

Background Materials – January 12, 2026 – Planning Board Meeting

Prepared by Anne Capra, Director of Planning and Conservation, 1/9/26

Meeting will be live streamed on [Cable Access Channel 15](#).

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Background Reports for Planning Board meetings are posted online:
<https://www.southhadley.org/1274/Agenda-Background-Materials>

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.

2) Minutes

Planning and Conservation Coordinator Colleen Canning will forward minutes separately.

Action Needed: Vote to approve the minutes.

3) Correspondence

Correspondence is attached.

Action Needed: No action needed.

5) Decision - 136 East Street Flexible Development Special Permit and Stormwater Management Permit

Application materials online: <https://www.southhadley.org/1512/East-Street-136---Flexible-Development>

The subject property is 8.9 acres in the RA1 zoning district. The proposed development is a Flexible Development for a 14-unit condominium development for people age 55 and older, in two single-family and six duplex housing units. The development will include 4.104 acres of protected open space. The site will be serviced by FD2 public water, Town sewer, and SHELDT. The proposed Flexible Development includes multiple buildings on a parcel for dwelling purposes and will require Form H approval under the Subdivision Regulations, which will be filed after the Special Permit application is approved.

Applicable Bylaws and Regulations for Planning Board Review:

- **Chapter 200 Stormwater Management** [Town of South Hadley, MA Stormwater Management](#)
- **255-31 Flexible Development** [Town of South Hadley, MA Supplemental District Regulations](#)
- **Article IX Special Permits** [Town of South Hadley, MA Special Permits](#)
- **Chapter 360 Subdivision Regulations, Article VI More than one building for dwelling purposes per lot:** <https://ecode360.com/30055288#30055288>

The public hearing was opened on 11/10/25, continued to 11/24/25, and 12/22/25, and closed on 12/22/25. The Board will discuss the Special Permit and Stormwater Management Permit Decision, special conditions, including setting the performance guarantees, and vote on issuance of a Special Permit.

ACTION NEEDED: Discuss the Special Permit and Stormwater Management Permit Decision, special conditions, including setting the performance guarantees, and vote on issuance of a Special Permit

RECOMMENDED MOTION: *I move to issue a Special Permit and Stormwater Management Permit with conditions as presented for the Flexible Development at 136 East Street.*

6) Sign Bylaw Amendments

Draft Bylaw online: <https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14645/Sign-Bylaw-Proposed-Amendments--111925-Revisions>

Example Signs Report: <https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14567/Example-Sign-Dimensions-Guide>

The Board began discussion on amendments to the sign zoning bylaw (255-85 Signs) in early 2025, and decided to table discussion. A revised draft is available based on the Board's previous comments.

ACTION NEEDED: Review draft and discuss edits.

7) Floodplain Bylaw Amendments

Model Bylaw and other materials online: <https://www.southhadley.org/1318/ProposedDraft-Bylaws>

Floodplain Regulations

- [South Hadley Floodplain Bylaw Checklist 2/24/2025](#)
- [2020 MA Model Floodplain Bylaw V2](#)
- [255-91 Floodplain Regulations - Current Bylaw](#)
- [Preliminary FEMA Map Panels Guide and Web Viewer Links](#)

FEMA Map Viewer – Look up your property here and explore the online map viewer:

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=5852ea902db44e55bfce395799315f9c>

South Hadley is under mandate by FEMA and MassDCR (the State coordinating office for the National Flood Insurance Program) to update the existing floodplain regulations to meet current standards. We have been awaiting the release of updated flood maps for the lower Connecticut River before undertaking this. The currently effective FIRM maps are from 1979/1980. Preliminary maps for our area were released in August 2025 and DCR is advising municipalities to proceed utilizing these maps.

ACTION NEEDED: Planning Director will provide a general overview of the resources currently available and posted online for this regulation update process. Schedule next meeting date to begin working through the model bylaw.

