

Background Materials – September 22, 2025 – Planning Board Meeting

Prepared by Anne Capra, Director of Planning and Conservation, 9/19/25

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

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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

Planning and Conservation Coordinator Colleen Canning will forward correspondence separately.

Action Needed: No action needed.

6:30PM Public Hearing Continuance

AGENDA ITEM #4 478 Amherst Road Site Plan Review – Mobile Food Establishment

Application online: <https://www.southhadley.org/1496/16855/Amherst-Road-Map-58-Parcel-132---Mobile-?activeLiveTab=widgets>

Revised Site Plan:

<https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14376/478AmherstRd2025RevisedSept10?bidId=>

Additional Site Details Submitted 9/19/25:

<https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14383/Site-Details---9192025>

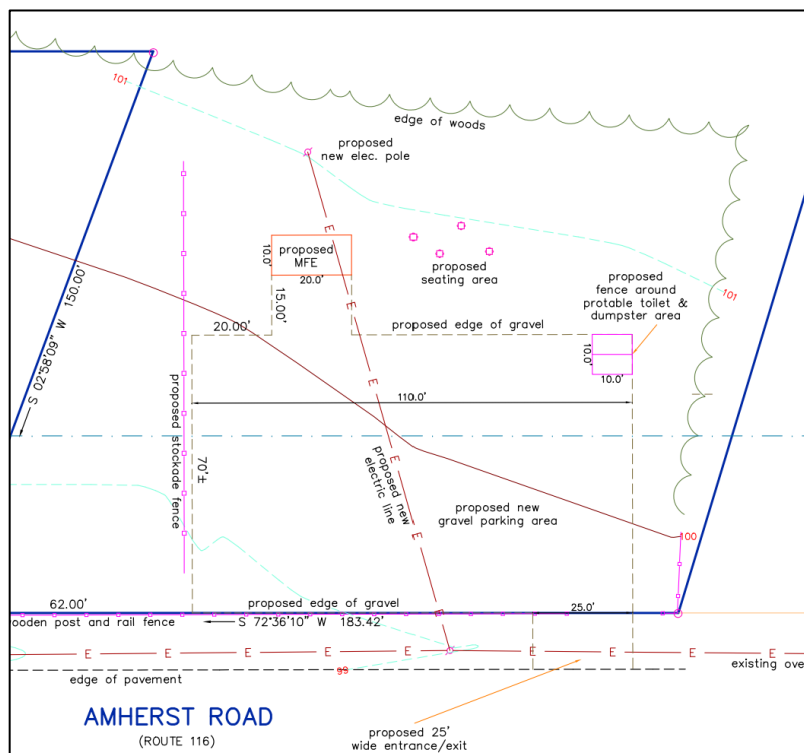
General Bylaw Chapter 177 Mobile Food Vendors [Town of South Hadley, MA Mobile Food Vendors](#)

Zoning Bylaw Article XII Site Plan Review [Town of South Hadley, MA Site Plan Review](#)

Melanie Lorenz, resident of 478 Amherst Road, has submitted an application for Site Plan Review to open a “neighborhood ice cream stand” within the currently undeveloped portion of Assessor’s Map 58, Parcel 132, which is zoned Business B. The parcel does have mixed zoning: Business B along the road frontage, and Agricultural in the rear. The proposed mobile food vending business would be located fully within the Business B portion of the site. The use is classified as “retail sales” which is allowable by Site Plan Review (SPR) in the BusB zoning district. Further, the proposed use is regulated under General Bylaw Chapter 177 Mobile Food Vendors, which also requires SPR by the Planning Board for this use. The business would be operated out of a mobile food trailer which is why the standards under Chapter 177 would apply. The Planning Board opened a public hearing for this application on 8/25/25, and continued to allow the applicant the opportunity to address some concerns about the location and

screening of the dumpster and portable bathrooms. Additionally, public comments include requests to consider redesign of the parking lot so that the food truck was up front and the parking in the rear.

