

Background Materials November 25, 2024– Planning Board Meeting

Prepared by Anne Capra, Director of Planning and Conservation, 11/22/24

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 – 501 Newton Street – Rocky’s Ace Hardware and Garden Center

Plans are online here: <https://www.southhadley.org/1451/Newton-Street-501---New-Rockys-Ace-Hardw>

The permit is for a 135 SF illuminated wall sign on the face of the new hardware store under construction. Only the lettering will be illuminated at nighttime. Hours of illumination are not identified in the application. The only standard for the Board to consider for an Illuminated Sign Permit is whether the proposed illumination is adverse to the surrounding neighborhood or community:

255-85 (G)(2) Standards for Adverse to Surrounding Neighborhood or Community:

- a. Illumination impact on surrounding properties – must be considered and minimized.
- b. Internally illuminated signs for lettering or logo or message being promoted only.
- c. Illumination does not illuminate adjoining or nearby residential properties or pose a danger to motorists on adjoining or nearby roadways from glare.
- d. Background or field of sign cannot be illuminated.

Department Comments:

Building, Jason Forgue – Sign Permit application has sign size reduced to 122 SF. No other comments.

DPW, John Broderick – DPW has no concerns.

Police, Chief Gundersen – No comments or concerns to add.

Water District 2, Jeff Cyr – We have no comments or concerns.

Action Needed: Discuss project with applicant representative including hours of illumination, take questions from the public. The Board must make a finding that the sign will not be adverse to the character of the surrounding neighborhood or the community. Motion and vote on the application.

Recommended Motion: I motion to make a finding that the sign will not be adverse to the character of the surrounding neighborhood or the community, and to grant an illuminated sign permit, with the following conditions (e.g. hours of illumination, etc.).

AGENDA ITEM #5 Request for Waiver from site plan requirements for Special Permit and Site Plan Review Application – 460 Amherst Road, VJ’s Convenience

Waiver request is online here: <https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/13454/Patel---460-Amherst-Road-South-Hadley-MA---Request-for-Waiver-of-Site-Plan-Requirements?bidId=>

Heritage Land Survey has been contracted by Mr. VJ Patel to prepare necessary permits to add U-haul truck sharing at this location, accessory to the existing convenience store. These permits would entail a Special Permit for the expansion or alteration of a preexisting nonconforming use, and Site Plan Review for a “Business Service” in the Business B zoning district.

The request before the Board at this time is a request for a waiver of some of the site plan requirements, specifically all of the supplemental details in #2 as listed below, with the exception of (j) which pertains to easements. There is an access easement across the property and they are proposing to include that on the site plan.

Per the [Planning Board Rules and Regulations for Special Permits](#), the Board may grant a waiver from application standards as it deems necessary and appropriate.

2) Applications for Special Permits involving site changes shall include a plan which has all of the details required for all applications (Section IV-1 above), the Legend (Section IV-4 below), and the following supplemental details (existing and proposed conditions – if applicable):

- a) parking plans and agreements (including the location and dimension of parking areas, and any joint use arrangements)
- b) location of dumpster/trash storage receptacle
- c) location of screening/fences
- d) lighting/illumination plans (including location of all exterior lighting and, when applicable, requirements of Chapter 171 of the Town’s General Bylaws)
- e) existing grades and proposed finish grades (at 2 foot contours unless the Planning Board specifies otherwise)
- f) landscape plan, plant quantities and specifications, and a planting schedule prepared by a registered landscape architect
- g) location of all utilities (water, sewer, gas, and electric) – differentiate between above ground and below ground utilities
- h) location of septic and well systems
- i) location of drainage systems
- j) location, dimensions, and purposes of easements
- k) extent and character of existing green space and proposed green space
- l) location of sidewalks on the proposed development and along the street on which the proposed development has vehicular access for a distance of at least 300 feet in both directions from the corners of the project site
- m) proposed form of Performance Guarantee

X. Waiver of Application Requirements. The Planning Board may waive any of the above requirements as they deem necessary or appropriate in particular cases. Any request for a waiver of the requirements of these Rules and Regulations must be submitted in writing either before the application is submitted or as part of the application. Requests for waivers shall include a specific recitation of the requirement for which a waiver is sought and how the absence of the required information will not impede consideration of the application in light of the Standards stated in Section 255-129 of the South Hadley Zoning Bylaw.

