



**NOVEMBER 28, 2023 MEETING MINUTES
PLANNING BOARD**

The Montague Planning Board met in-person in the Second Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls and via Zoom at **6:30 p.m.** on **Tuesday, November 28, 2023.**

Members Present: Ron Sicard, Elizabeth Irving, Sam Guerin, Bob Obear. **Absent:** George Cooke.
Staff: Maureen Pollock, Planner. **Also in attendance:** Zaharia Nichita, Jonathan Sieruta (Civil Engineer), Scott Bourcier (Gale Associates), Bryan Camden (Airport Commission), Tech School Superintendent and Director of Facilities, and the Chair of the Airport Commission.

MOTION by E. Irving to accept the minutes from October 24, 2023. Seconded by S. Guerin. Vote: Ron Sicard (AYE), Elizabeth Irving (AYE), Sam Guerin (AYE), Bob Obear (AYE). MOTION PASSES 6:32pm.

PUBLIC MEETING – SITE PLAN REVIEW

SPR 2023-03 - Zaharia Nichita - Request a Site Plan Review approval to construct a 5,000 square foot, 1 story building with 15 parking spaces for an auto sales and repair business, under Sections 7.2.6, 9.1.2, and 9.1.6 of the Zoning Bylaw, located at **property identified as Millers Falls Road (Parcel #23-0-28)**, General Business Zoning District.

Members of the Planning Board completed a site plan visit. The parcel is relatively flat. The applicant was before the Planning Board with a similar proposal for the neighboring property with considerable grading issues. Jonathan Sieruta describes the new parcel and proposal which is less expensive to develop because of the grading. There will be less fill and retaining walls on this parcel. There is a 24’ strip between the parcels. This plan does not have to contend with the intermittent stream. The proposed plan is not within wetland buffers. A filing was submitted for priority habitat. A landscaping plan was submitted. A small detention center (a swale) is at the rear of the property. Storm water calculations are indicated on the plan. Sewer, water, snow storage and dumpster locations are indicated on the plan.

The Planner reads suggested conditions for parking, lighting, landscaping.

*MOTION by R. Sicard to approve **SPR 2023-03 - Zaharia Nichita** - to construct a 5,000 square foot, 1 story building with 15 parking spaces for an auto sales and repair business, under Sections 7.2.6, 9.1.2, and 9.1.6 of the Zoning Bylaw, located at property identified as Millers Falls Road (Parcel #23-0-28), General Business Zoning District, with conditions. Seconded by B.Obear VOTE: Ron Sicard (AYE), Elizabeth Irving (AYE), Sam Guerin (AYE), Bob Obear (AYE). MOTION PASSES 6:45pm.*

(ANR) 2023- 06 (Parcel #23-0-28) Map 23 Lot 28 SUBDIVISION APPLICATIONS Zaharia Nichita, Millers Falls Rd.

The Planner describes how the land parcel will be divided. It is confirmed that the fire chief approves

the 24' frontage. The plan meets dimensional requirements.

MOTION by to Approve (ANR) 2023- 06 (Parcel #23-0-28) Map 23 Lot 28. Seconded by B. Obear. VOTE: Ron Sicard (AYE), Elizabeth Irving (AYE), Sam Guerin (AYE), Bob Obear (AYE). MOTION PASSES 6:48pm.

Bob Obear leaves the meeting.

Bob Obear returns to the meeting.

SPR 2023-06 – Turners Falls Municipal Airport- Request a Site Plan Review approval to construct a 12,000 square foot academic aircraft hangar with site improvements, under Sections 5.2(a)ii-iii, 9.1.2, and 9.1.6 of the Zoning Bylaw, located at **78 Industrial Blvd (Parcel #17-0-015)**, Industrial (ID) Zoning District.

The applicant was previously before the Planning Board to approve the foundation plan. This application is for the full site plan application. Presenting for the Airport is Scott Bourcier of Gale Associates. The plan set includes existing conditions, demo plans, site plan, erosion control, grading, and other supplemental details. The building, once completed, would be leased to the Tech School as a public/private partnership. The topographic/ property boundary plan shows that the foundation does not encroach.

