



Townsend Planning Board Annual Report 2019

Chairman: Lance McNally

Vice Chair: Laura Shifrin

Clerk: Veronica Kell

General Member: Jerrilyn Bozicas

General Member: Charles Sexton-Diranian

The Planning Board's responsibilities include the review and approval of Subdivisions and Site Plan projects requiring Special Permits; Approval Not Required (ANR) Plans for subdividing lots, and applications submitted under the Scenic Roads Act. The Board holds public hearings for new zoning bylaw proposals and/or zoning bylaw amendments and submits recommendations to Town Meeting relative to these proposals, serves as the Stormwater Authority to oversee the Stormwater Management Bylaw, and is in charge of updating the Town's Master Plan. Agendas are posted on the bulletin board outside Memorial Hall, 272 Main Street, Townsend, MA and on the Townsend Town calendar on the website (www.townsend.ma.us). Meetings are open to the public.

In addition to their responsibilities as members of the Planning Board, Laura Shifrin continues dedicated service as the Planning Board representative on the executive board of the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission, and Town Properties Committee. Veronica Kell serves as Planning Board representative on the Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee and the Capital Planning Committee. In addition to his role as Planning Board member, Charles Sexton-Diranian also serves as Chair of the Townsend Housing Authority. The Planning Board seeks a motivated resident to serve as an associate member to fill a vacancy. The Planning Board continued to support Townsend resident Kelly Kelly as the Planning Board's representative to the Charter Review Committee.

Elizabeth Faxon continues to provide support as the Planning Board Administrator by managing agenda business and serving as liaison to applicants, their attorneys and representatives, engineering firms, developers, contractors, Town Counsel, and the general public. Beth performs research on land use issues; in response to phone calls and visitors' inquiries, often in conjunction with other Department Staff, while also functioning in her role as Zoning Board of Appeals administrator. Beth's dedication and knowledge is a proven asset to the Town in

providing the Planning Board with outstanding support. Her attention to detail and ability to work with the public and other entities effectively provides the Planning Board with the confidence that all matters before the Board are handled professionally and efficiently.

Public Hearings were held to review applications and plans for an Open Space Preservation Development Definitive subdivision approval with associated special permit and Stormwater permit and Scenic Road approval located at 187 & 199 North End Road. Public Hearings were held to review four Site Plan Review/Special Permits and Board members attended two site walks. Seven ANR plans to subdivide lots were reviewed and approved by Board members in public hearings and three Stormwater Permits were issued with associated projects. As part of the Definitive subdivision approval, Site Plan review, and Stormwater permitting processes, the Board solicits input from all town Boards and Departments and, in most cases consults a peer review engineer, in order to achieve a coordinated, comprehensive review. Public Hearings and site walks were held to review the application and plans for the development of a 1-MW AC ground-mounted solar photovoltaic energy system on West Meadow Road. The Locke Brook solar array is the first Large-scale Solar siting approved under the recently amended Large-scale ground-mounted installation bylaw.

Public hearings were held to review a draft amendment to the Accessory Apartment in a residential district bylaw subsequently approved at Town Meeting. A public information session was held to educate voters in preparation for the Town Election 2019 Ballot question referendum related to what type of marijuana establishment the Town would like to allow in the zoning bylaw. Before Town Meeting, a public hearing was held to review warrant articles specifically drafted to let voters decide what types of recreational marijuana establishments they would support or eliminate in Townsend under the Recreational Marijuana establishment zoning bylaw.

The Board embarked on the process of elevating Townsend to becoming a Municipal Vulnerability Prepared (MVP) Designated Community by working with citizens, Town boards and committees, and local organizations to apply for a FY 2020 Planning Grant through the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental affairs. If awarded, the Town will engage in a community resiliency planning process during which the Town will examine its vulnerability and strengths and identify priority actions to build resilience as the climate changes and well as leverage the regional plan to create a Hazard Mitigation Plan for Townsend.

The Planning Board supports the Master Plan Committee members who are progressing through the long-anticipated update of the Master Plan. The Planning Board was awarded technical assistance from the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) under the District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) program through which the expertise of technical planners was enlisted to provide housing data and statistics for the purpose of updating the Housing Production Plan and informing the Master Plan Update. The Master Plan Committee has engaged the consulting firm FXM Associates to work on the Economic Development chapter of the Master Plan. The Master Plan Update document is expected to be in the final stages by the calendar year 2020. The Master Plan Committee supported the Planning Board with their Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Planning Grant application.

The Planning Board assisted other Town departments via responding to requests from the Board of Selectmen to comment on Chapter 61 land transitions, committee appointments, and formulating a strategy for local regulation of Adult Use Recreational Marijuana. The Planning Board worked closely with Town Counsel, the Building Department, Zoning Board of Appeals, Board of Health, Highway Department, Conservation Commission, Historical Commission, Board of Assessors, Townsend Housing Authority, Town Clerk, and public safety officials to gather perspective and comment on applications under review as well as to gather input to develop and amend bylaws.

Respectfully submitted,

THE PLANNING BOARD

Planning Board Administrator, Elizabeth Faxon