

# Background Materials – April 14, 2025 – Planning Board Meeting

Prepared by Anne Capra, Director of Planning and Conservation, 4/14/25

**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>

\*Planning Board Member Rob Wachilla to be absent.

### 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 Planning Board Reorganization

Annual elections were held on March 8<sup>th</sup> and Robert Sklarz was elected to the open Planning Board seat, for a three year term ending in March 2028. The Board needs to elect members for Chair, Vice Chair, and Clerk.

**Action Needed:** Elect members for Chair, Vice Chair, and Clerk.

### 6:30pm Public Hearing

#### AGENDA ITEM #5 Mount Holyoke College Energy Center Site Plan Review

See attached project background materials.

**Action Needed:** Conduct the public hearing. It may be necessary to continue the hearing until receipt of updated and revised plans and information.

#### AGENDA ITEM #6 Discussion Route 202/33 & Business A-1 Design Guidelines

Draft Design Guidelines Outline online: <https://southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14008/Design-Guidelines-Outline---Planning-Board-Meeting-Presentation---4142025>

The Route 202/33 Advisory Committee has been invited to attend and participate in the conversation. Innes Associates will present an outline of the draft design guidelines of the Business A-1/Routes 202/33 corridor zoning district. It is the intent that these guidelines will also be the design guidelines framework for the Route 202/33 Design Guidelines Overlay District, which will be presented to Town Meeting at the Fall Special Town Meeting in November 2025. However in the meantime, the Board needs to adopt design guidelines for the Business A-1 zoning district. At Annual Town Meeting in May 2024, the Business A-1 district was amended and included a moratorium on all permitting under it until June 1, 2025 (this was changed from March to June on Town Meeting floor as an amendment to the Article) or until the Planning Board adopted Design Guidelines for the district. Full background report online here: <https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/12857/Article-27---Planning-Board-Report-to-Town-Meeting---Business-A-1-Zoning-Amendment-rev>

Ecode has not yet been updated to incorporate these zoning amendments, however the Attorney General's Office did approve them in October 2024.

#### Schedule

4/14/25	Consultant presents outline for design guidelines and introduction of content; provide feedback on content
5/5/25	Consultant presents complete draft design guidelines for Planning Board discussion
5/19/25	Public Hearing – Business A-1 Design Guidelines
6/9/25	Finalize Business A-1 Design guidelines – Planning Board vote to adopt
Fall 2025	Finalize Design Guidelines for Routes 202/33; Planning Board adopt after Fall Town Meeting adopts zoning for corridor.

A quick recap of the difference between zoning bylaws, design standards and design guidelines:

**Zoning Bylaw** – Municipal laws that govern how land can and cannot be used in certain geographic areas called *zoning districts*. Zoning bylaws, the zoning map (which identifies the zoning districts) and amendments to each of these are adopted by Town Meeting.

**Design Standards** – Mandatory design standards, typically included in the zoning bylaw, and therefore, adopted by Town Meeting.

Design Guidelines – Recommended guidelines for site layout, building/architectural form and detail, landscaping, parking, pedestrian/bicycle circulation, connectivity of the site to the street/public realm and surrounding neighborhood, etc.; adopted by the Planning Board.

**Action Needed:** Allow Innes to present the proposed outline of design guidelines, and offer clarifying information for development of the draft guidelines to be presented to the Board at the 5/5/25 meeting.

**AGENDA ITEM #5 Discussion ADU Bylaw Amendments Report to Town Meeting**

A draft Report to Town Meeting on Amendments to 255-50 Accessory Dwelling Units is online here: <https://southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14012/Report-to-Town-Meeting---255-50-ADU-Bylaw--DRAFT-41125>

**Action Needed:** The Board should discuss any comments on the draft report, recommend any changes needed, and vote on acceptance of the Report so that it may be issued to the public and Town Meeting.