7) Planning & Conservation Department Report on Planning Projects and Development Updates

Agricultural Uses Zoning Bylaw Amendments

Assessment report and draft bylaws online (posted January 2025):

<https://www.southhadley.org/1318/ProposedDraft-Bylaws>

An advisory committee has been formed by the Director of Planning and Conservation, and appointed by the Town Administrator, to review the draft zoning bylaw amendments. The Committee is working on a detailed review of the bylaw recommendations more in depth and will make additional recommendations prior to the Planning Board taking this back up for discussion in March.

EV Charging Stations in South Hadley Falls Feasibility Study and Upcoming Webinar

The Facilities Department coordinated an on-street charging stations feasibility study for South Hadley Falls. The study has been completed and we will be hosting a webinar to present the final results:

Tuesday, January 27th at 6pm

Join Zoom Webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84327003333?pwd=mxhuElugG1kJHYOejTKINjLPiXYvBU.1>

By Phone: +1 646 558 8656

Webinar ID: 843 2700 3333

Passcode: 415514

The study is online at the link below:

<https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14609/EV-Charging-Station-Feasibility-Study-Report-121625>

Remote/Hybrid Meetings Authorization Extended

Gov. Healey signed a bill to extend authorizations for local boards and committees to hold public meetings remotely or in a hybrid format *through June of 2027*. The law also extends the remote meeting option for representative town meetings and permits reduced quorums for open town meetings. The remote and hybrid authorizations under the state’s open meeting law were created as emergency accommodations during the COVID-19 pandemic and had been extended due to their success but were due to expire on March 31.

Upcoming Meetings

1/26/26 <i>Virtual</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 506 Granby Road SPR and Stormwater Management Permit – Public Hearing Continuation
2/9/26 <i>Virtual</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subdivision Regulations Public Hearing• Zone Change Petition – 115 Woodbridge Street
2/23/26 <i>Virtual</i>	
3/9/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agricultural Bylaw Amendments Discussion
3/23/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agricultural Bylaw Amendments Discussion
4/13/26	
4/27/26	
5/4 & 5/18/26	

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.

**SOUTH HADLEY PLANNING BOARD
LIST OF ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENCES
JANUARY 12, 2026 REGULAR MEETING**

Letters and Memos

- January 6 email invitation (attached) from Joanna Brown, South Hadley resident, for a January 21 webinar on intergenerational care for land and community.
- January 7 to January 9 email chain (attached) from South Hadley residents regarding proposed changes to Agricultural Zoning uses.

Legal Notices

Amherst

-

Chicopee

-

Granby

- Notice from the Granby Planning Board for public hearings on January 5 to consider the following: 1) application for Site Plan Approval for a private garage/stable exceeding 1200 sq ft at 35 Baggs Hill Road; 2) application for Site Plan Review for a private garage/stable exceeding 1200 sq ft at 127 Morgan Street; and 3) application for Site Plan Review for a private garage/stable exceeding 1200 sq ft at 157 Amherst Road.

Hadley

-

Holyoke

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**Fwd: Free Jan 21 at 7 pm Webinar w/ Robin Wall Kimmerer & Esther Bonney -
"Intergenerational Care for Land and Community"**

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

Wed, Jan 7, 2026 at 7:54 AM

Please add to the Board's correspondence.

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

From: **Joanna Brown** <joannabr@comcast.net>

Date: Tue, Jan 6, 2026 at 10:21 PM

Subject: Free Jan 21 at 7 pm Webinar w/ Robin Wall Kimmerer & Esther Bonney - "Intergenerational Care for Land and Community"

To: Joanna Brown <joannabr@comcast.net>

FYI--info on "Intergenerational Care for Land and Community" Webinar on January 21 at 7 pm Eastern Time. Free but registration is required. If you cannot attend at that time, register anyway and you will be sent a link for replay after the program.

