



Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

Planning Board Meeting Minutes Remote via Zoom Video Conferencing

February 25, 2021 at 7:15 PM – Approved at March 25, 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 **Concurrent meeting with the Design Review Committee to discuss:**

8
9 **Proposed planting guideline addition to the Design Review Guidelines**

10 Catherine Rooney, Vice Chair of the Design Review Committee (DRC), presented a tree planting
11 diagram and recommended that it, or something similar, be adopted as the planting standard
12 guideline. There was a discussion concerning the challenges related to enforcing planting
13 conditions for submitted and executed landscape plans, and the recommended length of the
14 warranty. There was consensus to have the DRC develop a formal design review guideline for
15 plantings for the Planning Board to vote on and adopt.

16
17 **Sign Bylaw interpretation and enforcement**

18 Bill Savage, Chair of the DRC, referred to a letter that was distributed to the board entitled the
19 Signage Bylaw and Noticeable In-town Offenses. Mr. Savage explained that the problem was
20 the lack of meaningful signage enforcement, and the letter recommended the Building
21 Commissioner begin discussions with local business concerning compliance. Mr. Matchak
22 explained that Doug Scott, the new Building Commissioner, was hired three weeks ago. The
23 board members suggested providing Mr. Scott with a list of businesses to focus on and confirm
24 their compliance, as well as drafting and distributing a one-page flyer with signage guidelines.

25
26 **Update on Committee work on possible zoning amendments**

27 Mr. Savage explained that the bylaw amendments under review by the DRC, include the Site
28 Plan square footage trigger, the parking lot review to integrate sustainability and stormwater
29 management system improvements, the downtown building façade requirements, and the DRC
30 and Site Plan review document and presentation requirements.

31
32 Mr. Buchanan asked, and Mr. Savage responded that going forward the DRC would schedule
33 joint meetings with the board and/or provide periodic updates as needed. Mr. Savage also
34 commented on the benefits of having a staff member join the DRC meetings, as Ms. Snellings'
35 involvement has helped to improve the DRC's meeting structure and procedures.

36
37 Ms. Rooney made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Savage; Rooney-aye,
38 Savage-aye; with a vote of 2-0-0.

39
40 **28 South Street Approval Not Required**

41 Mr. Matchak reviewed the Agricultural Restriction proposed by the Dept. of Agriculture at the
42 federal level and the town of Holliston for Outpost Farm, 28 South St., Holliston. The
43 Restriction would protect the 28.74-acre lot of land at the Ashland/Holliston line where
44 Outpost grows much of its produce. Given a minor portion of the lot is located in Ashland, the
45 Ashland Planning Board would be required to sign-off the Approval Not Required (ANR) to
46 sub-divide the Ashland lot from the 28.74-acre agricultural land. Mr. Matchak noted that \$1.1
47 million in total was invested by the town of Holliston, the Dept. of Agriculture, and the Natural
48 Resources Conservancy Services to protect the land area for agricultural purposes. The
49 permanent Restriction for agriculture purposes would be held by the town of Holliston and the
50 Dept. of Agriculture.

51

52 Mr. Rubertone made a motion to approve the Approval Not Required for 28 South St. as
53 presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kendall; Kendall-aye, Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye,
54 Rubertone-aye, Buchanan-aye; with a vote of 5-0-0.

55

56 **Downtown Zoning Tour and Zoning Amendment Discussion**

57 Mr. Buchanan explained that the Planning Board held a public meeting tour of the downtown
58 area. The members discussed developing a framework and criteria checklist approach to
59 tackle the zoning attributes by section, such as building front/side/rear set-back requirements,
60 high-level uses, building height, design standards, massing, design standards details, and
61 landscaping.

62

63 There was a discussion concerning the downtown streetscape redesign plans and providing
64 plans to the board. The members also discussed beginning the review at Homer Ave. and
65 telecom building area, to ensure the transitional zone integrates with the overall objectives.

66

67 **Discussion of possible zoning bylaw amendments, including:**

68 **Covered Porch bylaw**

69 The members reviewed a Pinterest board with images of various front porches and used the
70 images to consider features to specify in the bylaw.

71

72 The members agreed to review a draft version of the bylaw with restrictions, refine the
73 verbiage, and provide the board with an updated draft for final review.

74

75 **Review and Approval of Minutes from January 14, 2021 and January 28, 2021.**

76 Ms. Kendall made a motion to approve the minutes from January 14, 2021 as amended. The
77 motion was seconded by Ms. Krishnan; Kendall-aye, Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye, Rubertone-aye,
78 Buchanan-aye; with a vote of 5-0-0.

79

80 The members postponed approval of the amended minutes from January 28, 2021.

81

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

83 The next Planning Board meetings are scheduled on March 11, 2021 and March 25, 2021.

84

85 **Report from Board Members and Town Planner**

86 **Peter Matchak**

87 Mr. Matchak reported on the outdoor seating for restaurants. Large seating areas would likely
88 require Planning Board Review. Smaller, five to twelve seating areas would be dealt with in-
89 house.

90

91 ***Adjournment***

92 Ms. Kendall made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 pm. The motion was seconded by
93 Ms. Krishnan; Kendall-aye, Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye, Rubertone-aye, Buchanan-aye; with a
94 vote of 5-0-0.

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96 ***Documents***

- 97 1. Design Review Committee Proposed Planting Guidelines
98 2. Design Review Committee Signage Letter
99 3. ANR application and plan for 28 South Street
100 4. Draft Minutes for January 14, 2021 meeting
101 5. Draft Minutes for January 28, 2021 meeting
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