**AGENDA ITEM #6**

**Planning & Conservation Department Report on Planning Projects and Development Updates**

**A. Next Planning Board Meetings and Other Important Dates**

*Planning Board typically meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays of the month.*

<b>4/18/25</b>	<b>Arbor Day Celebration - 9:30 a.m. at the George Hahn/Edwin Warner Arboretum, Mosier Street</b>
<b>4/22/25</b> <i>Tuesday</i> <i>Rob Wachilla</i> <i>absent</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Village Commons Zoning Amendment and Zoning Map Amendment Proposal – Public Hearing</li> <li>Old Lyman Road Zoning Map Amendment Proposal – Public Hearing</li> </ul>
<b>4/28/25</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Village Commons Zoning Amendment Proposal – Discussion/Draft Report to Town Meeting</li> <li>Old Lyman Road Zoning Map Amendment Proposal – Discussion/Draft Report to Town Meeting</li> <li>Route 202/33 Zoning Recommendations Discussion (Innes not available)</li> </ul>
<b>5/5/25</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business A-1 Design Guidelines &amp; Route 202/33 Corridor Design Guidelines Discussion – Innes Associates &amp; Route 202/33 Rezoning Advisory Committee</li> <li>Anthony’s Special Permit - Public Hearing continuation</li> </ul>
<b>5/14/25</b>	<b>Annual Town Meeting</b>
<b>5/19/25</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business A-1 Design Guidelines Public Hearing (w/ Innes Associates)</li> <li>Illuminated Sign Permit, Jen’s Hair Care, 341 Newton Street</li> </ul>
<b>6/1/2025</b>	<b>Business A-1 Mixed Use Permitting Moratorium Expires - Design Guidelines Adoption Due</b>
<b>June – 6/9 &amp; 6/23</b>	Sign Bylaw Amendment Discussion Agricultural Uses Amendment Discussion

6/9 Nate Therien absent	
July – 7/14 & 7/28	Subdivision Regulations Public Hearing
August – 8/11 & 8/25	Sign Bylaw Amendment Public Hearing Agricultural Uses Amendment Public Hearing
September	Route 202/33 Zoning Public Hearing (Special Fall Town Meeting Warrant)

### B. Remote Meetings Extended

From Town Counsel, Mead, Talerman and Costa, 3/28/2025:

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Gov. Baker issued an executive order permitting municipalities to use remote conferencing technology to comply with existing Open Meeting Law requirements. This included allowing public bodies to provide live “adequate, alternative means” of public access to deliberation and participation of the public meeting and allowing a quorum to be reached without all members needing to be physically present at the meeting location. These provisions were set to expire on March 31, 2023, but were extended by Gov. Healey as part of a supplemental budget bill, with a new expiration date of March 31, 2025. On March 28, 2025, Gov. Healey signed Bill H.62 into law, which extends the Covid-era provisions until March 31, 2027. Primarily, this will allow cities and towns to hold virtual or hybrid meetings, notwithstanding provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

**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.

**Mount Holyoke College Energy Center**  
**9 Woodbridge Street**  
**Site Plan Review Application – April 14, 2025 – Project Background**

Application materials are online here: <https://www.southhadley.org/1476/Woodbridge-Street-9---MHC-Energy-Center>

Updated Project Description and response to initial departmental questions:  
[https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/13999/MHC-Energy-Center-Memorandum\\_Project-Narrative\\_32525?bidId=](https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/13999/MHC-Energy-Center-Memorandum_Project-Narrative_32525?bidId=)

Geotechnical Report: <https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14007/MHC-Energy-Center---Geotechnical-Report>

Mount Holyoke College initiated a large-scale geothermal construction project in 2023 as part of their effort to meet their carbon neutrality goals by 2037. Learn more about the campus wide project here: <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/geothermal-project> This application for Site Plan Review pertains to the construction of a new 6,158 sq.ft. energy center building which will eventually be the mechanical heart of the geothermal heating and cooling system. The existing heating plant and steam distribution is being phased out over time as new heat pump equipment becomes available. The goal for the existing heating plant is to replace the natural gas steam boilers with the equipment being installed in the Energy Center (EC) building. New natural gas condensing hot water boilers are planned to be installed in the heating plant in a phased manner aligned with the decommissioning of the existing steam boilers. The new hot water boilers will be used to supplement the heat pump equipment in the EC during the campus peak demand. These will also be used as redundant equipment should the EC come offline during a power outage or other emergency type events.