Action Needed:

This is not a public hearing. The applicant’s representative is anticipated to attend. The Board must deliberate on the request and take a vote as to whether or not to grant the requested site plan waivers.

AGENDA ITEM #6 Associate Planning Board Member Appointment

The Board has interviewed John Parenteau and Walter Hamilton. Applications included in background reports for [11/4 Walter Hamilton](#), and [10/28 John Parenteau](#).

Action Needed: The Board needs to motion and vote on the appointment of one of the two candidates for the position. The Selectboard has requested the Planning Board join them at their 11/26 meeting to

make the appointment. Alternatively, I could report the Board’s vote to them to consider in their half of the appointment.

AGENDA ITEM #7 Discussion of Special Town Meeting Action on Articles 9, 10, 11, 12

Special Town Meeting Results:

https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/13446/2024_11_13_STM_Electronic_Results?bidId=

The four zoning articles failed at the Special Town Meeting on November 13, 2024. The Planning Board is not bound to the moratorium on repetitive petitions and may take a zoning article back to Town Meeting whenever they want. The Board should consider whether or not it is warranted to continue work on these bylaws given the vote count. There is *a lot* of other work to be done and it doesn’t seem useful to continue investing time into these efforts.

At the 12/2/24 board meeting, we will take back up revisions to the Subdivision Regulations. The approach to revision of the regs will need to be revised based on the failure of these amendments/adoption of new bylaws. We will discuss this in detail at our next meeting.

	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	No Vote
Article 9 – Amend 255-31 Flexible Development	39	51	1	4
Article 10 – Adopt 255-95 Common Drive	43	43	4	5
Article 11 – Adopt 255-96 Common Open Space	38	51	2	4
Article 12 – Amend 255-47 Multifamily and multiple dwellings	38	48	5	4

Action Needed: No action needed.

AGENDA ITEM #8 Discussion of Dry Brook Aquifer Study

UMASS has released the *Geotechnical and Environmental Tracer Study of Dry Brook Hill Aquifer, South Hadley, MA*: <https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/13452/Geochemical-and-Environmental-Tracer-Study-of-Dry-Brook-Hill-Aquifer-South-Hadley-MA>

UMASS was commissioned to conduct a study of the Dry Brook aquifer to refine an understanding about the contributing area and connections between aquifers and source waters of the Dry Brook aquifer. A total of 63 water samples from 15 groundwater and surface water locations were taken and analyzed using a hydrogeochemical tracer analysis methodology. The results support the overall findings of the physical hydrological assessment described in the 2004 USGS Study of the Dry Brook Aquifer (Garabedian and Stone, 2004).

There will be a public presentation by the UMASS research team on:

Tuesday, January 14, 2025 @ 6PM

In Person Location: South Hadley Council on Aging, 45 Dayton Street, South Hadley, MA

Virtual Meeting Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82935405426?pwd=TTigMzkBDrjtMRgWvfXT9fWaqM3Zbl.1>

Or Telephone: +1 646 558 8656

Webinar ID: 829 3540 5426

Passcode: 604015

Action Needed: No action needed. See Planning Board work plan items for 2025.

AGENDA ITEM #9 Business A-1 Zoning Amendments Approved by Attorney General
AG Approval memo: [Business-A-1-Zoning-Amendment-Article-27---Attorney-General-Approval---October-2024](#)

Report to Town Meeting with proposed bylaw amendments (p.8):
<https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/12857/Article-27---Planning-Board-Report-to-Town-Meeting---Business-A-1-Zoning-Amendment-rev>

At Annual Town Meeting on May 8, 2024, the Town adopted amendments to the Business A-1 zoning district to allow multi-family residences by right (with site plan and design review) in this district, subject to a temporary moratorium until June 2025 while the Town adopts design review guidelines as required by the bylaw. The Board needs to discuss how and when these guidelines will be developed.