Please pass this announcement along to others who may be interested.
Thank you,

Joanna Brown

----- Original Message -----

From: Wild Ones <marketing@wildones.org>

To: joannabr@comcast.net

Date: 01/06/2026 2:19 PM EST

Subject: Free Webinar w/ Robin Wall Kimmerer & Esther Bonney - "Intergenerational Care for Land and Community"



Join Wild Ones, Plant Baby Plant, and Nurture Natives for a free national webinar, "**Intergenerational Care for Land and Community: A Conversation with Robin Wall Kimmerer & Esther Bonney.**" Together,

we will explore how small local actions, from school gardens to community plantings, can become part of a wider web of reciprocity and repair.

Intergenerational Care for Land and Community

Wednesday, January 21, 2026 | 6:00 p.m. CT / 7 ET / 5 MT / 4 PT

Premiere + YouTube chat

Register: <https://wildones.org/conversation-with-robin-wall-kimmerer-esther-bonney/>

This webinar brings together author and botanist Robin Wall Kimmerer and youth organizer Esther Bonney for a conversation about how people of different ages find their place in the native plant movement. They will talk about community, belonging, and how care for land grows when stories and skills are shared across generations.

Can't make it live? Register anyway- we'll send the recording link after the premiere.

This conversation is presented in partnership with [Plant Baby](#) [Plant and Nurture Natives](#). All donations made at the time of registration will be shared between Plant Baby Plant, Nurture Natives, and Wild Ones to support community-rooted projects that build intergenerational relationships and put native plants into the ground.

REGISTER NOW

About the Presenters:

Robin Wall Kimmerer is an author, scientist, SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor of Environmental Biology, and enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. Her books, including [Braiding Sweetgrass](#), weave Indigenous knowledge and ecological science to deepen our relationships with the natural world. In 2025, Robin launched [Plant Baby Plant](#), a movement aimed at re-establishing a reciprocal relationship with the Earth.

Esther Bonney is the founder of [Nurture Natives](#), a nationally recognized youth-led nonprofit empowering young people through native biodiversity restoration. At 19, she is a leading voice at the intersection of youth leadership, environmental stewardship, and community care.

Bonus: Free Book Giveaway

Register and you'll be automatically entered to win a copy of one of Robin Wall Kimmerer's newest books: [Bud Finds Her Gift](#) or [The Serviceberry](#). These two titles echo the heart of the conversation, offering stories and reflections

that speak across generations about reciprocity, care for land, and our shared responsibility to one another and the natural world.

Already registered? You're in.

No purchase or donation is required to enter or win. Winners will be selected at random from eligible registrants and notified by email.

Win a Free Copy!

ROBIN WALL KIMMERER
Bud Finds Her Gift

ROBIN WALL KIMMERER
THE SERVICEBERRY
Abundance and Simplicity
in the Natural World

REGISTER FOR OUR FREE
WEBINAR BY JAN. 20

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FRAUD ALERT -- 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. 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 and 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@southhadleyma.gov

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

Fwd: One More Quick thing re: Agricultural Zoning and Uses Bylaw Amendments

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

Fri, Jan 9, 2026 at 1:59 PM

Please add to correspondence.

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

From: **Marc Desrosiers** <310amherstroad@comcast.net>

Date: Fri, Jan 9, 2026 at 10:08 AM

Subject: Re: One More Quick thing re: Agricultural Zoning and Uses Bylaw Amendments

To: Denise Presley <lindellpresley@gmail.com>

Cc: linda sachs <lsachsny@earthlink.net>, Planning Board <acapra@southhadleyma.gov>, linda young <precincte@gmail.com>, Marc Desrosiers <marcalexdesrosiers@gmail.com>, Lisa Wong <lwong@southhadleyma.gov>, Martha Terry <marthatterry25@gmail.com>, joanna brown <joannabr@comcast.net>

Nice letter Linda- hopefully you will achieve the level of cooperation between the Planning Board and the taxpayer that should always exist.

Marc
Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 9, 2026, at 9:15 AM, Denise Presley <lindellpresley@gmail.com> wrote:

Linda,

I agree with you.

Also, the tables are confusing generally because some uses in Ag zoning districts conflict with the proposed bylaw. Inserting new uses in red ink is just lazy. Why not just clean up the tables to address the conflicts?

