

Background Materials – October 23, 2023– Planning Board Meeting

Prepared by Anne Capra, Director of Planning and Conservation, 10/20/23

Cable Access Channel 15 –The Cable Studio has indicated that this meeting will be live streamed on Channel 15.

AGENDA ITEM #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 8/8/22, posted on the Town of South Hadley Planning and Conservation Department webpage here:

<https://southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/9842/Open-Comment-Period-Policy---As-Adopted-2022-08-08>

Action Needed: Allow members of the public to offer comments to the Board.

AGENDA ITEM #2 Minutes

Planning and Conservation Coordinator Colleen Canning will forward minutes separately.

Action Needed: Vote to approve the minutes.

AGENDA ITEM #3 Correspondence

Correspondence is attached.

Action Needed: No action needed.

6:30 PM AGENDA ITEM #3 Illuminated Sign Permit and Special Permit for Pre-existing Non-conforming Use – 17 Bridge Street

Project plans are online here: [Bridge St \(17\) - Sign | South Hadley, MA - Official Website](#)

The owners of 17 Bridge Street (Map 5C, Parcel 27 - existing Sunoco Gas Station) are updating the gas canopy, exterior lighting and signage at the gas station (see online plans). The property is within the Business B zoning district. Therefore, they have submitted: 1) Illuminated Sign Permit application, and 2) Special Permit application for the expansion or alteration of a pre-existing nonconforming structure.

Special Permit - Alteration of Preexisting Nonconforming Structure

The freestanding price sign and pole at the southwest corner of the property, at the intersection of South Main and Bridge Streets is preexisting non-conforming structure under the Zoning Bylaw 255-85 Signs due to its size, and an expansion or alteration of it requires a Special Permit. It appears to meet the standard of a minimum of 10' from the street line. Dimensionally, the sign may not exceed an area of one square foot for each four lineal feet of lot frontage occupied by the premises, or 60 square feet, whichever is smaller.

- Parcel frontage: 150'
- Sign maximum allowed per zoning: 37.5 sq.ft.
- Existing sign: 19.8 sq.ft. plus Sunoco diamond sign (unknown size but appears to be at least 1 ½ times as large as the existing fuel price sign)



Thus, the existing fuel price sign in combination with the Sunoco diamond sign exceeds the allowed size and is being considered pre-existing non-conforming.

Submitted plans indicate a proposal to utilize the existing freestanding sign pole and replace the existing illuminated single price sign with an illuminated dual price sign, of the same overall dimensions. Only pricing will be illuminated; sign will not be backlit. The existing Sunoco diamond sign will remain and not be illuminated. To be granted a Special Permit, the Board must make a finding that the alteration shall not be more detrimental to the neighborhood that it is located in than the existing structure.

Illuminated Signs

Plans submitted indicate the following are proposed for illumination:

1. Freestanding dual price sign – only pricing information illuminated; existing Sunoco diamond to remain as is (not illuminated).
2. Gas Canopy –
 - a. Proposed blue replacement panels on four sides proposed for strip illumination.
 - b. Right and left panels also to include illuminated Sunoco diamond.
3. Under Canopy Gas Dispensers – Proposed illuminated dispenser valance with Sunoco diamond; bottom dispenser valance illuminated with gas brand log.

255-85 (G) Sign Bylaw standards for illumination:

- (2) Adverse to surrounding neighborhood or community. Signs which illuminate more than what is necessary to convey the message or name being promoted or create glare which may impact motorists are generally considered to have an adverse impact on the community. Such adverse impact arises from excessive light pollution. Therefore, in determining whether to approve the illumination of a sign, the Planning Board shall:
 - (a) Consider and minimize the illumination impact of the signage illumination on the surrounding properties; and
 - (b) Only approve internally illuminated signs where only the lettering or logo of the enterprise or message being promoted are illuminated; and
 - (c) Ensure that the illuminated sign does not illuminate adjoining or nearby residential properties or pose a danger to motorists on adjoining or nearby roadways which might arise from glare from the illumination source; and
 - (d) Not approve exposed or illuminated neon signs; and
 - (e) Require that illumination sources not illuminate the background or field of a sign except to the extent that the background or field (due to the shape of the sign area) is clearly a logo of the company or enterprise being advertised.

Department Comments – The following departments/entities stated they have no comments or concerns: Assessor, Conservation Administrator, District 1 Water Superintendent, DPW Director, Public Health Director, and Historical Commission Chair. Police Chief Gundersen stated she would like the neighboring liquor store, which is under the same ownership but on a separate parcel, to stop putting the portable sign board on the sidewalk where it creates an obstacle for pedestrians.