Per the bylaw, the Planning Board is to adopt Design Review as stated:

- (4) Design Review; architectural design standards.*
- (a) Any multifamily development in the Business A-1 zoning district is subject to Design Review by the Planning Board.*
- (b) The Planning Board shall adopt such regulations as may be necessary to further specify design standards.*
- (c) Except as provided in § 255-51B, no Site Plan may be granted approval and no building permit may be issued for any dwelling units under this section unless and until the development has been approved under the Planning Board Design Review process.*
- (d) Architectural design shall be compatible with the character and scale of similarly used buildings in the area of the Town in which the multifamily dwellings are to be located.*
- (e) To the extent practicable and legal, a project's pedestrian and bicycle access routes shall be interconnected with adjoining and nearby pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure; however, nothing in this section may require an applicant to acquire additional land or easements to accomplish such interconnection.*
- (f) Landscaping elements should be integrated into the project site's natural terrain to the extent practical and appropriate.*
- (g) Design standards promulgated by the Planning Board may provide for the use of appropriate building materials, façade treatments, screening, breaks in roof and wall lines and other architectural techniques to encourage compatibility and variability.*
- (h) Design Review and associated standards should also encourage, where practicable and legally viable, the integration of the proposed development's circulatory network into that of adjoining and nearby developments.*
- (i) The Planning Board may take into consideration whether exterior building facades and materials are consistent with South Hadley's character.*

AGENDA ITEM #7 Planning & Conservation Department Report on Planning Projects and Development Updates

A. Next Planning Board Meetings and Other Important Dates

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

The Board should identify meeting dates in May and June so that the COA’s multipurpose room can be reserved.

12/2/24	Rocky’s Hardware, 501 Newton Street SPR Amendment Request Subdivision Regulations Updates
12/9/24	
January – 1/13 & 1/27/25	February – 2/10 & 2/24/25
March – 3/10 & 3/24/25	April – 4/14 & 4/28/25
May	June

B. Pending Bylaw and Regulation Updates

The following items are on the Planning Board docket for 2025. The Board should discuss prioritization of these items.

- Consider amendments to Flexible Development Bylaw Package (Flexible Development Bylaw, Common Drive Bylaw, Common Open Space Bylaw, Multifamily Bylaw)
- Updates to Subdivision Regulations
- Zoning Bylaw Amendments - Agricultural Uses
- Sign Bylaw Amendment
- Business A-1 Design Guidelines
- ADU Bylaw amendments to come into compliance with [Affordable Homes Act](#).
- Potential Zoning Bylaw amendments to for Routes 202/33 corridor
- Potential Design Guidelines for Routes 202/33 corridor

C. Route 202/33 Corridor Rezoning Project

Project website: <https://community.innesassocltd.com/south-hadley>

[Route 202 & 33 Corridor Re-Zoning | South Hadley, MA - Official Website](#)

Next Forum #4– Thursday, January 16th at 6-8 PM
South Hadley Public Library – in person

Agenda – Presentation of draft zoning recommendations and design guidelines for discussion.

We are still requesting site specific comments from the public on the project's interactive web map (see below). Let's us know your thoughts about sites that are good candidates for new uses/change of use/redevelopment; open space that should be preserved or used as a park; traffic and circulation concerns for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists; and locations for paths/trails that would facilitate connectivity throughout the neighborhood.

Recording of Forum #2 is online here: [Rt 202/33 Rezoning Community Forum #2: 10/16/2024 on Vimeo](https://vimeo.com/811111111)

Open

Show us what you would like to see on the Corridor!

Click on the "Add Marker" tab, place the marker of the relevant category, and answer the questions! To view the definitions of the terms, click on the (i) symbol next to the address bar.