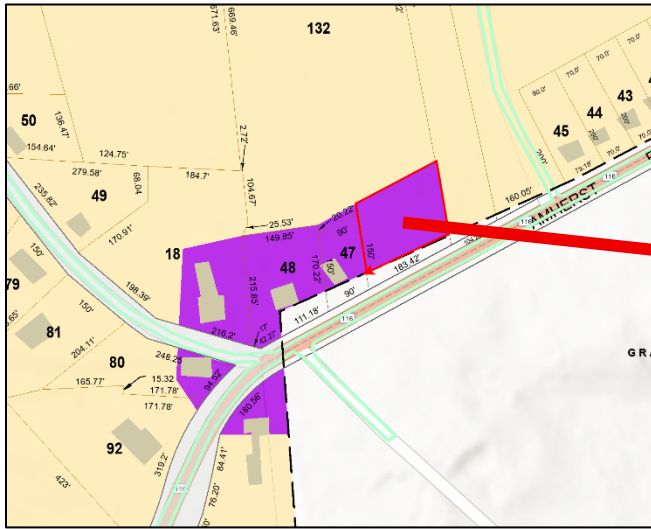
The applicant has submitted a revised site plan indicating a proposed stockade fence along the southern edge of the parking lot and food truck, location of the dumpster and portable toilet at the rear of the parking lot in the northwest corner with fencing around it, and a short segment of stockade fence at the north end of the parking lot.



Chapter 177 Permit Standards – 177-4 Vending on private commercial properties:

- A. Limited to all business districts with initial site plan review by the Planning Board – The proposed ice cream and coffee shop will be within the Bus B zoning district so this standard is met.
- B. The mobile food unit shall be located entirely on the property being served – This standard is met.
- C. Limited to no more than 14 calendar days per month at any one location – The application states that the business will be seasonal with hours of operation April -October, 12pm -8pm Friday, Saturday and Sunday. This equates to 3 days per week x 4 weeks per month = 12 days per month – This standard is met.

255-148 Site Plan Review Criteria – See attached worksheet.



Department Comments:

DPW, Johnny Broderick - DPW has no concerns with this project. MassDOT should be consulted since it is a State road.

SHELD, Matt Delmonte: The overhead service above the MFE as shown would not be allowed. Applicant has since spoken to SHELD and they can locate a utility pole in a different location and provide electrical service to the MFE.

Police, Chief Gundersen: From a police or traffic perspective, I have no concerns.

Tim Cauley, FD2 Water: I spoke to the resident a few months ago in regards to this possibly happening. We talked about running a water line for the building, but then I never heard anything back. I don't have any concerns about what he is doing, but just want to make sure that you are aware of this. Also, to piggyback on what John from the DPW stated, that is a state highway so there may be more permitting needed than just the town permits. I'm not sure if they are aware of that.

Historical Commission, Robert Judge: The Historical Commission believes that this proposed "mobile food establishment" at 478 Amherst Road would have no impact on any place of historical and/or archaeological significance.

Questions:

1. Exterior lighting hours of operation, design/specifications – Applicant described string lighting over the seating area at the last meeting. Unclear what lighting is on the food trailer.
2. # of parking spaces available – Submitted parking lot plan w/ 19 spaces. Per 255-86 Off-street parking, "Restaurants, theaters and other places of assembly: one space for every three seats." The site plan identifies 4 picnic tables with 4 seats each = 16 seats / 3 = 5.3 or 6 parking spaces required. The parking requirement is met.
Note – with 19 parking spaces, the parking area could accommodate 19x3 = 57 seats or 14 picnic tables with 4 seats each.
3. Need alternative electric utilities connection approved by SHELD
4. MassDOT approval for curb cut needed

Recommendations for Special Conditions:

1. Locate the dumpster and portable toilets away from the road; provide screening for the dumpster, and locked to prevent wind-blown trash and bears from getting into it.
2. Business sign requires a Sign Permit from Inspection Services Department; if illuminated, requires Illuminated Sign Permit from the Planning Board.
3. Hours of operation and exterior lighting
4. All required permits from Board of Health, Inspection Services, and any other departments must be procured and maintained current.

Action Needed: Discuss proposed revisions, ask questions, review compliance with SPR standards, vote on Site Plan approval.

