



Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

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

September 28, 2023, at 7:15 PM

Approved November 9, 2023

1 Present: Tricia Kendall, Chair
2 Anna Tesmenitsky, Vice-Chair (joined late)
3 Catherine Jurczyk, Clerk
4 Marcelo Arjona, Member
5 Deepa Venkat, Member
6

7 Absent: Amanda Hayes, Associate Member
8

9 Others: Peter Matchak, Town Planner
10

11 **Call to Order**

12 Tricia Kendall called the Planning Board meeting to order at 7:16 p.m. She mentioned that the
13 session was being recorded and broadcast.
14

15 **Clerk's Report**

16 Catherine Jurczyk reported that three public correspondences were received since the last meeting.
17 The Town Planner responded to two, and the Clerk responded to one on behalf of the board.
18

19 **Public Comment**

20 Mark Dassoni, 49 Hawthorn Rd., commented on the recent Comprehensive Plan Committee meeting.
21

22 Amanda Walsh, 107 Pine Hill Rd., commented on the MBTA Community regulation and suggested
23 that the board conduct a survey to determine the community's desired housing interests. Ms.
24 Kendall noted that housing options and the MBTA zoning district requirements put forth by the state
25 would be addressed through the Comprehensive Plan process and joint meetings with the Select and
26 Planning Boards.
27

28 **Discussion: Discussion with the Sustainability Committee**

29 Margie Gassel, 8 Adams Rd., a Sustainability Committee member, provided an update on the
30 development of the new Tree Bylaw. She explained that industrial/commercial Site Plan Reviews,
31 site alteration Special Permits, 40B Comprehensive Permits when 10% affordable housing is
32 achieved, and subdivisions are circumstances that would trigger the regulation.
33

34 Ms. Gassel asked for clarification regarding the development of lots and exemptions under private
35 residential definitive subdivisions. Mr. Matchak said it is complicated for the town to deny a
36 subdivision because it is the right of the property owner to develop buildable lots and frontage and
37 complete the roadway construction; however, he said he would consult Town Counsel regarding a
38 clear explanation of the bylaw.

39
40 Mr. Matchak said, based on his research, several towns have implemented a Tree Plan approach that
41 stipulates the manipulation of trees outside the buildable envelope or the tree protection zone
42 within the dimensional rear, front, and side setbacks that fall under the jurisdiction of the
43 community's bylaw.

44
45 Ms. Gassel provided a plan with sustainability-related topics to discuss with the Planning Board at
46 future meetings.

47
48 Anna Tesmenitsky recommended three approaches to tackle the bylaw, including providing the
49 community with regulation options, identifying vulnerable private areas in Ashland, and offering
50 incentives to protect and preserve trees.

51
52 Joel Arbeitman, Woodbridge Ln., commented on the importance and urgency of tackling this topic
53 due to climate change. He also asked what the town's intent was in developing the Tree Bylaw and
54 questioned the proposed triggers.

55
56 Ash Ratanchandani, the Sustainability Chair, mentioned the bylaw's objective should address the Net
57 Zero goal, the need to fight climate change and limit the loss of tree coverage.

58
59 Mark Dassoni said the bylaw should be included in the public Site Review process.

60
61 Based on the extensive research Ms. Gassel completed to document every tree bylaw or ordinance in
62 the state, the board asked the Sustainability Committee to outline their recommendation concerning
63 priorities and the focus for Ashland regarding tree regulations for commercial and residential
64 properties.

65 **Public Hearings**

66 **9-49 Homer St. – Site Plan and Special Permit – continued from May 11, 2023**

67 The application team, including Atty. Terry Morris, Ron Bourque, and Rick Salvo were in attendance.
68 Mr. Matchak said that since May 11th, he and Mr. Morris decided to have an additional technical
69 review meeting to address the site's fire dept access and safety concerns, which resulted in a revised
70 Site Plan. GCG, the town's third-party consultant, provided their comments.

71
72
73 Mr. Morris added, to respond to GCG's and Town Counsel's comments, that an additional 11 parking
74 spaces across the street on the old train site were included to address the building's non-conforming
75 status and the existing uses.

76

77 Rick Salvo, the project engineer from Engineering Alliance, reviewed the Site Plan changes that
78 improved access and egress from the site. One-way circulation was proposed to improve the vehicle
79 flow, allow for an access road for delivery and emergency vehicles, and additional green space. Mr.
80 Salvo said the stormwater plan was similar, and utility connections would be on Homer Ave.

81
82 Ron Bourque reviewed the building's architectural changes and exterior finishes. He examined the
83 elevation renderings that showed that the exterior included a shingle style on the upper level, a four-
84 inch clapboard pattern on the second floor, and the storefronts and dental moldings would identify
85 the retail lower level. Mr. Bourque noted that the residential unit count was still 25. He also said the
86 pocket park was retained, although the Design Review Committee (DRC) recommended excluding it.
87 They intend to increase the number of roof-mounted solar panels to 40 to 45.

88
89 Julian Salvucci, the project landscape designer, provided an overview of the landscape plan. Mr.
90 Salvucci highlighted the specific plantings from large to small and their placement around the site's
91 perimeter and said the majority are native species. He reviewed the green roof layout and noted a
92 change from the last iteration was the switch from artificial turf to natural grass and inground LED
93 subtle strip lighting along the perimeters of the seating areas.