Denise

On Fri, Jan 9, 2026 at 6:56 AM linda sachs <lsachsny@earthlink.net> wrote:

Hi Anne,

In addition to Tables/Charts that allow comparison of proposed new Agricultural Uses in Non-Ag zones to existing zoning, would it be possible for those Tables to also disclose all applicable local and state laws and which town departments or governmental entities are responsible for enforcing those laws?

Given South Hadley's budget problems this seems particularly important.

Plus it would be difficult to assess whether something ought to be permitted without this information.

For example — if a homeowner decides to raise two pigs for personal consumption, who would be responsible for enforcing laws pertaining to the maintenance and disposal of animal feces or waste from their slaughter? What if the waste ran off their property? Who would be responsible for responding if those animals were being mistreated and the homeowner was in violation of laws pertaining to the humane treatment of farm animals?

(We have already seen how incredibly complicated and time consuming it is for our town to deal with someone's vicious pet dog and a resident abusing their dog.)

Thank you.

Linda Sachs

Begin forwarded message:

From: linda sachs <lsachsnyc@earthlink.net>

Subject: Re: Agricultural Zoning and Uses Bylaw Amendments

Date: January 8, 2026 at 1:29:59 PM EST

To: Planning Board <acapra@southhadleyma.gov>

Cc: linda young <precincte@gmail.com>, Denise Presley <lindellpresley@gmail.com>, Marc Desrosiers <marcalexdesrosiers@gmail.com>, Lisa Wong <lwong@southhadleyma.gov>

Dear Anne,

Thank you for responding to concerns we've expressed about the Ag zoning and Ag uses amendments.

As written by the Planning Board's consultant, the Review and the Amendments are frighteningly complicated, complex, dense and potentially enormously impactful on residents throughout South Hadley.

I appreciate that you are working with a Committee to sort out some of the complexities and complications. And I appreciate your recognition of the fact that this process may take much longer than what the Town Administrator expressed in her memo to the Select Board, i.e. getting this to the May 2026 Town Meeting.

Marc Derosier's suggestion that proposed changes be presented in a clear fashion that allows comparison to existing zoning is right on point. The tables that were produced for the 202/33 proposed amendments are a good example of one way that more clarity can be achieved.

I'm attaching a copy of the brief comments that I made to the Select Board on January 6.

Jeff Cyr recommended that comments be addressed to the Planning Board, so I hope you will take look at this short document and consider the suggestion that the process of amending AG zoning and Ag uses include a "robust public component," and more than just one public hearing.

I share your desire to achieve what is truly "best for South Hadley" and believe that with transparency and public participation, that will happen.

Thank you again.

Linda Sachs
[193 Woodbridge Street](#)

On Jan 7, 2026, at 12:31 PM, Anne Capra <acapra@southhadleyma.gov> wrote:

Hello,

I'm sending this email to follow up on comments at last night's Selectboard meeting and/or your recent comments submitted to me. The Planning Board will hold public meetings in person regarding any draft amendments under consideration, in addition to a formal public hearing. As was mentioned, the amendments are somewhat complicated. Therefore, I'm working with what I'm calling the Agricultural Bylaws Amendment Committee as a focus group to

help me work through various issues that exist in the current draft bylaws before the bylaws go back to the Planning Board for public discussion. As stated last night, we would love to send bylaw amendments to the May Town Meeting but it is very likely that the process may take longer, and that is fine. The many issues and conflicts in our current zoning about ag uses have existed for a very long time so we can all ride out for a few more months so that we come up with something together that is best for South Hadley.

I've attached the presentation from the first agricultural committee meeting which lays out the framework for the rezoning. To clarify, these amendments are not just about the "Agricultural Zoning District" but about agricultural uses at various scales across all zoning districts throughout South Hadley.

I ask for your patience as I work through this initial phase to prepare drafts to take back to the Planning Board. All of the draft materials are online but are subject to change in the next few months as the committee focus group works through them:

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

Sincerely,
Anne

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*Do not print this email unless necessary

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