19 contributions so far

The screenshot displays an interactive web map interface. At the top, there is a search bar with the placeholder text "Enter an address" and a magnifying glass icon. To the right of the search bar are icons for information, help, location, share, and zoom. Below the search bar is a map of a neighborhood with a yellow highlighted corridor. Several colored markers (green, purple, orange) are placed along the corridor. A legend on the right side of the map provides definitions for various categories:

- Paths/ Trails:** A designated route for walking, biking, or other non-motorized travel. It provides a safe and accessible way for residents to move through neighborhoods.
- Adaptive reuse:** refers to the process of reusing an existing building for a purpose other than which it was originally built or designed for.
- Public spaces:** are areas like parks, plazas, and streets that are open and accessible to everyone and can be used for social activities.
- Open spaces:** are any undeveloped land or green areas, including parks, gardens, and natural landscapes.
- Circulation:** refers to both vehicular and non-vehicular (bikes/pedestrian) movement. Identify locations where traffic calming measures such as crosswalks, new traffic lights, speed bumps, etc could be located to improve

At the bottom of the legend, there is a yellow box with the text: "For help using this map, please see the [instructions](#)." Below the legend is a blue button with a location pin icon and the text "Add Marker".

D. Affordable Housing Trust Board Member Applications Open!

Application online: <https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/13462/Affordable-Housing-Trust-Board-Application>

The South Hadley Selectboard is seeking qualified applicants to serve on the Board of Trustees for the South Hadley Municipal Affordable Housing Trust. The Board will include individuals with diverse backgrounds and skills to support the Trust's mission of enhancing affordable housing in our community.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Applicants must be residents of the Town of South Hadley, with the exception of the Town Administrator.
- Preference will be given to individuals with expertise in real estate law, architecture, planning, banking, finance, and real estate.
- Additionally, applicants who currently live in affordable housing are encouraged to apply.

Application Materials:

Applicants are required to submit the following:

1. A Cover Letter that describes your interest in serving on the Board of Trustees and how your background aligns with the goals of the South Hadley Municipal Affordable Housing Trust.
2. A Resume that highlights relevant professional or personal experience, particularly in areas related to real estate, finance, housing, planning, and community service.

Submission Details:

- Application materials should be emailed to Anne Capra, AICP, South Hadley Planning & Conservation Director at acapra@southhadleyma.gov.
- The subject line must read: "Application for Board of Trustees."
- Applications will be accepted until 11:00 a.m. on December 20, 2024.

This project was identified under the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) 2.0 Grant. Through this project, the Core Team determined that housing affordability was the greatest challenge the most vulnerable members of the community faced in dealing with the stressors associated with climate change. Creation of an Affordable Housing Trust would enable the community to become more climate resilient.

To learn more about the MVP 2.0 project: <https://www.southhadley.org/1379/Municipal-Vulnerability-Preparedness-20>

**SOUTH HADLEY PLANNING BOARD
LIST OF CORRESPONDENCES
NOVEMBER 25, 2024 REGULAR MEETING**

Letters and Memos

- November 12 letter (attached) from Lyndsay Tetlow, 40 River Road, regarding opposition to Special Town Meeting Article 9.
- November 14 email (attached) from Eric Friesner, Precinct C Town Meeting Member, thanking the Planning Board for their efforts in bringing forth articles to the recent Special Town Meeting to amend the zoning bylaw.

Legal Notices

Amherst

- Notice from the Amherst Zoning Board of Appeals for public hearings on December 12 to consider the following: 1) request to modify a special permit to increase residential apartments proportional to site development at 19 Research Drive; 2) compliance to enforcement letter for parking associated with 63-65 Salem Street; and 3) request to modify existing variance to increase height, add additional floor, and add lot for development at 422 Amity Lane.
- Notice from Amherst Town Council for a public hearing on November 26 to consider an amendment to the zoning bylaw to adopt the University Drive Overlay District.

