



# Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

## Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Select Board Meeting Room / Zoom Conferencing  
Town Hall, 101 Main Street, Ashland, Massachusetts 01721

July 13, 2023, at 7:15 PM

Minutes Approved on September 14, 2023

1 Present: Tricia Kendall, Chair  
2 Catherine Jurczyk, Clerk  
3 Marcelo Arjona, Member  
4 Deepa Venkat, Member  
5  
6 Absent: Anna Tesmenitsky, Vice-Chair  
7  
8 Others: Peter Matchak, Town Planner  
9

### 10 **Call to Order**

11 Tricia Kendall called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. She mentioned that the session was being  
12 recorded and broadcast. Ms. Kendall reviewed the meeting agenda.  
13

### 14 **Clerk's Report**

15 Catherine Jurczyk, the Planning Board Clerk, reported that the board had received no new emails.  
16

### 17 **Public Comment:**

18 Mark Dassoni asked what each member's goal is for the town. Ms. Kendall responded that those  
19 topics are covered at Planning Board Retreats.  
20

21 Ms. Jurczyk said completing the Comprehensive Plan with residents' input is one of her goals.  
22

23 Mr. Dassoni also asked for more information about top projects to educate and share with the public.  
24

### 25 **Reinstatement Review: Kevin Mowatt, Design Review Committee (DRC)**

26 Kevin Mowatt, Vice-Chair of the DRC for the past year, felt he contributed to improving the DRC and  
27 the Planning Board's collaboration procedures and said he looked forward to continuing to serve on  
28 the committee.  
29

30 DRC members Hannah Stein, Cathy Rooney, and Ujwala Pawnarkar approved Mr. Mowatt's  
31 reinstatement. The members thanked Mr. Mowatt for his efforts and contributions.  
32

33 Mr. Arjona motioned to reinstate Kevin Mowatt to the Design Review Committee for a three-year  
34 term. Ms. Jurczyk seconded. Venkat-aye, Arjona-aye, Jurczyk-aye, and Kendall-aye; vote of 4-0-0.

35  
36 Mr. Matchak noted that Mr. Mowatt must be sworn in to become an active member.

37  
38 **Joint Discussion with the Sustainability Committee**

39 Ashwin Ratanchandani, the Sustainability Committee Chair, said the committee’s main objective is to  
40 determine the best way to collaborate with the board on moving forward with high-priority  
41 initiatives, such as achieving Net Zero goals, the Opt-in Energy Codes, and a Tree Bylaw.

42  
43 Ms. Kendall said there is a strong relationship between the Sustainability Committee, the DRC, and  
44 the Planning Board because of the design professionals across the groups with sustainability  
45 knowledge. She also suggested identifying another Planning Board member to liaise with the  
46 Sustainability Committee due to Ms. Tesmenitsky’s dedicated time and focus on the Comprehensive  
47 Plan Committee.

48  
49 Mr. Ratanchandani provided a high-level overview of the proposed Tree Bylaw for the fall Town  
50 Meeting and asked for feedback. Mr. Matchak said the proposed bylaw would require the board’s  
51 approval, and they would need at least three to four months to complete their review. Ms. Kendall  
52 proposed convening a subcommittee that included the DRC to tackle high-priority initiatives, and Mr.  
53 Matchak agreed.

54  
55 To speed up the review process, the members agreed to review the Tree Bylaw and the Opt-in Code  
56 executive summaries and draft proposals and provide their feedback directly to Mr. Matchak.

57  
58 Mr. Ratanchandani reviewed the Opt-in Code proposal, and its focus to ensure new construction is  
59 wired for electric utilities, renovated buildings using fossil fuels are pre-wired for future  
60 electrification, solar PV, Zero Energy, and improved energy ratings.

61  
62 There was discussion regarding how this code would directly affect the town regarding feasibility,  
63 cost, and economic sustainability. The members mentioned that projects recently before the board  
64 committed to electric utilities in the residential sections and some of the other code restrictions and  
65 reducing, if not eliminating fossil fuels; therefore, they questioned the need to adopt the new code.  
66 They also discussed comparing and contrasting a recently approved development’s requirements and  
67 conditions to the stretch codes to help understand what else must be included to meet the code and  
68 the pluses and minuses.

69  
70 **Project Updates:**  
71 **16-18 Union St. – Definitive Subdivision Plan – Continued to August 10, 2023**

72 Mr. Matchak reported that 16-18 Union St. abuts the Public Safety Building and is owned by Fafard  
73 Co. The project is on the August 10<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda. GCG Associates, the third-party peer  
74 reviewer, submitted a letter that was shared with the applicant. However, no new materials have  
75 been submitted by them in response.

