



Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Remote via Zoom Video Conferencing

January 27, 2022, at 7:15 PM – Approved at March 17, 2022 meeting

1 Present: Tricia Kendall, Chair
2 Lakshmi Krishnan, Clerk
3 Anna Tesmenitsky
4 Deepa Venkat
5 Marcelo Arjona
6 Kevin McClean
7
8 Others: Peter Matchak, Town Planner
9 Emma Snellings, Asst. Town Planner
10

11 *Call to Order*

12 Tricia Kendall called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm. Ms. Kendall read a statement regarding the
13 town’s response to Covid-19 and explained that per the Governor’s order the meeting is being held
14 remotely via Zoom, and recorded and broadcast by WACA TV. Ms. Kendall introduced the
15 Planning Board members, staff in attendance, and reviewed the meeting agenda.
16

17 **355 West Union Street Site Plan Review – Continued from the January 13, 2022.**

18 The applicant requested a continuance to the next available Planning Board Meeting.
19

20 Mr. Arjona made a motion to continue the 355 West Union Street and Site Plan Review until
21 February 10, 2022. The motion was seconded by Ms. Krishnan; Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye, Arjona-
22 aye, McClean-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye and Kendall-aye; with a vote of 5-0-0.
23

24 **501 Pond Street Special Permit and Site Plan Review – Continued from January 13, 2022.**

25 The applicant requested a continuance to the next available Planning Board Meeting.
26

27 Mr. Arjona made a motion to continue the 501 Pond Street Special Permit and Site Plan Review
28 until February 10, 2022. The motion was seconded by Ms. Krishnan; Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye,
29 Arjona-aye, McClean-aye, and Kendall-aye; with a vote of 5-0-0.
30

31 **Multi-Family Zoning Requirement for MBTA Communities: Review the newly adopted** 32 **Zoning Legislation requirement that MBTA communities shall have at least one zoning district** 33 **of reasonable size in which multi-family housing is permitted as of right.**

34 Mr. Matchak reviewed this item and its relevance to the Planning Board. He explained that the
35 proposal is part of larger zoning legislation that was recently approved by the State House. The
36 objective is to recommend that MBTA communities “up-zone” areas in proximity to train stations
37 and bus stops to allow for increased zoning density, at a minimum of 15 units per acre.
38

39 Mr. Matchak noted that he attended a Dept. of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)
40 webinar on January 13, 2022 that laid out the proposal’s framework. Mr. Matchak suggested
41 interested parties attend the MetroWest Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) webinar on
42 this topic scheduled for February 1. He also noted that the Planning Office is preparing an analysis
43 of what current transit district zoning allows. Mr. Matchak reviewed the proposal’s other three
44 objectives, including limiting the distance of developments in the zone to less than one-half mile
45 from the commuter rail station, banning age-restricted units, and requiring the development to be
46 suitable for families and children.
47

48 Ms. Kendall asked Mr. Matchak to provide the members with a copy of the Select Board letter
49 stating their recommendations regarding the regulations. The members also discussed engaging
50 other committees and boards to weigh in on the regulations, and to ensure the Planning Board’s
51 comments are provided in time for DHCD’s March 31st deadline.
52

53 **Development of Outdoor Seating Standards**

54 Ms. Kendall explained that during the pandemic, temporary outdoor seating allowances were made,
55 and now restaurants are seeking approval for permanent outdoor arrangements. She outlined points
56 previously discussed by the board requiring such proposals to include a civil engineering site plan, to
57 meet accessibility standards, to address traffic and parking safety considerations, to provide design
58 and material color selections, and to specify the seating capacity. The members also discussed
59 requiring a Design Review Committee assessment or third-party review. They also suggested
60 consulting other communities that have explored these standards for parking area and street side
61 seating.

62
63 Regarding the 355 W. Union St. outdoor seating application that is before the board, Mr. Matchak
64 recommended the board complete their review of the application and assess it from its security,
65 traffic safety, aesthetics, and accessibility standpoints.

