

Background Materials – June 23, 2025 – Planning Board Meeting

Prepared by Anne Capra, Director of Planning and Conservation, 6/20/25

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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 is attached.

Action Needed: No action needed.

6:30PM Public Hearing Continuation

AGENDA ITEM #4 MHC Energy Center Site Plan Review

Mount Holyoke College has submitted a request to withdraw their application for Site Plan Review. They have indicated that they have re-evaluated the construction phasing of the geothermal project and determined that the proposed Energy Center's geothermal hub is not needed at this time. Due to the cost of construction for this facility, they are seeking to delay this phase of the project for an

undetermined length of time, which could possibly be longer than the period in which they would need to begin construction under Site Plan Approval.

RECOMMENDED MOTION: 1) *Move to approve the request to withdraw the application for Site Plan Review for the MHC Energy Center without prejudice.* 2) *Move to close the public hearing.*

Action Needed: Board should vote on the withdrawal request and close the public hearing.

6:30 PM Public Hearing

AGENDA ITEM #5 Special Permit - 88 Willimansett Street, Mixed Use Development

Application is online here: [Willimansett Street \(88\) | South Hadley, MA - Official Website](#)
255-37 Business C Development Standards: [Town of South Hadley, MA Supplemental District Regulations](#)

The subject property is 1.32 acres located in the Business C zoning district, Assessor's Map 14, Parcel 25, recently purchased by Meiya Berkey and Sean Donnelly. They seek to live in the pre-existing nonconforming single-family residential dwelling and construct a new 2,500 sq.ft. commercial gym facility with an associated 11-car parking lot, stormwater infiltration basin, and landscaping. The gym use is considered a "personal service establishment" per 255-10 and requires Site Plan Review in the Business C district. Because of the intent to utilize the existing dwelling for residential purposes, the Building Commissioner determined that the project qualifies as a mixed-use development as permitted within the Business C zoning district by Special Permit. Single-family dwellings are only allowed in the Business C District by SP as part of a mixed use development which is why this is a preexisting nonconforming use.

NOTE – There are several errors/conflicting statements in the application as follows:

- The property is not within a Smart Growth Zoning District and therefore is not eligible for permitting under 255-23 nor do any of the development standards for such districts apply.
- The application and narrative conflict. The application form states that the gym is to be accessory to the single-family dwelling, but the application narrative describes this as two principal uses. This application is considered a mixed use development with two principal uses. The proposed gym does not meet the standards for an accessory use. The proposed 2,500 sq.ft. gym far exceeds the size of the existing dwelling which is 1,134 sq.ft. Per 255-10, "accessory" is defined as: A structure, building or use which: **A.** Is subordinate in function to and serves a principal building or principal use; **B.** Is subordinate in area or extent to the principal building or principal use served; **C.** Contributes to the comfort, convenience, or necessity of occupants or the principal building or use; and **D.** Is located on the same lot as the principal building or use.

Department Comments:

DPW – J. Broderick via email 5/20/25: MassDOT will be resurfacing Willimansett Street during the period 7/1/25-6/30/26; exact date and time unknown as of 5/21/25. I was told it has moved up on the construction list (on 5/16/25) due to another community having a project not ready for construction, so a Fall 2025 resurfacing project is a realistic possibility.

(1) Any new utility cuts and service installs must be made ASAP, permitted through DPW, and brought out of the public way easement, filled with flowable fill, and asphalt patching repairs consisting of 2" of 3/4" base course, and 2" Mass State Top course.

(2) Any proposed alterations or additional adjustments to the current driveway curb cut must be completed ASAP, due to the above roadway improvement proposed work.

Water District 1, Jeff Cyr via email 5/20/25: If the house remains, an additional service fee of \$2,000 is required.

SHELD, Matt Delmonte via email 5/20/25: Electric utilities are underground on the street. A second electric service would be underground customer-owned /installed.

BOH, Sharon Hart via email 6/2/25: For stormwater, require no standing water within 72 hours. BOH must witness perc test.