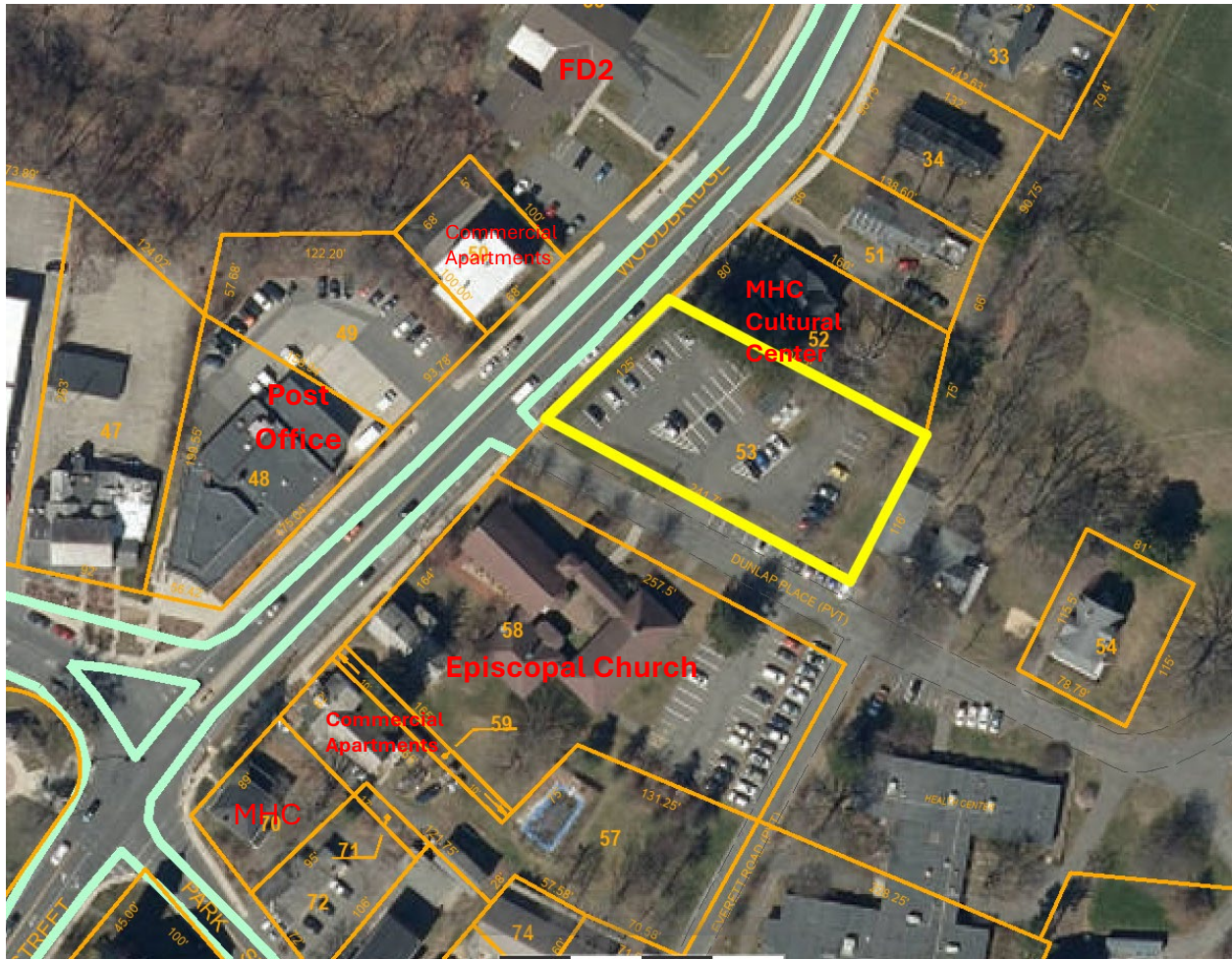
The subject property is 0.57 acres located at 9 Woodbridge Street (Assessor's Map 49, Parcel 53), at the corner of Dunlap Place on the Mount Holyoke College Campus. The site is within the Residence B zoning district and is currently a parking lot with approximately 40 spaces and a small shed. The site was previously a gas station and bike shop that was demolished in 1997.

**Exempt Project under MGL C40A, Sec. 3 (a.k.a. Dover Amendment)**

Construction of the energy center is exempt under MGL C.40A sec 3 because it is part of the educational institution's campus facility, but it is subject to reasonable regulations concerning the bulk and height of structures and determining yard sizes, lot area, setbacks, open space, parking and building coverage requirements. Per the South Hadley Zoning Use Regulations Schedule, development of noneducational use facilities in the Res B district are subject to site plan review, consistent with the Dover Amendment.

