



TOWN OF
MONTAGUE
MASSACHUSETTS

TOWN HALL
One Avenue A
Turners Falls, MA 01376

PLANNING BOARD
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DRAFT JUNE 26, 2023 MEETING MINUTES
PLANNING BOARD

The Montague Planning Board met in-person in the Upstairs Room, located in Town Hall, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls and via Zoom at **6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 26, 2023.**

ROLL CALL:

- **Present:** Elizabeth Irving (Acting chair), Matthew Lord, George Cooke, Ron Sicard (zoom), Sam Guerin. Also, in attendance was Town Planner Maureen Pollock, applicant – Adrienne Cramer

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

- **May 23, 2023 Meeting Minutes:**

MOTION by G. Cooke to Approve the Meeting Minutes from May 23, 2023. Seconded by M. Lord. VOTE: Ron Sicard (Abstain), Elizabeth Irving (AYE), Matthew Lord (AYE), George Cooke (AYE), Sam Guerin (AYE), MOTION PASSES. 6:36PM.

FORM A (ANR) SUBDIVISION APPLICATIONS

- **Adrienne Cramer, 463 Millers Falls Road (Assessor's Map/Parcel: 29-0-095)**

Adrienne Cramer of 463 Millers Falls Road (Assessor's Map/Parcel: 29-0-096) wishes to change the side yard property lines which adjoins 465 Millers Falls Road (Assessor's Map/Parcel: 29-0-096), to accommodate the location of existing trees and fence and to swap a 115 square feet of land on each property. A problem was revealed when the neighbor did a survey; the existing fence is on her neighbor's property. The neighbors would like to exchange equal amounts of property to remedy the issue.

Zoning Bylaw Review: Dimensional Regulations for RS-1 Zoning District:
Both parcels are located within the Residential-1 Zoning District (RS-1).

- Minimum lot area requirement: 15,000ft².
- Minimum lot frontage: 100 feet
- Minimum front yard and street line setback(a): 15 feet
- Minimum side yard setback: 10 feet
- Minimum rear yard setback: 30 feet
- Maximum building height: 28 feet

463 Millers Falls Road - According to Assessor's Property Card, the house and lot was built/created in 1916. 463 Millers Falls Road is considered a pre-existing, non-conforming lot in terms of lot area as it does not meet the dimensional regulations under Section 5.5 of the Zoning

Bylaw. The existing lot area is 9,955ft². The proposed lot area is 9,955ft². There is not proposed changes to the lot area size. The change of the property line does not trigger any dimensional setback requirements under the Zoning Bylaw.

465 Millers Falls Road - According to Assessor's Property Card, the house and lot located at 465 Millers Falls Road was built/created in 1900. 465 Millers Falls Road is considered pre-existing, non-conforming lots in terms of lot area and lot frontage as the do not meeting the existing dimensions under Section 5.5 of the Zoning Bylaw. The existing lot area is 8,178ft² and the existing lot frontage 89 feet. There is not proposed changes to the lot area size and lot frontage. The change of the property line does not trigger any dimensional setback requirements under the Zoning Bylaw.

Montague Subdivision Control Law:

§ 3.2 Plan believed not to require approval.

A. *Any person who wishes to record a plan of land at the Registry of Deeds or to file a plan of land with the Land Court and who believes that said plan does not require approval ("ANR Plan") under the Subdivision Control Law shall submit said plan and application (use Form A) to the Town Clerk, accompanied by the necessary evidence to show that the plan does not require approval and the filing fee of \$50.00 per lot. One Mylar original, four (4) paper copies and a digital copy in PDF format of said plan shall be furnished to the Town Clerk. Said plan shall be prepared by an engineer or surveyor and shall describe the land to which the plan relates, sufficient for identification, and shall include the name and address of the owner(s) of the subject land. Plans submitted for a determination that approval under the Subdivision Control Law is not required, shall be delivered to the Town Clerk or shall be sent by registered mail to the Planning Board c/o the Town Clerk, postage prepaid. If so mailed, the date of receipt by the Town Clerk on behalf of the Planning Board, shall be the date of submission of the plan.*

➤ **Board Review:** The proposal satisfies this section. Plans, application, and check have been submitted.