Historical Commission, Robert Judge – No comments.



Business C Commercial Development Standards

- 1. **Parking** – must comply with 255-86 - Retail or personal services uses: four spaces per 1,000 square feet of enclosed floor space, excluding space used for storage.
2,500 SF gym = 10 spaces required.
Proposing 11 spaces, including 1 ADA

Min. parking for single-family dwelling is 2 spaces. The existing single-family residential dwelling includes a two-car garage, The proposed new driveway to the gym at the rear of the lot will

eliminate the ability for cars to park in the residential driveway during the hours the gym is open. The owners of the property will also operate the gym and live in the existing house thereby eliminating the need for additional parking for employees.

2. **Appearance, architectural design** – The gym building is described as a “prefabricated metal building with metal roof and articulated entry vestibule”. No building elevations were provided.
3. **Lighting** – The application states that there will be no exterior site lighting, and building mounted wall sconces will provide light at the building entry and egress points during business hours, the front entry light will be on motion detector for security lighting during non-business hours.
4. **Access** – The project proposes to utilize the existing single curb cut on Willimansett Street. There is an existing sidewalk along the street at this location that will not be altered. The application includes a Traffic Impact Evaluation which concludes that the project will generate a maximum of 11 trips per hour during the heaviest peak traffic periods, which is equivalent to 1 vehicle every 6 minutes. The submitted Management Plan states that the business hours will be 4-8 PM Monday thru Thursday and Saturdays 10am-1pm.
5. **Landscaping and Screening** –
 - a) The parking lot is approx. 85’ long x 40’ wide. The standards state that no paved parking area shall extend more than 80’ in length, and 1 tree (2” caliper min) shall be provided per 30 parking spaces. The plan shows planting three (3) 2.5” caliper trees (tulip - 2 and white oak - 1).
 - b) No storage areas are identified on the site plan. The Management Plan states that a 90-gallon trash bin will be kept behind the building and picked up by South Hadley waste management weekly.
 - c) E) Landscaped buffer strip along road frontage – A buffer strip is not included on the site plans because the existing single-family residence along the road frontage will not be altered.
6. **Pedestrian access** – An existing sidewalk exists along Willimansett Street and will not be altered.
7. **Traffic Impact Statement** – See above.
8. **Public Transportation** – No reference to a request for a new bus station is indicated. There is no PVRTA service on Routes 202 or 33 in South Hadley. The closest service is on Route 116.

Special Permit and Site Plan Standards

See attached spreadsheet.

Proposed Conditions:

- Possible screening along south property line with residential property in vicinity of parking lot, and new gym building.
- Possible new tree(s) *with high understory visual clearance* between new driveway and sidewalk at front of property to include appearance along road frontage without blocking visual access.
- Sign Permit (in addition to building permits) is required from Building Commissioner
- BOH must witness perc test for infiltration basin.

Action Needed: The Board needs to hold the public hearing, accept public comment, make a finding on each of the Special Permit and Site Plan Criteria, and vote on the issuance of a Special Permit.

7:00PM

AGENDA ITEM #6 Discussion Route 202/33 Corridor Re-Zoning Design guidelines w/ Innes Associates

Draft Design Guidelines online: southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14182/Route-20233-Design-Guidelines---Draft-61723

Draft Zoning Recommendations online: [Route-20233-Corridor-Zoning-Recommendation-Memo-4302025](https://southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14182/Route-20233-Corridor-Zoning-Recommendation-Memo-4302025)

All project materials online: [Route 202 & 33 Corridor Re-Zoning | South Hadley, MA - Official Website](https://southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14182/Route-20233-Corridor-Re-Zoning-Design-Guidelines)

Innes Associates will give a presentation: 1) summarizing the status of the zoning recommendations for re-zoning Routes 202/33; and, 2) go through the draft design guidelines for this district. The draft design guidelines are NEW. They resemble those for the Business A-1 zoning district which the Board recently adopted, however they are specific to the proposed re-zoning. Thus, these guidelines would not be adopted by the Planning Board until after any new zoning is adopted for the corridor by Town Meeting in November. If new zoning was passed in November, the Planning Board would then pick up final review of the design guidelines, hold a public hearing, and adopt the guidelines.