Recommended Motion: *I move issue Site Plan Approval for a mobile food vendor business at 478 Amherst Road, subject to the following conditions*

6:30 PM -- PUBLIC HEARING

AGENDA ITEM #5 Proposed Sign Bylaw Amendments

The proposed zoning bylaw online:

<https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14382/Proposed-Zoning-Bylaw-Amendments---Signs---Public-Hearing>

The Planning Board will hold a public hearing on proposed amendments to the Zoning Bylaw for the regulation of signs. A review of the regulation of signs within the Zoning bylaw was published in May 2024 (<https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14139/Report-on-Sign-Bylaw-Review-and-Analysis---January-2025>), and presentation of the proposed changes was conducted at the Planning Board meetings on 7/14/25 and 8/25/25. Further review by the Town's legal counsel, Mead Talerman and Costa, has been provided and recommended edits identified in the proposed bylaw posted for this public hearing. Amendments are proposed as follows:

- Repeal and replace 255-85 Signs
- Amend 255-10 Terms defined
- Amend 255-22 Home occupations
- Amend 255-34 Professional business uses
- Amend 255-39 Bed-and-Breakfast facilities

MTC legal guidance included the addition of definitions for temporary signs: accessory and non-accessory. The term "temporary" needs further discussion and definition in the bylaw, particularly for a temporary *non-accessory* sign. An example of this would be a political campaign sign or fundraiser sign. Town Counsel advised that the time period should include a full campaign cycle from primary through general election period, if we choose to define a time period for "temporary" signs.

Action Needed: Conduct the public hearing, review proposed zoning edits, Planning Board deliberations, accept additional public comment if desired, motion to accept the final proposed zoning and submit to the Selectboard for placement on the November 5th, 2025 Special Fall Town Meeting Warrant.

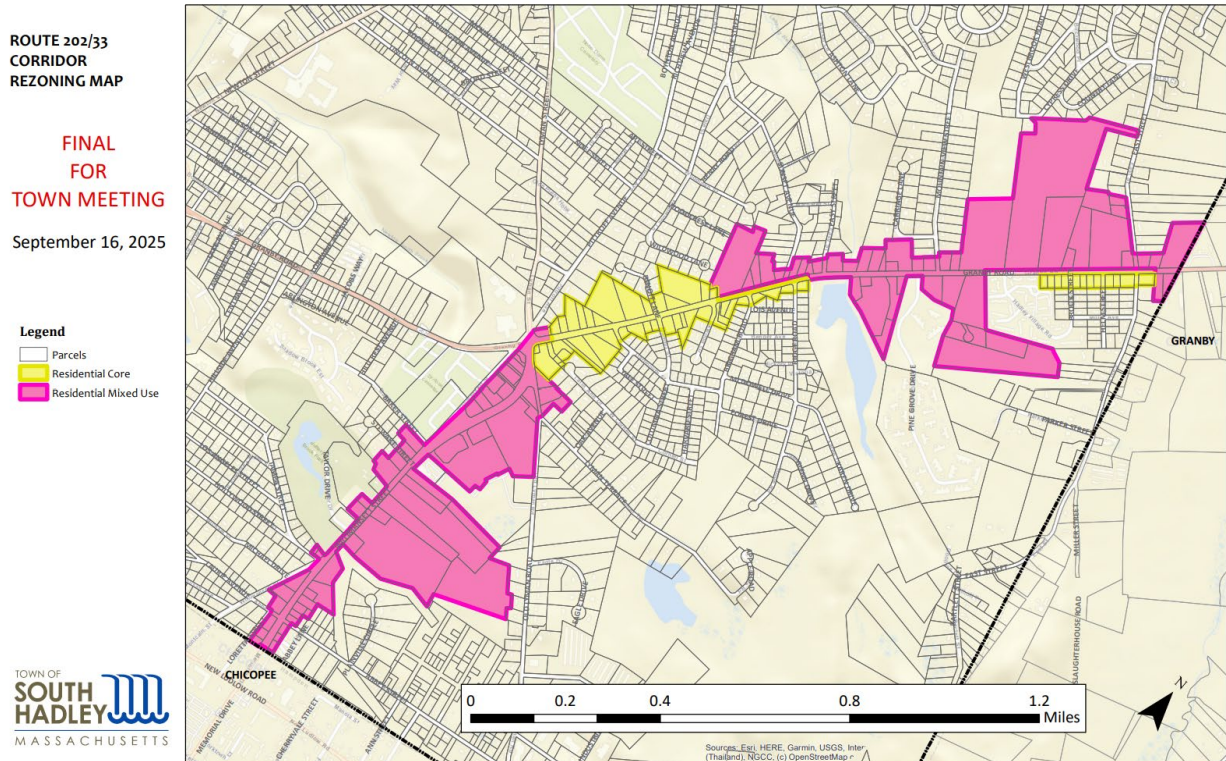
Recommended Motion: *I move to approve the proposed amendments to the Zoning Bylaw as presented and edited here tonight, and submit to the Selectboard for placement on the November 5, 2025 Special Fall Town Meeting Warrant.*