Action Needed: Conduct the public hearing, review and discuss both applications, and vote on each application. Seek clarification/confirmation on the following:

1. Sunoco diamond on freestanding pole sign is currently not illuminated and not proposed for illuminations.
2. Canopy illumination – Strip lighting does not appear to be related to any logo or sign lettering. Colored backlighting of canopy not in compliance with standards in 255-85 (G).

Recommended Motion: Motion that the Board makes a finding that the alteration of the freestanding sign will not be more detrimental to the neighborhood that it is located in than the existing structure and grants a Special Permit for the alteration of a preexisting non-conforming sign; and, issue an Illuminated Sign Permit for the signs (as modified by the Board in discussion).

AGENDA ITEM #4 Draft Housing Production Plan Public Hearing Continuation

The Planning Board is continuing the Public Hearing on the Draft Housing Production Plan to receive comments from the public on the plan. The public hearing was opened on 9/25/23. Below are links to the plan and ways to submit comment.

Housing Production Plan (HPP) Update – Public Comment Period Open until October 25th

- Draft Plan, Executive Summary, and a Video recording of the plan overview are available online:
 - ◆ <https://shhousingplan.org/resources/draft-plan/>
 - ◆ <https://shhousingplan.org/resources/>
- Hard copies available for review at: Town Hall, Senior Center, Public Library
- Email comments: acapra@southhadleyma.gov
 Submit via Google form: <https://forms.gle/xWSNuKpPWowzaqYcA>

Housing Production Plan (HPP) Revised Schedule

Below is the **REVISED** schedule for the HPP, as approved by the Planning Board on 6/26/23. The revised schedule is based on public comment on the amended timeline put forth in May.

DATE	TASKS
8/28	Final Draft HPP issued for public comment (60-day comment period)
9/13	Community Forum #3 – Senior Center, 45 Dayton Street @ 7-9pm
9/25	Draft HPP Public Hearing Opened

10/23	Draft HPP Public Hearing continuation (TBD)
10/25	60-day Public Comment Period ends
10/26-11/8	HPP revisions by consultant
11/9	Final HPP issued
December	Joint Selectboard & Planning Board Meeting for adoption

Action Needed: Continue the Public Hearing and receive comments from the public. Close the public hearing after all members of the public wishing to comment at the hearing have had a chance to do so.

AGENDA ITEM #5 Discussion on MPIC Bylaw Proposed Amendments

MPIC has made some minor updates to the proposed bylaw reviewed by the Planning Board at their 10/2/23 meeting, based on comments from Town Counsel and the Bylaw Review Committee. MOIC Chair Nate Therien will review the proposed changes with the Board for their support and approval.

Action Needed: Discuss proposed changes, vote to approve/support the proposed amendments to the MPIC Bylaw.

AGENDA ITEM #6 Discussion on Subdivision Regulations Update – Design Standards and Required Improvements

If time allows after the first half of the agenda is concluded, and at the Board’s discretion, discussion of the Design Standards may continue. At the Board’s 10/2/23 meeting, the Board completed review of Article IX Design Principles and Standards. Discussion will resume with Article X Required Improvements for Subdivisions (page 10-1). As with All materials prepared for this are posted online here: <https://southhadley.org/1318/ProposedDraft-Bylaws>

The draft materials are based on the subdivision regulation model prepared by PVPC, with the participation of South Hadley staff including former Planning Director Richard Harris, Anne Capra, then Conservation Administrator, former DPW Director Jim Reidy, and Public Health Director Sharon Hart. Detailed comparison of the PVPC Model for “Required Improvements” versus South Hadley’s existing Subdivision Regulations are online here:

<https://southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/11570/Comparison-of-Existing-Subdivision-Regs-to-Model-Regs---Required-Improvements>

Action Needed: Continue discussion on updates and revisions to the Subdivision Regulations beginning with Article X.

AGENDA ITEM #5

Planning & Conservation Department Report on Planning Projects and Development Updates

A. Fall Housing Speaker Series

Join us for a three-part speaker series to explore affordable housing in western Massachusetts. The term "affordable housing" means different things to different people, and often is associated with stereotypes and misperceptions about what it will look like, who will live there, and how it will impact local neighborhoods and the community. Come hear from affordable housing developers and policy experts about projects they have built and operate in communities surrounding South Hadley.

