



Office of  
**THE PLANNING BOARD**

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RECEIVED  
MAY 23 2023  
TOWN OF TOWNSEND  
TOWN CLERK

Laura Shifrin, Chair (2025)

Carol Hoffses, Member (2026)

Robert Therrien, Clerk (2024)

Mike Virostko, Vice Chair (2023)

Ian Ortiz Santiago, Member (2023)

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**PLANNING BOARD meeting minutes**

**Meeting Date: Monday, April 10, 2023**

**Time: 6:30 PM**

**Location: Selectman's Chambers**

**272 Main St, Townsend, Massachusetts.**

**And remotely via TCAM (Townsend Community Access Media) hosted ZOOM.**

**All are invited to attend.**

**1 PRELIMINARIES: votes may be taken.**

- 1..1 Call the meeting to order and roll call. The meeting was called to order at 6:40pm by Chair Laura Shifrin. Members present were Michael Virostko (remote), Robert Therrien (remote), Carol Hoffses (in person) and Chair Laura Shifrin (in person). Member Absent: Ian Ortiz Santiago. Others present: Elizabeth Faxon, Planning Board Admin. (In person), Hartley Pleshaw (TCAM Host)
- 1..2 Recital of The Pledge of Allegiance of the United States. Conducted with expressed appreciation for our service men and women, past and present.
- 1..3 Chairman's Additions/Deletions to Agenda unforeseen prior to 48 hours of this meeting. None noted.
- 1..4 Review Volunteer response forms received for Planning Board vacancy. None noted.
- 1..5 Review/Approve minutes of the April 3, 2023, meeting. C. Hoffses made a motion to approve the minutes of April 3, 2023. R. Therrien seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken as follows: YES – M. Virostko, C. Hoffses, L. Shifrin, R. Therrien. The motion carried.

**2 PUBLIC HEARINGS: votes may be taken.**

- 2..1 **6:45 pm continuation of public hearing – 22 Main Street site plan review special permit application.** Applicant, Sallie Thurber. Proposal is for alterations to structure, driveway configuration, and addition of parking spaces at 22 Main St. (Map 41, Block 6, Lot 0), Zoned OCD (Outlying Commercial District), to operate a veterinary hospital. Present for the Applicant: Stanley Dillis, Dillis & Roy CDG., Inc.

Chair Shifrin reconvened the continuation of the public hearing for 22 Main Street at 6:45pm. Mr. Dillis noted that a few revisions were made to address the concerns of the Planning Board, namely adding a note that there are no wetland resource areas within 100 feet of the work area, correcting an erroneous note relative to the pavement width. The Applicant filed an application with the Zoning Board of Appeals for the parking space in front of the building. A timeline for construction

was also submitted. He also noted that the MA DOT highway permit is under review based on a request for payment for said filing. The timeline includes seven target dates beginning on June 1, 2023, and ending by the middle of October 2023.

Chair Shifrin then read a Draft Decision which was drafted based on the discussion of the April 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting and the additional submissions received by the Board and the information of confirmation that MA DOT has received an application. The draft decision presented was reviewed by Town Counsel.

C. Hoffses made a motion to grant the site plan special permit subject to the following conditions read on April 10, 2023. M. Virostko seconded. A roll call vote was taken as follows: YES – C. Hoffses, R. Therrien, M. Virostko, L. Shifrin. The motion carried 4-0-0. M. Virostko made a motion to authorize the Chair Laura Shifrin sign the Decision. R. Therrien seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken as follows: YES – C. Hoffses, M. Virostko, R. Therrien. ABS – L. Shifrin. The motion carried.