94
95 Ms. Kendall asked, and the applicant confirmed that the buildings are all electric with roof-mounted
96 air source heat pumps.

97
98 Mr. Matchak said the applicant is scheduled to go before the DRC next Thursday and will review the
99 same information presented tonight. Ms. Kendall added that the memo she and Mr. Arjona drafted
100 included several items the board is reviewing with GCG.

101
102 Regarding Mr. Arjona's comment concerning the curb to curb for the entire length, the applicant said
103 they were unprepared to address that now due to the expense; however, they would evaluate it.

104
105 There was a brief discussion about the commercial space that could have two entrances on Alden St.
106 and Homer Ave. The applicant explained that the building's floor plan would be adjusted to meet the
107 requirements of the tenant who occupied the space.

108
109 Mr. Bourque explained that the surface parking spaces for the commercial units are along the
110 perimeter, and the subsurface spaces are for the residential units.

111
112 Ms. Kendall asked to have the Building Commissioner address whether the three units with access
113 only from the green roof pose an egress issue.

114
115 Concerning the affordability, Mr. Morris said the applicant had offered 10% and noted that Ashland
116 does not have an ordinance to dictate 25%. The members agreed to discuss this item and the
117 potential use of CPC funds to raise the percentage at another meeting.

118
119 The board agreed with the technical review recommendation to change the roadway and possibly
120 eliminate the pocket park to improve safety and traffic flow.

121
122 Given the application deadline is October 15, 2023, Mr. Matchak and Mr. Morris confirmed that an
123 extension would be arranged.

124
125 Ms. Jurczyk motioned to continue the 9-49 Homer Ave Site Plan and Special Permit public hearing to
126 October 12, 2023. Ms. Tesmenitsky seconded. Venkat-aye, Jurczyk-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Arjona-
127 aye, and Kendall-aye, with a vote of 5-0-0.

128
129 **Planning Board Representative to the MetroWest Regional Collaborative**
130 Select Board Vice Chair Yolanda Greaves explained each town that is part of the Metro West Regional
131 Collaborative is supposed to have two appointees, one from the Select Board and one from the
132 Planning Board. A representative from the Planning Board is needed for a quorum to vote on
133 funding, work plans, and bylaw changes. The meetings are primarily via Zoom on the third Thursday
134 of the month from 8:00 to 9:30 a.m. Ms. Greaves asked whether the Asst. Town Planner Alvaro
135 Esparza could be appointed as the Planning Board representative. The members agreed to add this
136 item to the next meeting agenda to allow Ms. Hayes the Planning Board Associate Member an
137 opportunity to volunteer to fill the position.

138
139 **Report on Planning Topics:**

140 Scenic Roads Outreach
141 No discussion.

142
143 Economic Impact Tool
144 No discussion.

145
146 Parking Memo
147 No discussion.

148
149 Housing Moratorium
150 No discussion.

151
152 MBTA Communities: Sept 14, 2023, Upcoming Joint Meeting with Select Board
153 Ms. Kendall reported that the MBTA working group, comprised of herself, Mr. Matchak, Joe Magnani
154 from the Select Board, and Mr. Esparza, met to discuss the town's strategy.

155
156 **Reports from Board Members and Town Planner:**
157 Comprehensive Plan
158 Ms. Jurczyk provided positive feedback regarding the consultant. She said the Zoom meeting volume
159 was an issue, and the remote participants asked to be included more in the discussion. Ms. Jurczyk
160 asked for the PowerPoint to be distributed and posted.

161
162 Design Review Committee (DRC)
163 No discussion.

164

165 Sustainability Committee
166 No discussion.
167
168 Community Preservation Committee (CPC)
169 No discussion.
170
171 Other
172 None.
173
174 **Administrative Matters: future meetings, public hearings**
175 **Planning Office Updates**
176
177 Whitmore Estates Definitive Subdivision
178 No discussion.
179
180 100-130 Chestnut Street (Village of Americas)
181 No discussion.
182
183 501 Pond Street
184 No discussion.
185
186 399 Union Street / Starbucks
187 No discussion.
188
189 12 Pond Street
190 No discussion.
191
192 Applications Received
193 Mr. Matchak said an application was received for the water tank cell tower at 400 Cedar St. and will
194 be on the next meeting agenda. Abutters within the 300 ft. radius on the Holliston line and in
195 Ashland have been notified.
196
197 Next Meeting
198 The next meeting is scheduled for October 12, 2023.
199
200 Other
201 None.
202
203 Minutes Review
204 Ms. Jurczyk motioned to accept the August 10, 2023, Planning Board minutes as written. Ms.
205 Tesmenitsky seconded the motion. Venkat-aye, Jurczyk-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Arjona-aye, and
206 Kendall-aye, with a vote of 5-0-0.
207
208

209 ***Adjournment***

210 Ms. Kendall motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:20 p.m. Mr. Arjona seconded. Venkat-aye,
211 Jurczyk-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Arjona-aye, and Kendall-aye, with a vote of 5-0-0.
212