Route 202/33 Corridor Re-Zoning Schedule:

6/23/25 Planning Board meeting - Presentation of draft Design Guidelines

7/14/25 Planning Board meeting - Planning Board discussion of draft zoning (Board only)

7/28/25 Planning Board meeting - Public Listening session on draft zoning and design guidelines

8/11/25 Planning Board meeting - Planning Board discussion to finalize draft zoning

9/8/25 Planning Board meeting - PUBLIC HEARING draft zoning

9/22/25 Planning Board meeting - Planning Board finalize proposed zoning amendments to send to November Town Meeting for adoption

11/5/25 - Fall Town Meeting - Vote to adopt proposed zoning amendments

12/2025 Planning Board meeting - Public Hearing to adopt Design Guidelines & Board vote to adopt Design Guidelines

Action Needed: Presentation by Innes Associates, Planning Board questions and comments. Since this is not a public hearing, it is at the Board's discretion as to whether or not to open the discussion to the public.

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

A. EV Charging Station Feasibility Study

Here is a link to the survey - please share with your friends and neighbors too! **Please respond by July 1st.**

The Town of South Hadley is conducting a feasibility study on the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations in South Hadley Falls. The goal of the study is to identify locations and provide timelines and estimated costs for the town to install multiple EV charging stations. To assist in identifying locations for the stations, we are seeking public input, particularly from residents without dedicated off-street parking. Funding for this project is provided through a [MassCEC ON-Street Charging Solutions](#) award to the Town of South Hadley. Commonwealth Electrical Technologies (CET) was selected by MassCEC to implement the program and Leidos was hired by CET to support their efforts.

B. Next Planning Board Meetings and Other Important Dates

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

7/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route 202/33 Corridor Re-Zoning Discussion (Board only) • Agricultural Uses Zoning Bylaw Amendments – Board discussion draft report • Sign Bylaw Amendments – Board discussion draft report
7/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 Brockway Lane SPR – Detached ADU - <i>PENDING</i> • Route 202/33 Corridor Re-Zoning Draft Zoning and Design Guidelines– Public Listening Session • Curb cut bylaw/policy
8/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Street - Flexible Development Special Permit – <i>PENDING</i> • 506 Granby Road – Multifamily Site Plan Review – <i>PENDING</i> • Route 202/33 Corridor Re-Zoning Draft Zoning and Design Guidelines – Board discussion/final edits • Open Space and Recreation Plan 10-year Action Plan Review
8/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural Uses Zoning Bylaw Amendments – Board discussion draft report • Sign Bylaw Amendments – Board discussion draft report
9/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route 202/33 Zoning Public Hearing - (Special November Town Meeting Warrant)
9/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route 202/33 Zoning – Final Edits & Draft Report to Town Meeting • Agricultural Uses Zoning Bylaw Amendments – Public Hearing • Sign Bylaw Amendments – Public Hearing
10/6 <i>Columbus Day 10/13</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route 22/33 Zoning – Approve Report to Town Meeting • Agricultural Uses Zoning Bylaw Amendments – Final Edits & Draft Report to Town Meeting • Sign Bylaw Amendments – Final Edits & Draft Report to Town Meeting
10/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural Uses Zoning Bylaw Amendments – Approve Report to Town Meeting • Sign Bylaw Amendments – Approve Report to Town Meeting • Subdivision Regulations Public Hearing
November 5th	Special Fall Town Meeting

AGENDA ITEM #8 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.