R. Therrien said he understood this special permit decision would be subject to a definitive response from MA DOT on the driveway access permit. Chair Shifrin said the Board received all information requested at the last meeting. She noted this special permit is granted with the condition that the Applicant obtains a driveway access permit from MADOT. R. Therrien asked if work will continue at the site while the MADOT driveway access permit is pending and heard yes according to the construction schedule provided and affixed to the Decision. It was stated that the site work reserved until MADOT review was complete, including the compacted base installation. It was explained that this special permit is granted contingent upon receipt of a MADOT driveway access permit, and should the permit not be issued then the permit holder would need to file an application to modify the special permit. M. Virostko made a motion to close the public hearing for 22 Main Street at 6:47pm. C. Hoffses seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken as follows: YES – C. Hoffses, M. Virostko, L. Shifrin, R. Therrien. The motion carried.

### **3 BUSINESS: votes may be taken.**

- 3..1 Planning Board regulations review. Sec 175-9 General provisions Subdivision control, 175-10 General requirements for applications, 175-11 Procedures for ANR (Approval Not Required) applications. Deferred to a future Planning Board May 8<sup>th</sup> agenda with expressed interest in the regulations which can be changed by a vote of the Board.
- 3..2 Townsend Zoning Bylaw Section 145-54.1 Age Restricted bylaw discussion. C. Hoffses suggested the cluster development and age restricted bylaw be combined. Chair Shifrin asked if a representative of the Board of water commissioners and the Board of Health and the THA could join the Planning Board at the May 8<sup>th</sup> meeting for further discussion. Admin will let Courtney Borelli know that the Planning Board spent time in review and discussion regarding the proposed bylaw modification proposal and combining the two bylaws ARD and Cluster Development for affordable housing is being considered. May 8<sup>th</sup> will also be the kickoff meeting for Townsend's MBTA (Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority) communities compliance work with MPRC.
- 3..3 Proposed bylaw modifications drafted by the Housing Authority discussion. Residential cluster development section. Overall Board members were complimentary toward the work presented and pleased with the content of the bylaw modification proposal. The Board commented that they did an excellent job in preparing this bylaw for the Board to

review and discuss. The suggestion was made that more work be done with input from many stakeholders to address some points raised in the discussion which included the following:

- Concern about the impact of high-density development on public drinking water.
- The impact of cluster development rezoning on the aquifer and groundwater protection.
- The impact of installing multiple private wells to service a cluster development resulting in overlap of the aquifer.
- Support for cluster development and high density zoning only as it correlates to expansion of the public drinking water infrastructure.
- The proximity of septic systems to well water on the site creates potential for cross contamination and drawdown.
- The problems private well owners are experiencing with wells running dry fluctuating with drought status.
- The proposal needs verbiage to protect homeowners who have private wells and do not have the option of connecting to municipal water.
- Concern that the Town does not have municipal wastewater.
- The large amount of State owned land that is in conservation use. This seems like a dichotomy when the state is mandating growth through MBTA communities compliance, yet there exist limited areas to build because of the large acreage in conservation.
- Having one well serving all the cluster development units was suggested.
- Appreciation for the zoning bylaw modification work was expressed including the observation that the work done is a very comprehensive approach to addressing the problem of housing shortages. Where the proposal is less comprehensive is the impact of this high density development on water resources, septic systems.
- Concern over cost of municipal water going up to finance new infrastructure to service high density development.
- Mr. Therrien referred to a Harvard MA high density development with the note that the developer was able to tap into existing water and sewerage systems at no cost to the Town or the taxpayer. Similar situations may be identified in Townsend.
- High density developments may need to be self-sustainable with respect to water and sewage, which may not result in affordable units.
- The Town will not be able to financially support building out of services to accommodate high density housing, it will be the developer's dilemma.
- Preservation of scenic roads and visual impact to the villages in Townsend was expressed as a consideration to be addressed in the bylaw.