<https://southhadley.org/1373/What-is-Affordable-Housing>

Links to the two presentations held so far are here:

- [Monday, 10/2 at 3pm – What is Affordable Housing, How is it Built, and Who is Involved](#)
- [Wednesday, 10/18 at 7pm – Housing for All: Workforce, Middle Income and Affordable](#)

Wednesday, 11/29 at 7pm – Housing as a Human Right

Flier: [Housing-Speaker-Series-Flier---112923 \(southhadley.org\)](#)

Please click the **LINK** below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86091171588?pwd=WHEzVUNQQk1oZVljbmtdDU3L1pOQT09>

Or By Phone: 1 (646) 558 8656

Webinar ID: 860 9117 1588

Passcode: 044290

B. MVP 2.0

South Hadley has been awarded a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) 2.0 Grant. The focus of the program is to improve resiliency to the impacts of climate change in the most vulnerable populations with a focus on social equity. The program website is here:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/mvp-20#mvp-planning-2.0-overview->

The Town has contracted with the Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts as a consultant. We are in the process of establishing the Core Team which will include 5-6 town staff members and 5-6 community liaisons. It is intended that the community liaisons will be representative of so-called "priority populations" as defined by the MVP program. For the purposes of this program, climate vulnerable populations include Environmental Justice (EJ) populations and other priority populations that may be disproportionately impacted by climate change due to life circumstances that systematically increase their exposure to climate hazards or make it harder to respond. In addition to factors that contribute to EJ status (i.e. income, race, and language), other factors like physical ability, access to transportation, health status, and age shape whether someone or their community will be disproportionately affected by climate change. MVP 2.0 expands on the climate resilience work the Town of South Hadley has done to date. Learn more about past MVP projects in South Hadley here: <https://www.southhadley.org/1263/11839/Municipal-Vulnerability-Preparedness-MVP?activeLiveTab=widgets>

C. Community Planning Grant Awarded – Re-Zoning Routes 202 and 33

The Town was awarded a Community Planning Grant through the recent One Stop for Growth Grant Round in the amount of \$68,000. We are awaiting issuance of a contract from the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC). In summary, the project would implement new zoning and design guidelines for Routes 202 and 33, as identified in a 2022 Corridor Assessment, to address the broad mix of commercial and residential uses along the corridor by creating three new zoning districts for mixed use that promote new multifamily housing units, support existing residential, and allows for new economic growth. The project seeks to amend the zoning bylaw to establish an identity for the corridor by defining gateways, clustering uses appropriately, and recommending design guidelines for new development or substantial rehabilitation/redevelopment. This project would develop the 2022 Plan's three new recommended zoning districts (Gateway, Low-Density Mixed Use, and Open Space and Recreation), new design guidelines for these districts, and amend the zoning map to include the districts. The goal of these new regulations is to cluster new commercial development along existing infrastructure consistent with sustainable growth patterns while providing safe connections for pedestrian, bicyclists and drivers; a variety of housing types and job opportunities; and preserve valuable open space and recreational resources.

D. Next Planning Board Meetings and Other Important Dates

Planning Board typically meets the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month.

10/25	Draft HPP - Public Comment Period Closes
11/13 – PB Mtg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Center/Warner/Graves Streets Infrastructure Improvement Project – DPW, BETA Engineering & PVPC 506 Granby Road – Redevelopment Concept Discussion
11/15	Housing Speaker Series – Workshop #3 – 7pm via Zoom
11/27 – PB Mtg	
12/4 – PB Mtg	
12/18 – PB Mtg	

E. Sign up for Planning Board Alerts

Planning and Conservation Department Coordinator Colleen Canning has put together instructional guides on how to signup for Planning Board alerts (and any other boards/commissions) via the Town website. PDFs of these guides are attached. Alerts include postings of meeting agendas, minutes, newsflash postings, etc. You can customize your notifications and whether you want to receive them by email or text here:

[Alerts & Notifications | South Hadley, MA - Official Website](#)

You can also sign up for CivicReady mass notification on the website too. This is for various weather alerts and emergency notifications.

Please share these guides with your networks. Although the Department goes to great lengths to share information with the public on current projects and general business through a variety of media outlets

and formats, residents need to accept some responsibility for tuning into those outlets. If you are not already signed up for Planning Board alerts via the website, please do so now!