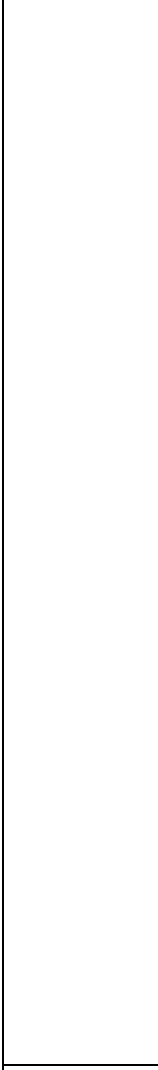
<p>A. Except in the case of a special permit for changing a nonconforming use or structure, which is governed by § 255-7B, the SPGA must make written findings on the following mandatory standards, requiring that a proposed use will:</p>	<p>The Business C District is established to achieve the following objectives of the Town of South Hadley:</p> <p>(1) To direct large-lot businesses and auto-oriented uses to the appropriate location. No single user may occupy greater than 65,000 square feet of building space and high-traffic generators such as drive-through restaurants, drive-up ATM machines, gas stations, etc. shall not be permitted in this district.</p> <p>(2) To provide safe, efficient traffic flow in the Business C District.</p> <p>(3) To maintain a high level of design and landscaping quality.</p> <p>(4) To provide safe pedestrian access to businesses and uses in the Business C District.</p> <p>(5) To protect property values through quality control.</p>
<p>1 Comply with all applicable land use district, overlay district, and other specific requirements of this and other bylaws and regulations, and be consistent with the purpose and intent of this bylaw and of the land use district in which it is located;</p>	<p>Route 33, from Route 202 to the Chicopee Line – Applicable standards: this area is a mixture of residential, retail and commercial land uses. This is a transitional area between more intense commercial uses in Chicopee and the more residential character that dominates Lyman Street north of Route 202. Encourage adaptive reuse of the existing structures when converting residential properties to other nonresidential use. Improve entryway from Chicopee to make it more visually appealing.</p>
<p>2 Be suitable to the surrounding neighborhood and the "Land Use Area" in which it is located. Land Use Areas are identified and described in the section of South Hadley's Master Plan entitled "Land Use Area Vision Statements" (pages 1-10 through 1-19). In making this determination, the Planning Board shall take into consideration any guidance provided by the land use goals articulated in South Hadley's Master Plan, goals articulated in South Hadley's open space and recreation plan, and input from relevant boards, Town officials, and the public;</p>	<p>The only land uses allowed by right include exempt agricultural uses (greater than 5 acres), federal and state buildings and parks and playgrounds. All other uses require a SP or SPR.</p>
<p>3 Be compatible with existing uses and uses allowed by right in the neighborhood, Land Use Area, and zoning district;</p>	<p>Abutting uses to the north and west include commercial uses including professional and medical office buildings. The Big Y shopping plaza is part of the property abutting to the north. A preexisting nonconforming single-family residential property is abutting to the south.</p>
<p>4 Be compatible with the existing character of the neighborhood and Land Use Area, and/or zoning district. "Character" shall be understood to include prevalent patterns of: site design; setbacks from property lines; amount and location of parking; amount, type, location</p>	

	and quality of open spaces and landscaped areas; amount, type, and location of impervious surfaces; distances and relationships between buildings; density of building(s) relative to land area; building massing; architectural style and detailing; materials; buffering from adjacent uses; traffic volume and timing; noise; odors; and light.	
5	Be suitable for the property on which it is proposed, considering the property's, scenic, cultural and historic significance, and its ability to be buffered or screened from neighboring properties and public roads.	
6	Provide safe access for fire, police, and other emergency vehicles.	No comments were received from Police or Fire.
7	Provide adequate water, drainage and waste disposal systems without causing significant harm to any natural water system or overloading any public water, drainage, or sewer system, or any other municipal facility.	Property is served by public water and sewer. The project does not trigger a stormwater management permit. The site plans include three stormwater infiltration areas, and the application states that the site will accommodate and attenuate peak flows for up to the 100-year storm; no calculations provided.
8	Not cause significant traffic congestion, impair pedestrian or bicycle safety, or overload existing roads, sidewalks and trails, considering their current width, surfacing, and condition, and any improvements proposed to be made to them by the applicant.	See Traffic Impact Evaluation
9	Not result in excessive air, water, noise, or light pollution, or create any other public or private nuisance;	
10	Not degrade the scenic, rural, or historic character of the Town with structures or other lot features which are deemed visually objectionable in light of prevailing community as reflected in the goals articulated in South Hadley's Master Plan;	
11	Be consistent with the South Hadley Master Plan, provided that the Comprehensive Plan provides legally sufficient guidance and that the applicable provision of	