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/Chapter40a/Section3>

*"No zoning ordinance or by-law shall regulate or restrict the interior area of a single family residential building nor shall any such ordinance or by-law prohibit, regulate or restrict the use of land or structures for religious purposes or for educational purposes on land owned or leased by the commonwealth or any of its agencies, subdivisions or bodies politic or by a religious sect or denomination, or by a nonprofit educational corporation; provided, however, that such land or structures may be subject to reasonable regulations concerning the bulk and height of structures and determining yard sizes, lot area, setbacks, open space, parking and building coverage requirements."*



## **Plan Review Criteria**

### **Dimensional Standards**

For corner parcels, the front yard setback applies to both streets. Per the submitted plans (see sheet EC-C200), they have erroneously indicated a 10' front setback along Woodbridge Street. The applicant indicated further that they have redesigned the steel canopy that is attached the front of the building which further encroaches in the setback. They will be shifting the building location and submitting revised plans. Exterior building elevations on sheets EC-A200 and EC-A201.

<b>Dimensional Standard</b>	<b>Residence B</b>	<b>Energy Center Project</b>
Min. Lot Size	7,500 SF	24,720 SF
Min. Lot Frontage	75'	124.97
Max. Building Coverage (Principal & Accessory)	40%	Requested calculation
Max. Impervious Coverage	70%	Not calculated; SD-2 calculates partial site impervious for area DA-1 at 0.343 acres (60.4%)
Min. Front Yard Setback	15'	10'
Min. Side Yard Setback	10'	>10"
Min. Rear Yard Setback	20'	>20'
Max. Height	3 stories/45'	2 stories plus penthouse and acoustic screen (37'3")

**Parking**

Off street parking standards per 255-85 for industrial uses are 1 parking space per 1,000 sq.ft. of enclosed building space. The proposed building is 6,158 SF which results in 6.2 required spaces. The site plan includes 7 parking spaces on the parcel and 5 more immediately adjacent to the parcel on Dunlap Place, which is part of the redevelopment of the entire parcel. This standard is met.

**Stormwater Management**

See sheets SD-1 & 2 in the Site Plan Review Narrative, and sheet EC-C400 in the plan set. The proposed system includes four yard drains around the vegetated lawn areas piped into a system connected to a hydrodynamic separator located in the southeast corner of the parking area, which also captures roof water runoff. The complete system drains to a stormwater system on Dunlap Place. Per the plan calculations for area DA-1, there is total reduction of impervious coverage from existing conditions of 0.472 acres to 0.343 acres, and an increase in pervious area from 0.356 acres to 0.485 acres. Note, these calculations also include a portion of the adjacent Dunlap Place and the reduction of parking spaces there from 10 to 5.

The system is designed to only handle the 10-year storm event and the first 0.5” of runoff, and appears to be a conveyance system only offering no onsite retention, detention or infiltration. During the site visit, college personnel stated the project included a vegetated swale but that is not indicated on site plans.

BOH below requested groundwater elevation data and specifications on hydrodynamic separator. The applicant provided a geotechnical report and this response: A summary of the groundwater conditions is available in the [Geotechnical Report](#) Section 3.4. A submittal with model number for the hydrodynamic separator can be provided after bidding once a manufacturer is selected. The hydrodynamic separator will be designed to meet the criteria in detail 5/EC-C701.

A detailed Stormwater Operation and Maintenance Plan has not been provided, and is required. Because the project is under the 1-acre of disturbance threshold, a Stormwater Management Permit was not required. The College does have an O&M Plan for other areas of campus, and the new systems at the Energy Center site need to be added to that Plan.

### **Lighting – Building exterior and site**

A photometric plan has been provided in Appendix C of the Site Plan Review Narrative. Five pole mounted lights (P) are placed around the edge of the driveway and parking lot and are indicated as dark sky compliant with little to no overcast beyond Dunlap Place and the property boundary.

Exterior wall packs on the building (K and J) appear to cast downward lighting along the building at walkways and doorways. There is no information provided on the hours of illumination.

### **Sound Attenuation – Roof mounted heat pumps, backup pad mounted generators, building interior mechanical operations**

The plans submitted by the applicant indicate an acoustic screen will be installed on the rooftop, however no details or specifications have been provided for that element (see sheets EC-A103, EC-A200, EC-A201, EC-A300). The applicant has been advised that information will be required as part of the SPR. They stated that it is currently under design by an acoustical engineer and will submit further information. I also requested that their engineer attend the public hearing to speak to this design element. However, guidance from Town Counsel states that per the Dover Amendment, regulating sound is out of the Planning Board's jurisdiction. The system on the roof does have a relationship to bulk and height but is limited to that.