76

77

78 **9-49 Homer Ave. – Site Plan and Special Permit – continued to August 10, 2023**

79 Mr. Matchak reported that the project met once with the DRC, and their feedback was forwarded to  
80 the board. The applicant is scheduled to return before the DRC on July 20<sup>th</sup> and the Planning Board  
81 on August 10<sup>th</sup>.

82

83 **10-60 Main St. – Special Permit and Site Plan Review – continued to August 10, 2023**

84 Mr. Matchak reported that 10-60 Main St. was continued until August 10<sup>th</sup>. He said the email was  
85 received, and the two continuances were added to the Planning Board website. Although he shared  
86 the Traffic Study, no other updates have been received.

87

88 **Report on Planning Topics:**

89 **Scenic Roads Outreach**

90 Mr. Matchak reported that Ms. Tesmenitsky volunteered to complete a list of trees if needed with  
91 their size, specimen, and the location where they were removed along Scenic roads. Ms. Kendall said  
92 estimating the cost of planting, maintaining, and pulling a tree stump will be obtained to determine a  
93 base budget and a funding source.

94

95 Mr. Matchak also noted that Eversource is completing its tree-trimming activities approved by the  
96 board.

97

98 **Parking Memo**

99

100 **Update on Housing Moratorium**

101

102 **Economic Impact Tool**

103

104 **Other**

105 Alvaro Esparza, the Assistant Town Planner, is working on adding a link on the Planning Board  
106 website page to information about the MBTA Communities and the impact on Ashland.

107

108 **Reports from Board Members and Town Planner:**

109 **Comprehensive Plan**

110 Mr. Matchak said the town has contracted with JM Goldson Consultants, and a Comprehensive  
111 Planning meeting at the Library is scheduled for July 20<sup>th</sup>, which is open to the public.

112

113 **Design Review Committee (DRC)**

114

115 **Sustainability Committee**

116

117 **Community Preservation Committee (CPC)**

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119

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

121  
122 **Planning Office Updates**  
123 Mr. Matchak provided the following updates:  
124  
125 **Whitmore Estates Definitive Subdivision**  
126 The demand letter was sent to the applicant by certified mail. The developer has 45 days to respond.  
127  
128 **100-130 Chestnut Street (Village of Americas)**  
129 Pre-construction activities have started on the 174-unit development with 10,500 sq. ft. of  
130 commercial space approved by the Planning Board in December 2022, including demolishing the two  
131 existing Fafard buildings and soil boring testing.  
132  
133 **501 Pond Street**  
134 Construction has not started; however, the permits are valid, and the owner secured the site.  
135 Regarding trees removed from the site, the applicant included replacing them in their plan.  
136  
137 **399 Union Street / Starbucks**  
138 A pre-construction meeting was held today, and the Eversource gas shutoff letter was submitted to  
139 the town’s Building Dept, which triggers the release of the demo permit. The demo is expected to  
140 begin shortly.  
141  
142 **12 Pond Street**  
143 Ms. Jurczyk is an abutter and recused herself from the discussion.  
144  
145 Mr. Matchak reported meeting with the Dept of Public Works and MassDOT to review the sidewalks;  
146 only a few tweaks by MassDOT are required regarding one of the handicap ramps.  
147  
148 Ms. Kendall asked, and Mr. Matchak responded that there was a potential tenant to occupy the  
149 commercial space. The approved landscaping and pocket park benches will be installed after the  
150 sidewalk and curbing are completed.  
151  
152 **Future Joint Meeting with Historical Commission: TBA**  
153  
154 **Future Retreat Date**  
155  
156  
157 **Applications Received**  
158  
159 **Next Meeting**  
160 The next meeting is scheduled for August 10, 2023.  
161  
162 **Minutes Review**  
163 Ms. Jurczyk motioned to accept the May 11, 2023, Planning Board minutes, as presented. Mr. Arjona  
164 seconded the motion; Venkat-aye, Arjona-aye, Jurczyk-aye, and Kendall-aye, with a vote of 4-0-0.

165  
166 **Adjournment**  
167 Ms. Kendall motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 p.m. Mr. Arjona seconded the motion; Venkat-  
168 aye, Arjona-aye, and Kendall-aye, with a vote of 3-0-0.  
169