E.Irving asks for clarification about the “pins” of the property. Bourcier comments that they found one monument, from which they can establish the setbacks.

Bourcier reviews the demolition plan; the site is largely cleared but they will need to remove two trees for the retention system. The site plan shows the approximate setbacks. Pavement is on 3 of 4 sides so aircraft can be pulled in/out of the building.

R.Sicard asks if the fire department is ok with the plan which does not have a gravel drive to the rear of the property where fuel is stored. Normally there is 360 degrees for fire apparatus.

The Planner comments that she emailed the application to the fire department but did not get a response.

Bryan Camden responds that they are working closely with the fire department who require hydrants and a hook-up on the building. Fuel storage will be in small quantities.

The Planner requests that any future updates to the plan be submitted to the Planning Board. The Building Inspector determines if the change needs to go back/before the Planning Board.

Site grading is reviewed by Bourcier including the location of a retention pond. Soil conditions are excellent for drainage. Erosion control and car parking are noted in the plan.

The Planner asks how long water is allowed to stand (regarding mosquito mitigation).

Bourcier responds that the draw down time is about 40 hours.

Bourcier continues with his description of the plan set. Lighting is downcast over egress doors and along the gravel pathway. The Water Department and Clean Water facilities will be completing those plans, therefore, Gale is seeking a waiver. Likewise, they seek a waiver for landscaping because there are no residential abutters. A prescribed grassland habitat will be planted and maintained. There will not be any monument signs and the building will use existing curb cuts. Access to the hangar will be through the Tech School lot.

Security is the responsibility of the Tech School.

Bryan Camden gives an update about the foundation construction.

MOTION by R. Sicard to Approve SPR 2023-06 – Turners Falls Municipal Airport- to construct a 12,000 square foot academic aircraft hangar with site improvements, under Sections 5.2(a)ii-iii, 9.1.2, and 9.1.6 of the Zoning Bylaw, located at 78 Industrial Blvd (Parcel #17-0-015), Industrial (ID) Zoning District with conditions and waivers for parking, lighting, landscape, utilities. Seconded by E. Irving. VOTE: Ron Sicard (AYE), Elizabeth Irving (AYE), Sam Guerin (AYE), Bob Obear (AYE). MOTION PASSES 7:22PM.

PLANNING & CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT REPORT ON PLANING PROJECTS AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATES:

First Street (Parcel #04-0-0031):

The Phase II assessment report for First Street (Parcel #04-0-0031) identified contaminated soils and recommends the Town to remove contaminants in order the property to be suitable for housing. Town staff are seeking cost estimates for remediation work and then will seeks funding for work. Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity will postpone its Purchase & Sale of the site until June 2024; and will postpone submitting its Plan Approval application to the Planning Board until more information is provided. MassHousing has informed Habitat for Humanity that they will hold Habitat’s awarded Neighborhood Stabilization Program \$1.2M grant until the Town cleans up the site.

Montague City Village Center Study:

The Planning Department hosted second community meeting on November 8 at the Discovery Center’s Great Hall. The meeting had a great turnout with over 70 people in attendance, many of whom are residents of Montague City. Participants brought some great ideas forward and we learned a lot.

The presentation slides, meeting notes, and meeting recording may be found on the project webpage via this link: <https://www.montague-ma.gov/p/1531/>.

Residents are encouraged to submit comments regarding potential long-term land uses and activities for the former Farren Care Center site and how it may fit in with the surrounding neighborhood and its connections, be it by foot, bicycle, wheelchair, FRTA bus, or car, please contact me at planner@montague-ma.gov.

The final report for this study will be made available on the project webpage in early 2024. The report findings and recommendations will be presented to the Planning Board and the Selectboard for further discussion and guidance on next steps.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Turners Falls resident Jack Carolan informed the Planning Board via email that he cannot join the Board because there is a potential conflict of interest with his place of employment.

ADJOURN:

MOTION by E. Irving to ADJOURN. Seconded by R. Sicard. VOTE UNANAMPOUS (4-0) MOTION PASSES 7:38PM