

# Montague Planning Board

One Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376 (413) 863-3200 Ext 207 Fax: (413) 863-3222 Email: [planner@montague-ma.gov](mailto:planner@montague-ma.gov)

May 27, 2014 6:30 PM  
Town Hall Downstairs Conference Room

## MEETING MINUTES

**Members Present:** Ron Sicard – Chair, Fred Bowman, George Cooke and Bob Obear

**Members Absent:** Bruce Young

**Staff Present:** Walter Ramsey, AICP- Town Planner and David Jensen – Building Inspector

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Ron Sicard-Chair.

No public hearings were scheduled.

### **Approval of Minutes:**

*Motion* by George Cooke to approve the March 25, 2014 minutes. *Seconded* by Fred Bowman. *Motion passed.*

*Motion* by George Cooke to approve the April 22, 2014 minutes. *Seconded* by Fred Bowman. *Motion passed.*

### **Planning Workshop:**

- **Review Subdivision Sketch Plan Assessors Map 15 Lots 114, 236, 235 135 Millers Falls Road**

Guest did not show up – Item removed from agenda

- **Review Subdivision Sketch Plan (Assessors Map 42 Lot 101) #4 Swamp Road**

**Guest: Susan Durkee, potential buyer.**

Susan Durkee presented a subdivision sketch plan for Assessors Map 42, Lot 101 on Swamp Rd. Ms. Durkee is a prospective buyer of the buildable lot. She proposed a dead-end private subdivision road to provide access to two buildable lots. The two house lots would be deed-restricted to certain maximum size, Size TBD. She was encouraged to submit a preliminary subdivision plan with more details on the private subdivision road, once she can demonstrate an ownership interest in the property.”

- **Zoning Workshop: Section 8 Site Plan Review**

The Planner presented a refined draft of proposed changes to site plan review. The key substantive changes discussed in the proposed Site Plan Review Bylaw were as follows:

- Adds two new performance triggers for high-intensity uses that may otherwise not require review: parking lots exceeding 10 spaces and generation of vehicle trips exceeding 500 per day
- Establishes streamlined permitting process when a special permit is not required in addition to site plan review
- Clarifies submittal requirements, approval guidelines, decision, and appeals process
- Removes “Environmental Impact Statement” portion of bylaw that was generally redundant to site plan review.
- Sets a 3 year expiration term for site plan approval

The board expressed a strong desire for having vehicle trip volume threshold. They asked planner to investigate pulling out the text for security bond and to allow site plan approval timeframe to be extended with permission from the reviewing board. There was also a debate as to whether the square footage threshold should drop from 5,000 to 3,000.

This summer, the board would like to have public workshop to solicit feedback from residents and the business community. Walter will coordinate

- **Zoning Workshop: Open Space Bylaw Review**

Planner presented the following document:



**MONTAGUE PLANNING & CONSERVATION**

ONE AVENUE A · TURNERS FALLS, MA 01376 ·  
PHONE: 413-863-3200 EXT 207 · FAX: 413-863-3222

**Open Space Development Bylaw**

Prepared by Town Planner 8/27/2013, revised 9/23/13, 5/13/14

**DRAFT FOR REVIEW AND COMMENT**

“Cluster” or “flexible” development has been a Town priority for over 13 years. According to the 1999 Master Plan and 2010 Open Space Plan, the Town needs to develop flexible housing options that maximize existing infrastructure and promote the protection of open space. Specifically, the 2010 Open Space Plan calls to “direct development to appropriate areas without devaluing the land and where possible, to allow clustering of homes on smaller lots to protect open space when land is developed.

This proposed bylaw amendment would allow new building lots to be built with up to 50% relief in lot size and frontage from the underlying zoning under two scenarios:

- 1) Water and sewer are available (this currently allowed by special permit from ZBA)
- 2) Where water and sewer are not available, at least 30% of the developable area must be placed into permanent protection.

**Benefits:**

- Promotes the protection of locally important open space and requires less roads and infrastructure to build and maintain.
- Would allow flexible subdivision design to be approved by one board rather than two.
- Enables the town to permit attractive and creative development, rather than being confined to cookie-cutter subdivisions and ANR development.

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**PROPOSAL**

**SECTION 5.4.1 (Minimum Lot area)**

**Current:**

(c) Exceptions of requirements in (a) and (b) may be allowed by Special Permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals where public water and sewer lines are available for residential use

**Proposed:**

(c) Exceptions of requirements in (a) and (b) may be allowed by Special Permit from the Planning Board where water and sewer lines are available for residential use or where a subdivision proposed after X/X/2014 in accordance with the Montague Subdivision Regulations is found to provide a public benefit through the permanent protection of land in agricultural use, contiguous forest land, or a scenic vista by way of preserving at least 30% of the total developable land area in the subdivision in a manner acceptable under the policies of the Planning Board. Exceptions shall not reduce minimum lot area by more than 50%.

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The Board reviewed the draft. In general the board was not supportive of requiring land to be set aside into permanent protection. They were hesitant to advance this bylaw without more protection for agricultural land within the AF district. This warrants further discussion.

**Motion** by Fred Bowman at 8:30 to adjourn the May 27, 2014 Planning Board meeting. Seconded by George Cooke. Motion passed.

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_