AGENDA ITEM #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 CORRESPONDENCES
OCTOBER 23, 2023 REGULAR MEETING**

Letters & Memos

- Development update from Jesse Lui regarding redevelopment of 27 Bardwell Street, the project to convert the former Library to multi-unit housing. (attached)

Legal Notices

Amherst

- Notice from the Amherst Zoning Board of Appeals for a public hearing on October 12 to consider a special permit request to convert an owner occupied duplex into a non-owner occupied duplex at 62 Taylor St.
- Notice from the Amherst Zoning Board of Appeals for a public hearing on October 19 to consider a comprehensive permit to construct 30 affordable residential units in 15 duplex structures at 20-40 Ball Lane.
- Notice of decision received from the Amherst Zoning Board of Appeals for the following: 1) special permit to expand existing care taker apartment at 19 Research Drive; and 2) special permit to change use and expand non-conforming single family home into a 3-family at 65 Taylor St.

Chicopee

- Notice from the Chicopee Planning Board for public hearings on November 2 to consider the following: 1) Preliminary Site Plan Waiver for a contract construction services facility at New Ludlow Road and Ludlow Road; 2) Zone Change on East Main St from Business A to Garden Industrial Planned Development 2; 3) Zone Change at 15 Wawal St from Residential A to Residential C; 4) Zone Change at 19 Beaumont St from Residential A to Business A; and 5) preliminary site plan with waiver for drive-through coffee shop and three residential lots at 0 and 523 James St.
- Notice of decision from the Chicopee Zoning Board of Appeals for approval of a variance from front setbacks to construct an attached garage at 621 Grattan St.

Granby

- Notice from the Granby Board of Appeals for a public hearing on November 2 to consider a variance for construction of a new home on a nonconforming lot at 146 East St.

Hadley

- Notice from the Hadley Planning Board for a public hearing on October 17 to consider amendments to the Hadley Zoning Bylaw.

Holyoke

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Oct 10, 2023

Anne Capra
Director of Planning & Conservation
Town of South Hadley
413-538-5017 Ext 128

Hi Anne,
I'm happy to report that we are continuing work to finish units 3,4, &w5. Without the burdens of satisfying the expectations of unit buyers, I expect to proceed more rapidly with the work.

Status to date:

Our current estimate for completion of units 3,4, &5 is still around October 30 though some of the tiles materials we ordered are out of stock, this might be cost slightly delayed.

Yours,

Jesse Liu

What is Affordable Housing?

The term "affordable housing" means different things to different people, and often is associated with stereotypes and misperceptions about what it will look like, who will live there, and how it will impact local neighborhoods and the community. Come hear from affordable housing developers and policy experts about projects they have built and operate in communities surrounding South Hadley.

Join us for part three of the virtual speaker series exploring Affordable Housing in western Massachusetts.

Wednesday, November 29th @ 7PM

“Housing as a Human Right”

Featuring a Keynote presentation from **Rose Webster-Smith**, from Springfield No One Leaves, and guest presenters **Senator Adam Gomez**, Hampden District, and **Darcy Jacobson**, from Beacon Communities LLC.

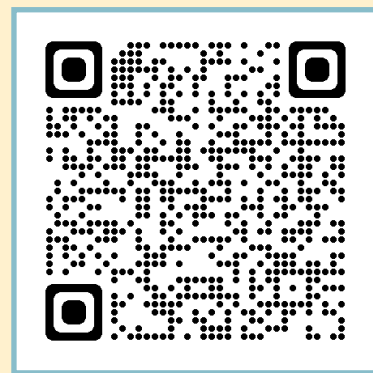
SPEAKER SERIES PAST EVENTS:

October 2, 2023

“What is Affordable Housing, How is it Built, and Who is Involved?”

October 18, 2023

“Housing for All: Workforce, Middle-income, and Affordable”



Zoom Login Information & past events' Recordings and Presentations

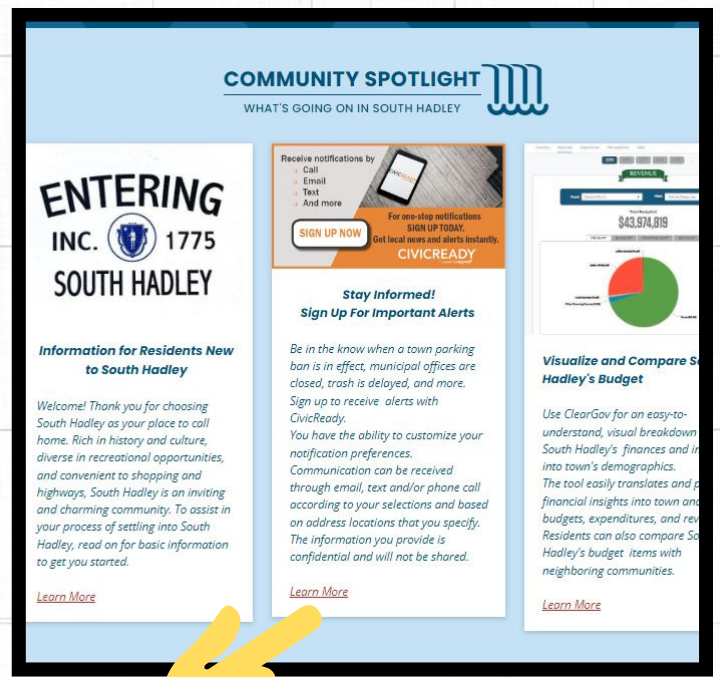
How to Signup for Board and Commission alerts