66
67 **Discussion of Auto Dealers Exchange of Concord, LLC (dba ASECA Boston):**

68 Ms. Tesmenitsky explained that there is a large supplemental parking area proposed for and
69 currently being review by Holliston that large vehicles would use and potentially access via Rte. 126
70 or other roads in Ashland. She recommended the Planning Board obtain information from Holliston
71 regarding the aspects of the operation and assess the potential impact on Ashland, in terms of traffic
72 on local roads, Rte. 126 which is a state road, and options to mitigate vehicle noise.

73
74 **Requested Lot Release Whittemore Estate Definitive Subdivision: Lots 9, 10, and 11:**

75 Mr. Matchak explained that Whittemore Estates is a seven-lot subdivision, and the developer is
76 requesting the release of the remaining three lots 9, 10, and 11. GCG, the town's third-party
77 engineering consultant, estimated the cost for the developer to complete the remaining work within
78 the roadway, including contingency, and inflation is \$303,720.00. The applicant has submitted a
79 surety bond for \$303,720.00 that will be held by the town. Mr. Matchak noted that the Conservation
80 Agent and the DPW have inspected the site's stormwater and erosion controls, and he also reviewed
81 the request, and it meets or addresses all of the barriers.

82
83 Ms. Kendall made a motion to approve the release of Whittemore Estate Subdivision Lots 9, 10, 11,
84 and accept the surety bond in the amount of \$303,720.00. The motion was seconded by Ms.
85 Krishnan; Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Arjona-aye, and Kendall-aye; with a vote of
86 5-0-0.

87
88 **Report from Board Members and Town Planner:**

89 **Ashland's Shared Housing Inventory Review**

90 Mr. Matchak provided a memorandum for the board's review that stated the town's shared housing
91 inventory (SHI) is at 9.1%, and the mandate is 10%. As of August 2, 2021, the town has been given
92 Safe Harbor until 2023, mainly due to permitting the 180-unit age-restricted housing development on
93 Memorial Dr. However, when the 2020 census is adopted the estimated SHI will likely drop to
94 7.9%. Mr. Matchak reviewed the various tools, such as inclusionary zoning that aid in increasing the
95 affordable housing stock. An inclusionary zoning housing survey will be available shortly.

96
97 **Special Municipal Employees Designation Update**

98 Mr. Matchak explained that the the Select Board put the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of
99 Appeals under the special designation. This designation allows a resident that sits on a board the
100 ability to appear and work in a professional capacity as well as to represent a client in a formal
101 setting in front of another board.

102
103 **10 to 50 Main St. Mill Building Project**

104 Ms. Venkat reported that the developer is reviewing the property's Activity and Use Limitation
105 (AUL), which defines the types of uses allowed on the property. AUL's are related to levels of
106 possible contaminants on the property.

107
108 Given the developer had initially proposed a 40-R project, which is now likely a by-right
109 development, 16 residents submitted a letter to the Planning Office requesting a webinar to educate
110 the public in this area. That letter was distributed to the board and responding to it will be addressed
111 at an upcoming meeting. Helen, the person representing the community group, stated that she sent
112 the letter earlier, however, Mr. Matchak said he did not receive it.

113
114

115 **Administrative Matters: future meetings, public hearings:**

116 **2022 Schedule Discussion**

117 **i. Wednesday Evening Retreat Date**

118 The next Planning Board retreat date will be scheduled on February 16, 2022, at 5:30 pm.

119

120 **ii. Planning Board Meeting Time (7:00 PM vs. 7:15 PM)**

121 The members agreed to maintain the regular Planning Board meeting start time at 7:15 pm.

122

123 **iii. Site Visit Date for 311 Pleasant Street**

124 The members agreed to schedule a 311 Pleasant St. site visit on February 4th at 4:00 pm.

125

126 **iv. Planning Board Email**

127 Mr. Matchak reported that he has arranged the use of a central town email account that the members
128 will use for Planning Board correspondence.

129

130 **Approval of Minutes**

131 Ms. Krishnan made a motion to approve the minutes of May 19, 2021, as drafted. The motion was
132 seconded by Ms. Venkat; Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye, and Kendall-aye; with a vote of 3-0-0.

133

134 ***Adjournment***

135 Ms. Krishnan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:49 pm. The motion was seconded by Ms.
136 Tesmenitsky; Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Arjona-aye, and Kendall-aye; with a
137 vote of 5-0-0.

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