Chicopee

- Notice from the Chicopee Planning Board for public hearings on December 5 to consider the following: 1) request for zoning change from Commercial A to Industrial to create contiguous zoning on a lot at McKinstry Ave; 2) request for waiver of frontage to create a single-family building lot from 1601 Westover Rd; and 3) request for waiver from frontage to allow construction of single-family home at 1230 Montgomery St.
- Notice from the Zoning Board of Appeals for public hearings on December 11 to consider the following: 1) variance from frontage and area to allow construction of a single family home at 1230 Montgomery St; and 2) variance from frontage to allow creation of a single family building lot from 1601 Westover Rd.
- Notice of decision from the Chicopee Zoning Board of Appeal Board for filing the following: 1) approval of a variance from frontage to allow construction of a two family home at 0 Montgomery St; 2) approval of variance from sideyard setbacks to construct a garage at 20 Mark Street; 3) denial of a variance from frontage and lot area to create a single family building lot and leave a nonconforming lot at 60 Trilby Ave; and 4) denial of appeal of building commissioner's decision regarding fence/hedge height in front setback at 63 Maryland Ave.

Granby

- Notice from the Granby Board of Appeals for a public hearing on November 19 regarding an appeal of the building commissioner's denial of permit for property at 119 West State Street.

Hadley

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Holyoke

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Nate Therian
Planning Board Vice Chairman

It has come to my attention that the planning board intends to vote on Article 9 which will reduce the required parcel size from 5 acres to 3. I adamantly disagree with this plan.

South Hadley is losing its rural appearance, a nice respite from the border to border development of cities. We don't have to nor should we go that route.

Given that climate change and an ever decreasing environmental quality, given the amount of wildlife I have experienced in my own back yard, in part from over construction, I find increasing development density, presumably for housing, not to be in our best interests.

I have seen more single housing in a town where the roads cannot handle this increase. The roads are narrow, curvy, and hilly. Yet I witness people driving 35, 40, 45 miles an hour on roads that should not be travelled in that speed, including River Rd. There was a time when South Hadley was known for drivers getting ticketed for speeding. That no longer holds true.

While I am no expert on economic theories, there is a point where population increases no longer benefits a town as expectations and expenditures rise higher than what is received in tax income. While I can gripe about the amount we pay in property taxes, I also understand that nothing is cheap anymore.

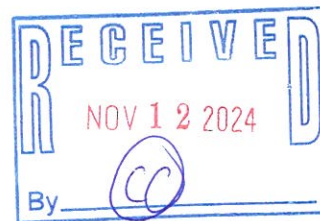
This is a desirable place to live. I hope we don't lose it.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

Lyndsay Tetlow



40 River Rd.
South Hadley, Ma



Fwd: Appreciation for trying to address the housing shortage

Anne Capra <acapra@southhadleyma.gov>
To: Colleen Canning <ccanning@southhadleyma.gov>

Thu, Nov 14, 2024 at 9:16 AM

Hi Colleen,
Please add to the Board's correspondence.
Anne

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Eric Friesner** <ejosephfriesner@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Nov 14, 2024 at 8:49 AM
Subject: Appreciation for trying to address the housing shortage
To: <acapra@southhadleyma.gov>, <dsmulvaney@shadleyma.org>

Hello Anne and Diane,

I just want to share my thanks to the Planning/Conservation Department and the Planning Board for attempting to address South Hadley's housing shortage, and to incentivise to the best of the town's ability the construction of affordable housing. Every idea that's been presented has been fought tooth and nail, but I sincerely appreciate your continued efforts. Last night's town meeting (and its lead up) was disappointing to say the least.

Please forward my thanks to the rest of the board, regardless of whether or not they support efforts to increase the availability of housing in our town.

Sincerely,
Eric Friesner
Precinct C Meeting Member

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Anne Capra, AICP
Director, Planning & Conservation
Town of South Hadley
116 Main Street | South Hadley, MA 01075
(413) 538-5030 x6128
acapra@southhadleyma.gov

Learn more about South Hadley's community plans [HERE](#).