The question was asked as to where some of these concerns might be addressed, in the regulations, in design standards, or in conditions of a special permit. Chair Shifrin commented that many of these can be addressed during the site plan review or subdivision approval in the conditions of the special permit or definitive approval. She noted that the Housing Authority discussed the state of water in Townsend when formulating the bylaw. The importance of preservation of water resources was acknowledged as a high priority and changing requirements for municipal and well water constrain development more today. The reduction in population of approximately 1,000 people in the last 20 years was noted and the lack of substantive new housing development was noted. M. Virostko stated the importance of

economic growth through commercial development along with smart growth in residential development citing that if residential development is moved along too quickly it could result in demand for municipal water supply extensions, and other municipal services.

The question was asked if there were any comments from the water department or data on private wells that could be reviewed with this bylaw proposal. Discussion ensued about the Water master plan and a water section of the Master Plan update and what information these contain as well as what recommendations are based on, an expanding or a stagnant housing production scenario. The comment was made that there is a good amount of landlocked land in town that would be developable under this bylaw were it approved. The admin will share these resources with the members of the Board. The water master plan was last updated in 2021 and is due for another update. This information must then be integrated into or amended to the master plan. Private well data is available from the Board of Health office and drinking water well regulations.

R. Therrien noted that the Planning Board is already going to work to bring Townsend into zoning compliance as a small adjacent MBTA community under Section 3A. He stated there are other programs for affordable housing & 40B and pointed out that the Town/taxpayers is often burdened with the cost of providing the basic utilities and services to make the affordable units affordable. At the end of the discussion, Chair Shifrin stated that she will recommend that the members of the Townsend Housing Authority review this recorded meeting (2023-04-10) for feedback on the proposed bylaw modifications.

C. Hoffses asked if the cluster development and age restricted bylaw could be combined in some way.

#### **4 CORRESPONDENCE: votes may be taken.**

- 4..1 Joint public hearing with Board of Selectmen April 18, 2023 @ 6:30pm petition submitted to the Board of Selectmen for road acceptance Harbor Trace Road and Cooperage Way. An application for road acceptance has been received by the board of Selectmen for Harbor Trace and Cooperage Way. The Planning Board must hold a public hearing on this application, and it will be held jointly at the Board of Selectmen's meeting. Admin is soliciting mandatory referral comments. The Planning Board must review the application, comments and take public comment and make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen.
- 4..2 Stormwater Management Permit project updates. Inspection reports/other related correspondence. None noted.
- 4..3 Notices from Townsend/other Towns. Noted.
- 4..4 Update Safe Routes to School – Carol Hoffses. None noted.
- 4..5 Citizen Planner Training Collaborative (CPTC) Annual Conference follow up. Board member R. Therrien suggested that the Board review, adjust and/or prepare bylaws to comply with the requirements of MBTA Communities Section 3A with input from other Boards and Committees and staff to meet the requirements and tailor to the community. A District Local Technical Assistance grant has been received from MRPC (Montachusett Regional Planning Commission) for this purpose. The kickoff meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 8<sup>th</sup>. L. Shifrin asked for a standing agenda item to be

placed on future agendas to be named as "Townsend's MBTA communities compliance and zoning for multifamily housing"

- 4..6 Montachusett Regional Planning Commission and Montachusett Joint Transportation Commission correspondence.

**5 ADJOURN: Votes may be taken.**

- 5..1 Next scheduled Planning Board hybrid meetings are scheduled for May 8, 2023 & May 22, 2023.

C. Hoffses motion to adjourn at 8:16pm. M. Virostko seconded. A roll call vote was taken as follows:  
YES- M. Virostko, R. Therrien, C. Hoffses, L. Shifrin.

Respectfully submitted,

**Approved on:** May 22, 2023

Elizabeth Faxon

Planning Board Administrator

Items on file:

1. 22 Main Street construction schedule and timeline.
2. 22 Main Street revised site plans dated 4-4-2023.
3. 22 Main Street Draft Planning Board Decision site plan review special permit.
4. Draft Proposed modifications to Zoning bylaw – Townsend Housing Authority.
5. 145-54.1 Age restricted development bylaw proposed amendments to the bylaw.