STEP 1

Go to [southhadley.org](https://www.southhadley.org) and scroll to the bottom of the page. Click 'learn more' at the bottom on the 'Stay Informed! Sign Up For Important Alerts' text box.

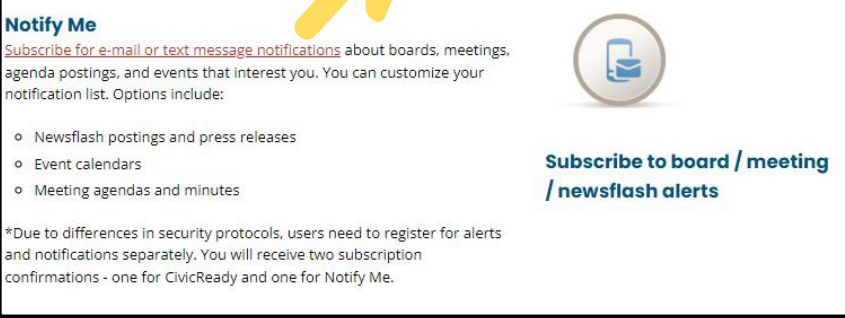
Alternatively, you can go directly to the web link here:

<https://www.southhadley.org/517/Alerts-Notifications>



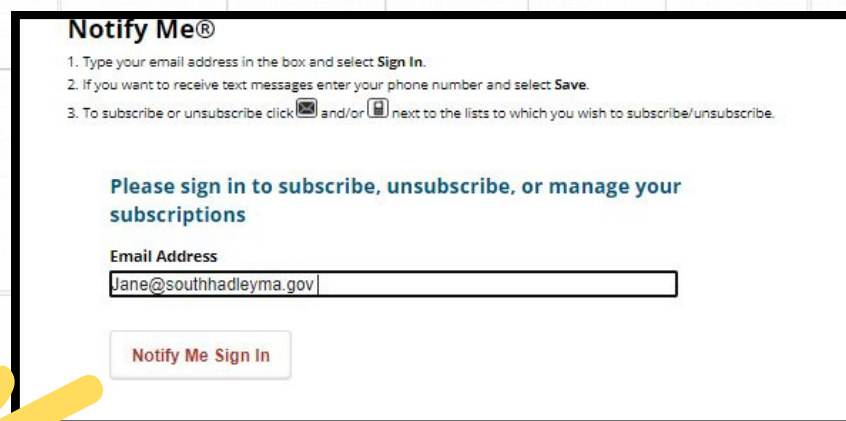
STEP 2

Scroll to the bottom of the page and click 'Subscribe for email or text message notifications' under the 'notify me' section.



