

**SOUTH HADLEY PLANNING BOARD VIRTUAL MEETING  
MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 16, 2021  
As Approved**

**Present:** Brad Hutchison, Chair; Diane Mulvaney, Vice-Chair; Joanna Brown, Clerk; Nate Therien, Member; Michael Davis, Member; Michael Adelman, Associate Member; Anne Capra, Director of Planning and Conservation; and Colleen Canning, Senior Clerk Planning and Conservation Department

Chair Hutchison called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM and reviewed the virtual meeting protocols.

**Agenda Item #1 --- Open Comment Period**

No members of the public indicated their interest to speak during the public comment period.

**Agenda Item #2 --- Minutes**

Draft minutes of the July 19 regular meeting and public hearing were sent to the Board for review. Spelling errors were noted within the drafts.

**Motion:** Clerk Brown moved to approve the draft meeting minutes of the July 19 regular meeting and public hearing as revised. Member Davis seconded the motion. Five (5) out of five (5) members voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

**Agenda Item #3 --- Correspondence**

The list of correspondence was included in the agenda background materials. The correspondences included a notice of intended sale of 225 and 229 Hadley Street. These properties were enrolled in Chapter 61A for agricultural use. This designation allowed the Town to purchase the property in the event of a sale or change of use. The location of the land did have cultural and ecological value. However, the land did not adjoin existing protected land and was selling at a high price point.

**Motion:** Chair Hutchison moved to recommend that the Town *not* exercise its right of first refusal to acquire the properties at 225 and 229 Hadley Street. Clerk Brown seconded the motion. Five (5) out of five (5) members voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

**Agenda Item # 4 --- Application for replacement of an existing freestanding illuminated sign at the South Hadley High Scho located at 153 Newton Street (Assessor Map 17, Parcel 15)**

Elizabeth Wood, Principal of South Hadley High School, was present at the meeting along with the project consultant, Adam Niska of Signorama.

Adam Niska described the proposed replacement sign. A revised rendering was provided to the Board which showed illumination of lettering on the sign's lower panel and illumination of the school's name and emblem on the upper panel. The sign could be programmed electronically to meet the conditions imposed by the Planning Board. Principal Wood noted that the replacement sign was needed as the existing sign used outdated technology and was difficult to program.

Members reviewed the internal illumination mechanisms of the sign to confirm that the sign's background would not be lit. Additionally, the conditioning of the upper panel and lower panel were separately considered as the upper panel would remain static and the lower panel would have transiting messages. The messages on the lower panel could be conditioned to prevent distracting or inappropriate graphics or transitions such as blinking or flashing. In conditioning hours of sign illumination, before and after school events were considered. In most cases the school could be occupied as early as 6:00 AM or as late as 11:00 PM.

**Motion:** Vice-Chair Mulvaney moved to find that the proposed sign illumination was not adverse to the existing neighborhood *and* moved to approve the sign illumination with special conditions to include: 1) the sign is to perform as specified in the application materials; 2) the sign is to be illuminated no later than 11:00 PM and no earlier than 6:00AM; 3) the sign's upper panel is only to show static messages and only the school's name and emblem are to be illuminated 4) on the sign's lower panel, only the message's lettering is to be illuminated and no more than five messages at no less than 20 seconds intervals are permitted. No flashing, blinking or otherwise disruptive presentation of the messaging is permitted; 5) the brightness of the illumination is to be set no greater than 0.3 footcandles above ambient lighting; and 6) the Board has discretion to modify any of these conditions in the event that the sign's illumination is proven to be adverse to the existing neighborhood.

#### **Agenda Item #5 --- Planning & Conservation Department Report**

Anne Capra detailed the following items:

- *Signature authorization* - Due to the Covid-19 State of Emergency, the Board could authorize staff to sign permits and plans on their behalf. The Board authorized such for the previous Director of Planning and Conservation. The Board could make a similar motion to authorize Anne Capra to do the same.

**Motion:** Clerk Brown moved to authorize Director of Planning and Conservation, Anne Capra, to sign permits on the Board's behalf after the Board votes on each permit due to the Covid-19 state of emergency. Vice-Chair Mulvaney seconded the motion. Five (5) out of five (5) members voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

Clerk Brown left the meeting at 8:15 PM.

- *McKinley Avenue Duplex*- The public hearing to consider the Special Permit was continued to September 13.
- *Grant Activity*- Department staff were in the process of initiating the contact for the MassWorks infrastructure improvements to Lyman Street. Drafted recommendations from studies funded through the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Grant Program for

economic recovery relating to the Covid-19 pandemic would be available soon. The MassTrails grant application for parking improvements to the Leaping Well Nature Trail had not been funded. However, funding for such improvements could be applied for again under different grant applications.

- *Master Plan update*- The Board finished their review of the draft and edits would be incorporated before the draft would be available for public comment.
- Upcoming meeting dates- The Board reviewed the upcoming meeting dates for the remainder of the calendar year.

**Agenda Item #6 --- Other New Business**

- *Permit Fee Waiver*- A resident expressed interest in filing a special permit for installation of an 8-foot fence. They requested relief from the application fee as was similarly done for an earlier application for the same use. Members indicated that they supported a reduction in the filing fee to \$50.
- *Meeting with Town Counsel* - As the Board was aware, the applicant of the North Pole Estates Subdivision had appealed the Board’s decision of denial. Town Counsel had been made available to members via email. However, a meeting under executive session could be sought if the Board desired. No members indicated a need for a meeting with Town Counsel at this time.
- *Hybrid Meetings*- Members considered including a future agenda item to discuss how meetings would be held during transition back to in-person meetings

**Agenda Item #7 --- Adjournment**

**Motion:** Vice-Chair Mulvaney moved to adjourn the meeting. Member Davis seconded the motion. Four (4) out of four (4) members present voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

**As Approved**

Colleen Canning, Senior Clerk

Planning and Conservation Department

| <b>Document</b>   | <b>Document Location</b> |
|---|--------------------------|
| Q&A Report  | Attached                 |
| Notice of Sale – 225 & 229 Hadley Street                | Planning Files           |
| Illuminated Sign Application – South Hadley High School | Planning Files           |

## August 16, 2021 Planning Board Meeting Question & Answer Transcript

| # | Question                                   | Asker Name      | Asker Email             | Answer(s)     |
|---|--|-----------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | Think I was moved to public from panelist. | Michael Adelman | mike.adelman@icloud.com | live answered |