfully Submitted,
As Approved
Colleen Canning, Senior Clerk Planning and Conservation

Appendix

Document	Document Location
6/1/2020 Google Meeting Chat Comments	Planning Files
Draft guidelines/protocols for active public participation in Virtual Planning Board Hearings and Meetings	Planning Files
Model Open Space Design / Natural Resource Protection Zoning	Planning Files