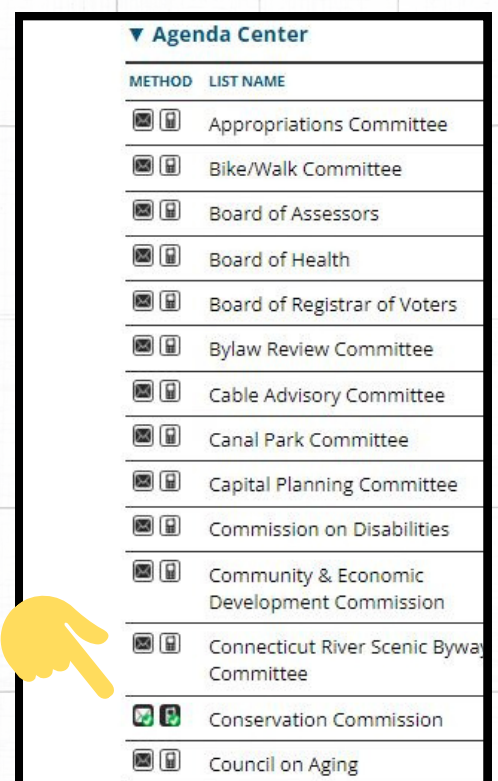
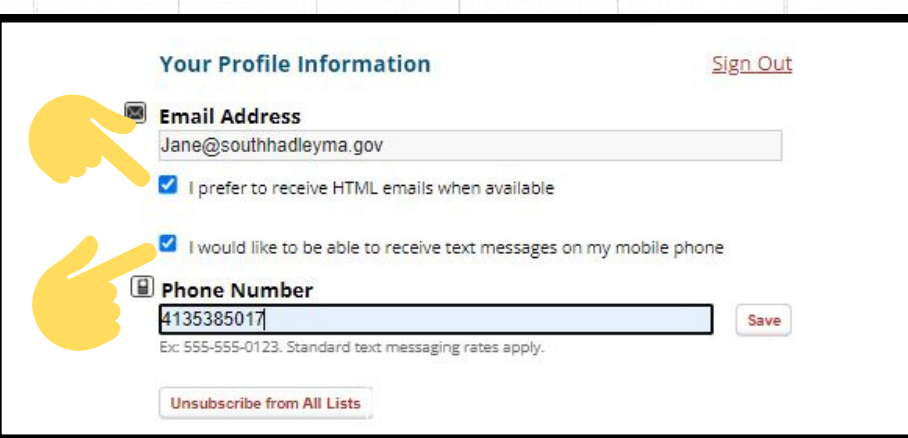
STEP 3

Provide email and click 'notify me sign in' below.



STEP 4

Select preference for email or text message notification (or both!)



STEP 5

Scroll through the selections. To sign up for alerts for Board and Commission agendas, select your notification preference (email or text)

STEP 6

You will receive a message via the method you selected to confirm your interest. Following confirmation, you'll start receiving updates! To change your notification preferences, follow the same steps above.

How to Sign up for Board and Commission Alerts

Step #1 - Go to [southhadley.org](https://www.southhadley.org) and scroll to the bottom of the page. Click 'learn more' at the bottom on the 'Stay Informed! Sign Up For Important Alerts' text box. (Alternaly, you can go directly to the web link here: <https://www.southhadley.org/517/Alerts-Notifications>)

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT
WHAT'S GOING ON IN SOUTH HADLEY

ENTERING INC. 1775 SOUTH HADLEY

Information for Residents New to South Hadley

Welcome! Thank you for choosing South Hadley as your place to call home. Rich in history and culture, diverse in recreational opportunities, and convenient to shopping and highways, South Hadley is an inviting and charming community. To assist in your process of settling into South Hadley, read on for basic information to get you started.

[Learn More](#)

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Get local news and alerts instantly.

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CIVICREADY

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[Learn More](#)

Visualize and Compare South Hadley's Budget

Use ClearGov for an easy-to-understand, visual breakdown of South Hadley's finances and insights into town's demographics. The tool easily translates and provides financial insights into town and school budgets, expenditures, and revenues. Residents can also compare South Hadley's budget items with neighboring communities.

[Learn More](#)

Step #2 - Scroll to the bottom of the page and click 'Subscribe for email or text message notifications' under the 'notify me' section.

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[Subscribe for e-mail or text message notifications](#) about boards, meetings, agenda postings, and events that interest you. You can customize your notification list. Options include:

- Newsflash postings and press releases
- Event calendars
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*Due to differences in security protocols, users need to register for alerts and notifications separately. You will receive two subscription confirmations - one for CivicReady and one for Notify Me.



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3. To subscribe or unsubscribe click  and/or  next to the lists to which you wish to subscribe/unsubscribe.

Please sign in to subscribe, unsubscribe, or manage your subscriptions

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I prefer to receive HTML emails when available

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METHOD	LIST NAME
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<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Board of Health
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Board of Registrar of Voters
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Bylaw Review Committee
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Cable Advisory Committee
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Canal Park Committee
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Capital Planning Committee
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Commission on Disabilities
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Community & Economic Development Commission
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Connecticut River Scenic Byway Committee
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Conservation Commission
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Council on Aging

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to me ▾

1

Please confirm your new subscription

Your subscription to the list below has not yet been confirmed. Please click on this link to verify your email address and start receiving emails.

<https://www.southhadley.org/list.aspx?mode=Subscribe&code=f28c4b6e-7d83-4810-887a-2557e902fb4b>

If clicking the link doesn't work, please copy and paste the link into your browser.

Unconfirmed List:

Conservation Commission