AGENDA ITEM #6 Discussion Draft Report to Town Meeting – Route 202/33 Zoning Amendments

Final proposed Zoning Amendments online here:

<https://southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14372/Corridor-Proposed-Zoning---FINAL-For-Town-Meeting-91625>

Project website: <https://southhadley.org/1400/Route-202-33-Corridor-Re-Zoning>



The Planning Board will review the draft Report to Town Meeting for this zoning amendment, make any edits, and vote to approve the Report which will then be issued to the Town Clerk and Town Meeting.

Action Needed: Review the draft Report to Town Meeting for this zoning amendment, make any edits, and vote to approve the Report

Recommended Motion: *I move to approve the Route 202/33 Zoning Amendments Planning Board Report to Town Meeting.*

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

Attorney General Review of May 2025 Annual Town Meeting Approval of Articles

Articles 15 (Creation of Affordable Housing Trust) and 17 (Old Lyman Road Zoning Map Amendment) were approved.

Articles 16, 18, 19, and 20 are extended for an additional 60 days until November 10, 2025:

16	Old Firehouse Museum Local Historic District
17	Zoning Map Amendment - Old Lyman Road
18	Zoning Bylaw and Zoning Map Amendment - Village District
19	Zoning Bylaw Chapter 255-50 Accessory Dwelling Units Amendment
20	Citizen Petition - South Hadley Welcoming Community Ordinance

Upcoming Meetings

10/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 506 Granby Road – Apartment Community – Site Plan Review and Stormwater Permit Public Hearing • 27 Ludlow Road (Lots 1 and 2) – ADUs - Site Plan Review • Route 22/33 Zoning – Approve Report to Town Meeting • Sign Bylaw Amendments – Draft Report to Town Meeting
10/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign Bylaw Amendments – Approve Report to Town Meeting
November 5th	Special Fall Town Meeting
11/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floodplain Bylaw Update – Introduction • Subdivision Regulations Update Discussion
11/24	
12/8	
12/22	
1/12/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subdivision Regulations Public Hearing (??)

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. Does site plan reasonably fulfill the following objectives: See 255-148 for complete criteria descriptions.</p>	
<p>1. Compliance with bylaws, regulations, and Master Plan.</p>	<p>BOH permitting and Inspectional Services permitting required. New business!! Seasonal ice cream stand would be great amenity for outdoor recreational users of nearby trails in the Holyoke Range/State Park; and surrounding residential neighborhood. Located next door to the Hiker Parking Lot on Water District 2 land (trail access to the Range).</p>
<p>2. Integration of site into existing terrain, surrounding landscape, and built environment to minimize disruptions.</p>	<p>Business zoning district surrounded by residential development at the base of the Holyoke Range. Amherst Road is also SR 116, an arterial connecting to Granby and Amherst.</p>
<p>3. Site design characteristics avoids and minimizes disturbance to natural resources, scenic views, and open space.</p>	<p>Portable food trailer, portable bathrooms, picnic tables, and dumpster; gravel parking area.</p>
<p>4. Conforms to Special Permit requirements, if applicable.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>5. Structures shall be compatible with the character and scale of structures in the neighborhood and zoning district.</p>	<p>Mobile food truck 20'x8'x8'</p>
<p>6. 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>	<p>Proposed stockade fence to screen parking lot; proposed fencing around dumpster and portable toilet. Request a few new trees?</p>
<p>7. 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>	<p>Confirm # of parking spaces and signage; signage proposed to be "Open" flag placed on fence and taken down when closed.</p>
<p>8. Prevent pollution of surface and groundwater, changes in ground water levels, increased run-off, and potential for flooding; and minimize erosion and sedimentation.</p>	<p>Low impact development within the Water Supply Protection Overlay district.</p>
<p>9. Minimize and/or mitigate adverse impacts on the Town's services and infrastructure.</p>	<p>Seasonal business</p>
<p>10. 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>	<p>Exterior lighting proposed as string lighting over seating area; need clarification about lighting near bathroom and on food trailer.</p>