	the Master Plan is not inconsistent with any specific provision of this bylaw;	
12	Comply with applicable criteria for site plans under § 255-148. Town of South Hadley, MA Site Plan Review	
B. In addition, the SPGA may include in its written findings, where applicable, consideration of any or all of the following criteria to be satisfied by the proposed use, building or structure:		
1	For projects involving the removal of existing housing, not adversely affect the availability of affordable housing in the Town;	
2	Not have an overall off-site impact that is significantly greater than the overall off-site impact that would be caused by full development of the property with uses permitted by right, considering relevant environmental, social, visual, and economic impacts;	
3	The adequacy and configuration of off-street parking and loading areas, including their nuisance impact on adjoining properties and on properties generally in the district;	
4	Harmony of signs and exterior lighting, if any, with surrounding properties;	
5	The location of the site, and proposed buildings or structures thereon, with respect to floodplains and floodways of rivers or streams;	
6	The absence of any other characteristic of the proposed use that will be hazardous, harmful, offensive or will otherwise adversely affect the environment or the value of the neighborhood or the community; or	

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Provisions for energy conservation, for the use of renewable energy sources, and for protection of solar access.



	<p>A. Does site plan reasonably fulfill the following objectives:</p>	
1.	<p>Compliance with bylaws, regulations, and Master Plan.</p>	
2.	<p>Integration of site into existing terrain, surrounding landscape, and built environment to minimize disruptions.</p>	
3.	<p>Site design characteristics avoids and minimizes disturbance to natural resources, scenic views, and open space.</p>	
4.	<p>Conforms to Special Permit requirements, if applicable.</p>	
5.	<p>Structures shall be compatible with the character and scale of structures in the neighborhood and zoning district.</p>	
6.	<p>Landscaping shall be an integral part of the proposed site design, and shall enhance the design and arrangement of structures, define usable public and private outdoor spaces, integrate the site into the surrounding landscape, as appropriate, and provide buffering from objectionable or noxious elements both within the site, between the site, and the surrounding area.</p>	
7.	<p>Provide for the convenience and safety of vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian movement within the site and should provide connections, wherever feasible and appropriate, to adjoining public ways and properties.</p>	
8.	<p>Prevent pollution of surface and groundwater, changes in ground water levels, increased run-off, and potential for flooding; and minimize erosion and sedimentation.</p>	
9.	<p>Minimize and/or mitigate adverse impacts on the Town's services and infrastructure.</p>	
10.	<p>Minimize intrusion of light into adjacent properties and shall minimize excessive night-sky lighting while ensuring adequate light for safe use of the property.</p>	
11.	<p>Place electric, telephone, cable TV, and other utilities underground where physically and environmentally feasible.</p>	

12.	<p>Drainage of the site shall recharge ground water to the extent practical. The peak rate of surface water flowing off-site shall not increase above predevelopment conditions and shall not adversely affect drainage on adjacent properties or public roads or increase turbidity of water flowing off-site.</p>	
13.	<p>To create more walkable and pedestrian-friendly developments, minimum frontage occupancy requirements apply in certain locations to create a sense of enclosure in the streetscape. As used herein, "frontage occupancy" means the percentage of the lot width at the front of the building that must be occupied by the facade of a building.</p>	
<p>B. Modifications to a site plan may be required to ensure the objectives above are fulfilled.</p>		

**SOUTH HADLEY PLANNING BOARD
LIST OF CORRESPONDENCES
JUNE 23, 2025 REGULAR MEETING**

Letters and Memos

- June 18 email (attached) from Martha Terry, Route 202/33 Corridor Rezoning Advisory Committee member, with comments on the draft design guidelines for the proposed Route 202/33 new zoning districts.