B. *A plan submitted under §3.2 shall be prepared in accordance with the applicable requirements of the Franklin County Registry of Deeds, and shall, at a minimum, show the following information:*

1. *The name(s) of the record owner(s) of the subject land, and the names of the owners of all adjacent land as determined from the most recent tax records of the Town;*

➤ **Board Review:** The proposal satisfies this section. The names of the record owners of the subject land, and the names of the owners of all adjacent land have been provided.

2. *The location of all existing buildings on the subject land;*

➤ **Board Review:** The proposal satisfies this section. All existing buildings and structures on 463 Millers Falls Road and 465 Millers Falls Road are shown on the plan.

3. *The location of all easements and rights of way located on or serving the subject land;*

- **Board Review:** The proposal satisfies this section. According the property deeds, there are no known easements on either property. 463 Millers Falls Road is a corner lot, located at the corner of Millers Falls Road and Lyman Street. 465 Millers Falls Roads fronts Millers Falls Road.
4. *The existing and proposed boundaries of the subject land and of each parcel and lot created or altered by the plan;*
 - **Board Review:** The proposal satisfies this section. The submitted plan show the existing and proposed boundaries to 463 and 465 Millers Falls Road.
 5. *The zoning classification of the subject land;*
 - **Board Review:** The proposal satisfies this section. The submitted plan lists the zoning classification of the subject land - Residential District-1 (RS-1) Zoning District
 6. *A locus plan at a scale sufficient to show the subject land in relation to the nearest intersecting street(s);*
 - **Board Review:** The proposal satisfies this section. A locus map is shown on plan.
 7. *The locations, widths, and names of all abutting ways;*
 - **Board Review:** The proposal satisfies this section. Millers Falls Road and Lyman Road are 50 feet wide, respectfully.
 8. *A notation reading: “Endorsement of this ANR Plan does not certify that the lots shown on the Plan qualify as building lots under the Town of Montague Zoning Bylaw.”*
 - **Board Review:** The proposal satisfies this section. The notation is provided.

MOTION by R. Sicard to endorse the FORM A (ANR) SUBDIVISION APPLICATIONS Adrienne Cramer, 463 Millers Falls Road (Assessor’s Map/Parcel: 29-0-095). Seconded by G. Cooke. VOTE: Ron Sicard (AYE), Elizabeth Irving (AYE), Matthew Lord (AYE), George Cooke (AYE), Sam Guerin (AYE), MOTION PASSES 6:45PM

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Discuss the adoption of 40R Smart Growth Overlay District Plan Approval Form, Administrative Rules, and design guidelines in accordance with Section 10 of the Zoning Bylaws and pursuant to MGL Chapter 40R**

The Planner gives an overview of the project which included parcels on Frist Street and Power Street. The intent of the 40R Smart Growth Overlay District is to increase housing density that is affordable. Last year (2022), the Town adopted Section 10 Smart Growth Overlay Districts of the Zoning Bylaw. The last step is to create rules, regulations and design guidelines. Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity (PVHH) has started their designs to submit to the Planning Board approval in mid to late fall.

Matt Lord asks if the PVHH proposal will be considered a 40R project. Planner responds, yes, given the project’s location and due to the lot area requirements, PVHH’s proposal will require Planning

Board review and approval under, Section 10 Smart Growth Overlay Districts of the Zoning Bylaw.

- **Discuss possible zoning district changes to property identified as Turnpike Road (Assessor's Map/Parcel: 21-0-152) and possibly property identified as Turnpike Road (Assessor's Map/Parcel: 21-0-004)**

The Planner presents a Slide Deck titled "Exploring Zoning Map Amendment, June 27, 2023." The presentation reviews the reasons why the Town is considering the zone change of the parcel from Neighborhood Business (NB) to General Business (GB).

Under the Zoning Bylaw, "manufacturing, processing, or research" uses are allowed in the Industrial (ID) and General Business (GB) Zoning Districts.

The presentation shows how few parcels are available for "manufacturing, processing, or research" uses in the Industrial (ID) and General Business (G-B) Zoning Districts. Some of factors limiting available land include: land is already developed, land not large to develop (factors: building size, parking, stormwater), levels of land protection, wetlands, steep slopes, ownership, and lack of lot frontage and access.