<p>11. Place electric, telephone, cable TV, and other utilities underground where physically and environmentally feasible.</p>	<p>SHELD commented that proposed electric utility pole would not be allowed in the proposed location; applicant communicated with SHELD and there are other options for locating the pole without any conflict.</p>
<p>12. 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>	<p>Gravel parking lot, temporary mobile trailer. Conversion of open field into gravel parking area.</p>
<p>13. 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>No minimum frontage occupancy requirement.</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
SEPTEMBER 22, 2025 REGULAR MEETING**

Letters and Memos

- September 17 email (attached) from Dan Dodge, Cornell Street, regarding the Board's September 15 public hearing continuation.
- September 19 email (attached) from Joan Vohl Hamilton, 77 Hadley Street, regarding proposed zoning amendments for signs.

Legal Notices

Amherst

●

Chicopee

●

Granby

●

Hadley

●

Holyoke

●

Brad Hutchison

2 messages

Dan <danobac16@gmail.com>

Wed, Sep 17, 2025 at 1:59 PM

To: Anne Capra <acapra@southhadley.ma.gov>, shplanboard@southhadley.ma.gov

Good morning Anna,

I watched the recorded September 15 Planning Board Meeting and I would LOVE it if Board Member Brad Hutchison could call me to discuss his expanded residential core comments.

Thanks

Daniel T. Dodge

413-218-7344

Anne Capra <acapra@southhadley.ma.gov>

Wed, Sep 17, 2025 at 3:05 PM

To: Colleen Canning <ccanning@southhadley.ma.gov>

Please add to the Board's correspondence.

[Quoted text hidden]

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WARNING: FRAUD ALERT REGARDING FAKE APPLICATION FEE REQUESTS

The Town of South Hadley has been made aware of a fraudulent scheme targeting applicants with fake requests for application fee payments. An outside entity is sending detailed emails with subjects like "Settlement of Invoice for Application Review [property] Development," which then provide instructions for wiring payments.

These emails and invoices are NOT from the Town of South Hadley. All application fees are handled in person at Town Hall. **Do not pay any invoices or respond to these fraudulent emails.**

If you have received a suspicious email or have any questions about application fees, please contact the Planning & Conservation Department directly.

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

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

77 Hadley Street
South Hadley, MA 01075
September 19, 2025

South Hadley Planning Board
c/o Anne Capra
Town Hall
South Hadley, MA 01075

Dear Planning Board Members,

I write to you regarding the town signage issue you'll be addressing on September 22. My hope is that you'll create air-tight rules regarding when political or advertising signs may be posted on South Hadley properties, and when they must be removed.

There are signs on properties about town that advocate for removing candidates in 2026. It's September 2025! Who even knows whether the candidate will run for office again? The general public must look at these signs for an entire year?

Even worse, on Route 47 near the Hadley line, there's a huge banner that advocates voting for a candidate in 2028 that is not even eligible to run for office! Three more years of that? People who don't live in South Hadley have asked me why South Hadley allows this sort of obvious political propaganda.

And then there are temporary advertising lawn signs that pepper lawns indefinitely. "Indefinitely" is the issue that's unacceptable.

Most town residents put candidate signs up somewhat before an election, and remove them immediately after an election. My hope is that you'll create a clear policy to make this the law, and that there will be enforcement of the law.

Thanks for all you do, and for your efforts in this matter.

Sincerely,
Joan Vohl Hamilton