

Background Materials March 11, 2024– Planning Board Meeting

Prepared by Anne Capra, Director of Planning and Conservation, 3/5/24

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

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Background Reports for all Planning Board meetings are posted online:

<https://www.southhadley.org/1274/Agenda-Background-Materials>

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 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.

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 are attached.

Action Needed: No action needed.

AGENDA ITEM #4 Illuminated Sign Request – 500 Granby Road – All Creatures Big and Small Animal Hospital

This is an illuminated sign request to install a replacement freestanding illuminated sign for All Creatures Big and Small Animal Hospital at 500 Granby Road, Assessor Map 32 Parcel 76.

Application online here: <https://www.southhadley.org/1399/Granby-Road-500---All-Creatures-Big-and->

During the reconstruction of Granby Road approximately two years ago, MassDOT requested the sign be removed during construction. The old sign was apparently damaged during that process and they are requesting to install a new sign of the same size (26 sq.ft.). The illumination is described as backlit for the entire panel. I have spoken to the property owner and the sign company and explained that only the text and the logo can be illuminated. It does appear that the image of window with the pets in fact part of their logo (see online materials). The sign designer was looking into redesign to only illuminate the text. In terms of the location, because the ROW is owned by MassDOT, I requested the property owner submit permission for placement of the sign, which was granted (see online materials).

Recommendations: Clarify the status of the illumination – fully backlit or not. Identify hours of illumination. Handwritten notes on hard copy submission state “dusk to dawn”. Other illuminated sign permits have limited illumination to hours of operation or within a few hours of such for employee arrival. It may be the case that this business has overnight clients and overnight illumination is appropriate.

Action Needed: Conduct public meeting. Answer questions noted above. To approve the sign illumination, the Planning Board must make a determination that the sign will not be adverse to the character of the surrounding neighborhood or the community.

AGENDA ITEM #5 Discussion on Flexible Development Bylaw and Associated Bylaw Amendments

If time permits, we will continue discussion on these bylaw amendments. The Board began discussion of these bylaw amendments on 1/22/24. A detailed report summarizing the comprehensive bylaw amendment package is attached to this report. All proposed bylaw amendments are online [here](https://southhadley.org/1318/ProposedDraft-Bylaws): <https://southhadley.org/1318/ProposedDraft-Bylaws>

Town Counsel has reviewed the proposed bylaws and provided guidance for some changes that we will discuss. Revised versions of 255-31 Flexible Development and the Use Regulations Schedule are now posted to the website based on her comments.

There was discussion on considering lowering the acreage threshold in the Flexible Development Bylaw from five acres to three acres. To help us envision what increased density might look like, I’ve uploaded some density studies from other communities provided through MassPlanners. Most are for multifamily developments but thought they were worth sharing for this exploratory discussion (scroll to bottom of page at link below).

[Proposed/Draft Bylaws | South Hadley, MA - Official Website](#)

Action Needed: Continue discussion on amendments to Flexible Development Bylaw and associated bylaws.

AGENDA ITEM #6

Planning & Conservation Department Report on Planning Projects and Development Updates

A. Route 202/33 Corridor Rezoning Project – Advisory Committee

In response to the Request for Proposals for a consultant to develop rezoning recommendations and design guidelines for the Routes 202 and 33 corridor, we have received proposals from three firms. Those proposals are under review by Town staff (Assistant Town Administrator, Highway Superintendent, and Director of Planning and Conservation) and a recommendation will be made to the Town Administrator for awarding a contract. In the meantime, I am working to set up the project Advisory Committee.

The project Advisory Committee will consist of the following members, to be appointed by the Town Administrator:

- Business owner within the study area (1)
- Residential property owner within the corridor (1)
- Resident at large (2) - each representing Town Meeting Precincts other than the corridor (corridor spans A, C and E)
- Planning Board Member (1)
- Planning Director

Advertisement for committee members is being posted through the Town website and social media, as well as the Town Reminder. To apply, complete the application form here: [Form Center • Application for Appointment to Board, Commissi \(southhadley.org\)](#) In the field “Other” write in “Route 202/33 Corridor Re-Zoning Advisory Committee”. **Applications are due Wednesday, March 13th by 3pm.**

Planning Board Member – One (1) Planning Board member will serve on the five member advisory committee. The Board needs to identify this member tonight.

Advisory Committee Roles and Responsibilities

The Advisory Committee will work with the project consultant and Director of Planning and Conservation to review and comment on analyses, draft re-zoning recommendations and draft design guidelines. Committee members are expected to participate in the following meetings and public engagement activities between April 1, 2024 thru May 1, 2025:

- Attend Advisory Committee meetings (6 to 8) – virtual and in person
- Review and comment on draft materials as developed by project consultant
- Attend public workshops (two in person, one virtual)
- Attend Planning Board public hearing (up to 4)

A summary of the project and scope of work is online [here: Route-202--33-Corridor-Re-Zoning-Project-Description \(southhadley.org\)](#)

B. Next Planning Board Meetings and Other Important Dates

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

3/25/24 – PB Mtg	6:30 Public Hearing Non-owner Occupied STR – 5 Pine Street
TUESDAY 4/9/24 – PB Mtg	
4/22/24 – PB Mtg	

5/6 – PB Mtg	
5/8/24	Annual Town Meeting
5/20 – PB Mtg	
6/10/24 – PB Mtg	
6/24/24 – PB Mtg	

AGENDA ITEM #7 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.