There is a lack of available land for manufacturing uses within the Town of Montague and Franklin County region. The Town hopes that this zoning map change can help retain existing industry needing to expand from locations within the Town of Montague and the Franklin County region. If approved, the zoning map change could provide a permit pathway for manufacturing use, as well as, for multi-family dwellings.

"Manufacturing, processing, or research" and "Multi-family dwellings, including mixed use" in the G-B Zoning District would require review and approval of a Special Permit by the Planning Board. A Special Permit would require a Public Hearing, with legal ad and abutter notice requirements. The Planning Board would have the discretion to approve or deny the Special Permit application; and may impose conditions of approval.

The Town does not believe the proposed zoning change could be considered "spot zoning" as the proposed zoning map change is reasonable and it relates to addressing the need to provide land available for a possible manufacturing use to occur on Parcel #21-0-152.

The subject parcels fit in with the adjoining uses to the subject parcels including:

- East - Police Station, Fire, and DPW;
- North – Springdale Cemetery, multiple family housing (Villa Park Apartments), single family homes
- South – St Mary's Cemetery
- West - powerline, Jude Wire manufacturing, FRTA vehicle maintenance facility and large scale solar

Additionally, the subject parcels are located along a heavily trafficked road (Turnpike Road).

M. Lord is skeptical that a housing developer will find Parcel #21-0-152 attractive, but the flexibility of General Business (GB) Zoning District zoning is a good option.

A Franklin County based manufacturing company has expressed interest in Parcel #21-0-152. This parcel is 15.6 acres in land area, which is sizable to site a 100,000 square foot building area. While this proposed zoning map change was initially inspired by a perspective company, given the lack of available land in Zoning Districts that allow “Manufacturing, processing, or research”, this proposal goes beyond any particular company. The Town hopes that this zoning map change can help retain existing industry needing to expand from locations within the Town of Montague and the Franklin County region. If approved, the zoning map change could provide a permit pathway for manufacturing use, as well as, for multi-family dwellings.

There is general discussion about the history of cemetery zoning in Montague.

The Board would like to see an “industrial” to avoid possible issues with residents and noise from the DPW, dog shelter, etc.

Ron Sicard asks about a small part of land owned by the cemetery, but that is deemed as not necessary.

M. Lord asks about the difference in housing options-depending on zoning.

The Planner describes the chart from the slide deck.

The Planner suggests holding a public input session at the next Planning Board meeting schedule July 25th. The Planner will notify the property owners within 300 feet of the subject parcels of the public input session date/time/location. The Selectboard would need to be notified and the warrant would be set for the fall Town Meeting. The Planning Board has 6 months from the hearing for it to go to Town Meeting.

The Planning Board is in support of the zoning change for Turnpike Road (Assessor’s Map/Parcel: 21-0-152) and possibly property identified as Turnpike Road (Assessor’s Map/Parcel: 21-0-004)

PLANNER REPORT:

- Affordable Housing Development on First Street (Assessor’s Map 4, Lot 31)
Soil testing for Phase 2 will occur in the coming weeks and results available in the late summer, The purchase and sale agreement will be completed by the Town at that time. The Selectboard authorized the request to put PVHH’s proposed Affordable 6 dwelling units to be added to the Town’s Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). The Subsidized Housing Inventory is used to measure a community's stock of low-or moderate-income housing for the purposes of M.G.L. Chapter 40B, the Comprehensive Permit Law.
- MassHousing Partnership’s Complete Neighborhoods Partnership (CNP): Montague City District Plan
The site is being demolished. The Planner is working to collect public input. Dates have not been announced. Planner will share all meeting notes and public comments provided.
- Announcements

- Sawmill River Corridor Assessment Project – May 24th Public Meeting Presentation Slides and Meeting recorded may be accessed via link: <https://montague-ma.gov/p/1522/Sawmill-River-Corridor-Assessment-Project>
- Franklin County Regional Pollinator Plan Check-In Workshop on June 27th 2 – 3.30 p.m. via Zoom. Register via: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEseqvrDktH9F16q6Y7kCbZPwTbnAK1srn>

ADJOURN:

MOTION by R. Sicard ADJOURN. Seconded by E. Irving VOTE: Anonymous 5-0. MOTION PASSES 7:46M.