



# Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

## Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Remote via Zoom Video Conferencing

February 11, 2021 at 7:15 PM – Approved at March 11, 2021 meeting

1 ***Call to Order***

2 Dale Buchanan, Planning Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM and reviewed the  
3 meeting agenda. Emma Snellings, Assistant Planner, explained that the meeting was being  
4 held via Zoom recorded and broadcast live by WACA TV. She provided the video conference  
5 meeting access numbers and passcodes.

6  
7 **Presentation by Cece Doucette on wireless technology**

8 Cece Doucette gave a presentation entitled Wireless Technology Risks & Safer Municipal  
9 Solutions. Ms. Doucette's focus was to bring awareness concerning radio frequency radiation  
10 issues. She highlighted studies conducted on cellphone radiation emissions that identified  
11 cancers, DNA damage, infertility, and neurotoxicity effects. The research also indicated that  
12 children are particular vulnerable.

13  
14 Concerning cell tower density, Ms. Doucette cited non-industry funded science outlined in  
15 antennasearch.com. She explained that 5G technology is the addition of short millimeter  
16 waves that cannot go through objects and therefore highly densified towers are required to  
17 support 5G. Ms. Doucette explained the effect cell towers have on adjacent residential areas  
18 including property value degradation by roughly 10%. Ms. Doucette expressed that the town's  
19 bylaws should be strengthened to make it difficult for the industry to place towers in  
20 residential areas.

21  
22 Ms. Doucette outlined several recommendations that Ashland can begin to consider  
23 transitioning to safe technology.

24  
25 Mr. Matchak noted that Ms. Doucette's presentation would be available on the town's websites  
26 and forwarded to the members.

27  
28 **Downtown Zoning Presentation Follow-Up**

29 Mr. Matchak and Ms. Snellings reported on their efforts to arrange the Planning Board public  
30 meeting to walk and view the downtown area. The members agreed to meet on February 24,  
31 2021 at 8:45 am to 10:00 am.

32  
33 **Discussion of possible zoning bylaw amendments, including:**

34  
35 **Covered Porch bylaw**

36 Mr. Buchanan explained that because many houses are built close to the front easement or  
37 front yard setback, the zoning bylaw requires a Special Permit or Variance from the Zoning  
38 Board of Appeals (ZBA) to allow a front porch addition from being built right up to the street.  
39 The proposed Front Porch bylaw, added to Section 4, would require a Building Permit for an  
40 open-air porch as opposed to a zoning Variance as long as all the conditions were met.

41  
42 The members reviewed the draft Covered Porch bylaw. They discussed adding language to  
43 stipulate the height of open rail guardrails, limit the porch height to one-story, prohibit  
44 construction on top of the porch, and the specific setbacks and dimension requirements for  
45 various residential heights. The bylaw would be applicable to all Ashland residential zones,  
46 including the Overlay District.

47  
48 **Administrative Matters: future meetings, public hearings**

49 The next regular Planning Board meeting is scheduled on February 25, 2021. The  
50 downtown walkthrough is scheduled on February 24, 2021.

51  
52 Mr. Matchak reported there is a resubmitted Permit application for 0 Megunko St. pending  
53 the Planning Board’s review and will likely be scheduled in March 2021. He provided an  
54 update concerning the Transportation Improvement Project that will redo the rail crossing  
55 at that location.  
56  
57 In addition, Mr. Matchak mentioned that April Anderson was hired address economic  
58 development related to the 10-50 Main St. 40R project and downtown redevelopment.  
59  
60 Mr. Rubertone made a motion to appoint Tricia Kendall and Deepa Venkat to represent the  
61 Planning Board on the 10-50 Main St. 40R Subcommittee. The motion was seconded by Ms.  
62 Krishnan; Kendall–aye, Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye, Rubertone-aye, Buchanan-aye; with a vote  
63 of 5-0-0.  
64  
65 **Report from Board Members and Town Planner**  
66 None.  
67  
68 ***Adjournment***  
69 Ms. Kendall made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 pm. The motion was seconded by  
70 Ms. Krishnan; Kendall–aye, Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye, Rubertone-aye, Buchanan-aye; with a  
71 vote of 5-0-0.  
72  
73 ***Documents***  
74 1. February 11, 2021 Agenda  
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