Legal Notices

Amherst

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Chicopee

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Granby

•

Hadley

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Holyoke

•

Fwd: to the members of the Planning Board and the Associate

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

Wed, Jun 18, 2025 at 10:34 AM

Please add to the Board's correspondence.
Thanks

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

From: **Martha Terry** <marthatterry25@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Jun 18, 2025 at 10:17 AM
Subject: to the members of the Planning Board and the Associate
To: Anne Capra <acapra@southhadleyma.gov>

Dear Anne Capra, Members of the Planning Board, and Associate Member,

I am writing regarding certain aspects of the Routes 202/33 rezoning recommendations and design guidelines that will be discussed with Innes Associates at the June 23rd Planning Board Meeting.

I am a member of the Routes 202/33 rezoning advisory committee. The discussion at the June 23rd meeting does not include the advisory committee, therefore I am submitting in writing concerns I have on these recommendations and guidelines.

First, the April 30, 2025 memo on the Routes 202/33 Corridor Zoning Recommendations lists 55 feet as the height limit for Residential Mixed Use.

This contrasts sharply with the 3 1/2 stories or 45 feet height limit, page 40, of the Routes 33/202 Final Report of January 2022. I would like a full explanation of why the height limit was extended between the 2022 report and the 2025 memo. At one point, Emily Innes stated that the extra height was needed for ventilation of first floor restaurants in Mixed Use Buildings. I wrote to the Building Commission and to the Board of Health, and both entities debunked such a claim. There is no ordinance for extra height for restaurant ceilings for ventilation purposes. So, why was the height limit for Residential Mixed Use raised and on whose recommendation and authority?

I would like Innes Associates to show what Routes 202 and 33 would look like with 55 foot tall buildings lining the corridor in the business zones.

The public deserves and needs an accurate visual representation of 55 foot buildings, with very little if any setback, lining this corridor of predominantly one and two story structures. I believe that the public would be unpleasantly surprised and disapproving of such.

Second, the Routes 202/33 Advisory Committee voted to include the northwest and southeast corners of the intersection of Routes 202/33 in Residential Mixed Use by a vote of 4 to 1, with my vote of dissent.

Mr. Dan Luis owns the property, the former Clock Shop, at this southeast corner, and should have recused himself from this vote. He did not. My vote of dissent is not included anywhere, so there is the appearance of a unanimous vote to permit 55 feet tall buildings at this already very busy, often chaotic intersection. Furthermore, the chiropractic Professional Use at the northwest corner was judged a "nonresidential use", and therefore the Residential Mixed Use zoning was extended to that parcel which is currently zoned Residential A-1. I fail to follow this logic. This residence, which houses the Chiropractic Practice, is surrounded by single family homes of one or two stories. Now, that corner lot is scheduled to be rezoned for a 55 foot tall mixed use building. Again, please explain this reasoning to rezone a two story Residential Professional Use to Residential Mixed Use with a 55 foot height limit.

Third, the proposal for cottages in the Residential area of 202/33 recommended 12 units per acre. I believe the public needs and deserves a realistic rendition or photograph to accurately depict this density. At one of the Advisory Committee meetings, only a sketch of 6 per 1/2 acre was shown.

Last, the frontage in the residentially zoned areas of 202/33 was reduced from the current 125 feet to 75 feet. Again, a photograph that accurately illustrates how this thoroughfare would look with this drastically reduced frontage must be made available.

In sum, I did enjoy and take very seriously my role and responsibilities on the Routes 202/33 Rezoning Advisory Committee, and I am submitting my concerns in advance because the June 23 meeting does not include any public input.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Martha Terry

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