### **Department Comments**

A site visit was held on 4/9/25 and attended by the DPW Director, Conservation Administrator, Public Health Director, SHELD, Fire District 2, Planning Director, Mount Holyoke College Operations and Geothermal Project Management, and the project architect, engineers, and construction supervisor. Additional departmental comments are as follows:

Board of Health - Sharon Hart, Public Health Director – A Demolition Permit from the BOH is required. Dust control in the form of lime or water required for construction phase. BOH would like ground boring data regarding groundwater elevation/depth to groundwater pertaining to the stormwater management system design. Requesting hydrodynamic separator model # and profile diagram.

DPW – John Broderick, DPW Director –

- public way proposed path of new utility installs are the least impactful to vehicular and pedestrian travel disruptions.
- public shade trees on the Upper Common will be evaluated and may need to be protected, or removed and replaced per tree warden's assessment
- road opening/trench permits must be filed and reviewed by DPW for approval and fee considerations
- sanitary sewer connection fee must be applied for, reviewed and fees determined and approved by DPW
- pedestrian and vehicular travel impacts: traffic/travel/signage plan must be submitted to DPW for review and approval by: Police Dept/FD1 and FD2/PVTA/municipal school busing

SHELD – Matt Delmonte – SHELD does not have any comments related to this filing with the Planning Board.

Fire District 2 Fire Department - Captain O'Neill– No comments for the Planning Board.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Open the public hearing and allow the applicant to present their project plans. Outstanding items at this time include:

1. Site plan conforming to Residence B front yard setback requirements.
2. Revised elevations showing the revised steel canopy.
3. Final design for acoustic screening on roof.
4. Seek clarification on the stormwater system design, elevation of groundwater, and possibility for improved onsite retention, detention, infiltration and treatment. Identify location of vegetated swale on plans – not indicated.
5. Stormwater Operation and Maintenance Plan has not been provided, needs to be submitted. Could be part of the campus's overall SWPPP.
6. A condition of the site plan approval should be construction site monitoring for erosion and sediment control, and post-construction reporting on annual maintenance for two years.
7. Identify hours of illumination for site and exterior building lighting.

**SOUTH HADLEY PLANNING BOARD  
LIST OF CORRESPONDENCES  
APRIL 14, 2025 REGULAR MEETING**

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**Letters and Memos**

- April 7 letter (attached) from Barry McPhee, 3 Woodbridge Lane, expressing concern for the application for Site Plan Review filed by Mount Holyoke College for a new energy center at 9 Woodbridge Street.

**Legal Notices**

*Amherst*

- Notice from the Amherst Planning Board for a public hearing on April 2 to consider an application for Site Plan Review filed by Amherst Youth Soccer to install a storage shed at Plum Brook Recreation Area on Potwine Lane.
- Notice from the Amherst Planning Board for a public hearing on April 16 to consider a 4 lot preliminary subdivision plan at Shutesbury Road.

*Chicopee*

- 

*Granby*

- 

*Hadley*

- 

*Holyoke*

-

Barry McPhee

3 Woodbridge Street

South hadley mass 01075

413 530 4323

"IN SHOCK"

Dear Editor

I am an abutter to Mount Holyoke College. I received notice for Monday April 14th at 6:30 pm planning board hearing at the Council on Ageing for the proposed project at 9 Woodbridge Street for a new Energy Center. (<https://www.southhadley.org/1179/site-plan-review>.)

I was "In Shock" when I examined the construction documents and photo for the proposed building.

I have worked in the plumbing, HVAC and mechanical trades for most of my life as well as working for a large mechanical engineering firm in Connecticut for 15

years as a construction administrator before retirement.

I have worked on several projects, new construction and renovations on many College campuses including MHC, Amherst, Smith, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard and many others. I have never seen a building that "Stands Out" of place as this building.

The construction documents do not indicate the end use. Based on my experience this facility will contain mechanical equipment systems generating a lot of noise operating 24/7/365.

The rendering of the proposed building does not show the acoustic screening on the roof adding additional height to a total of 38 feet above grade to house additional equipment, and two ground mount emergency generators, all adding

additional noise.

I am "In Shock" , with all the land that MHC owns, they would choose this residential neighborhood location for this building.

This building will be at one of the Gateways to South Hadley.

Please don't get me wrong; the building design is not the issue, it's a nice looking building with good intentions for its use, however it does not complement the neighboring architecture characteristics.

I urge the planning board to appose the construction of this building in this location.

Please vote no.

Thank you.