



**TOWN OF
MONTAGUE
MASSACHUSETTS**

TOWN HALL
One Avenue A
Turners Falls, MA 01376

PLANNING BOARD
(413) 863-3200 ext. 112
Planner@montague-ma.gov

**Draft 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, February 27, 2024.**

Members Present: Ron Sicard, Elizabeth Irving, Sam Guerin, George Cooke **Absent:** Bob Obear
Staff: Maureen Pollock, Planner. **Also in attendance:** Elinor Write, Liam Cregan (Franklin Land Trust), Julie, Megan Rhodes (FRTA), Ben Gamlin.

MINUTES:

MOTION by R. Sicard to Approve the Meeting Minutes from November 28, 2023. Seconded by E. Irving. Vote: Ron Sicard (AYE), Elizabeth Irving (AYE), Sam Guerin (AYE), George Cooke (AYE). MOTION PASSES (4-0) 6:31pm.

MOTION by R. Sicard to Approve the Meeting Minutes from December 12, 2023. Seconded by E. Irving. Vote: Ron Sicard (AYE), Elizabeth Irving (AYE), Sam Guerin (AYE), George Cooke (AYE). MOTION PASSES (4-0) 6:33pm.

FORM A (ANR) SUBDIVISION APPLICATIONS

ANR 2024-01, Elinor S Wright, Old Sunderland Road (Parcel #50-0-17)

George Cooke recuses himself.

Elinor Write introduces herself. She is accompanied by Liam Cregan of Franklin Land Trust who is helping the applicant with a conservation restriction on the parcel. This is the first step: to subdivide and register the land which will eventually be moved to conservation. The land will be available for hiking but not hunting.

The Planner reports that the parcel meets all of the criteria for subdivision.

MOTION by R. Sicard to Approve ANR 2024-01, Elinor S Wright, Old Sunderland Road (Parcel #50-0-17) with the intention of moving the parcel to conservation. Seconded by E. Irving. Vote: Ron Sicard (AYE), Elizabeth Irving (AYE), Sam Guerin (AYE). MOTION PASSES (3-0) 6:38pm.

PUBLIC MEETING:

Intention to lay out Sandy Lane as a Public Way – For Planning Board comments and recommendations to the Selectboard, pursuant to G.L. c. 41, §§81G and 81I

George Cooke recuses himself.

Bob Obear and Ron Sicard had a site visit.

The Planner shows an image of the crosswalk at Sandy Lane and Turnpike Road which will be turned into a public right of way. The image of the crosswalk shows a grade difference of 3-4" with the street. The Board does not see this as a problem caused by FRTA but will recommend to the Planning Board that the issue is fixed.

The Planner shows a plan of the proposed Sandy Lane right of way which terminates at Turnpike Road. The plan does not include the crosswalk. George Cooke (while recused) offers a clarification of the plan. Cooke says that "there is not a radius on that corner" It is described as a geometry issue. The Planer will write a recommendation for the Montague Select Board with a suggested condition (sidewalk gap connection).

MOTION by R. Sicard to draft a letter of support for lay out Sandy Lane as a Public Way. Seconded by E. Irving. VOTE: Ron Sicard (AYE), Elizabeth Irving (AYE), Sam Guerin (AYE). MOTION PASSES (3-0) 6:55pm.

Julie (ZOOM audience) asks about the reason for changing the road from private to a public right of way? Ron Sicard responds that the Town already maintains Sandy Lane, the road has sufficient infrastructure (sidewalks, sewers, drainage), and several public facilities (DPW, Sherrif) use the road. Additionally, the Town would now qualify for maintenance grants. (Chapter 90 funds)

Julie asks if trailer trucks would be allowed. The Planner responds Yes, however any future business on Sandy Lane would require special approval.

George returns to the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

The Planner reminds the members that registration for the CPTC Annual Conference on Saturday, March 16, 2024, at Holy Cross College, Worcester is open. Members can be reimbursed.

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

Megan Rhodes (FRTA) joins the meeting to discuss the Comprehensive Plan Update. A slide deck is presented to the Planning Board. The slide deck reviews: the planning process, outreach strategy, draft chapters and uses for uses for uses for the Comprehensive Plan. There will be a public meeting in May to review the draft plan. Hopefully, the Comprehensive Plan will be finalized in June 2024.

Megan Rhodes shows the Planning Board a draft Table of Contents. Climate change and energy conservation is written in every chapter. Megan shows an example from the "Housing" chapter and explains that the recommendations are at a "higher level" to give the Town the flexibility to pivot in order to to take advantage of grant opportunities. Rhodes discusses the chapters that have been drafted, and the ones still in process. Finished drafts can be viewed at www.montagueplans.org The FRTA group will check back with the Planning Board for approval, as required by State law.

The slide deck is entered into the minutes.

Referring to the housing slide, Julie asks if senior housing will include veteran housing. The Planner thanks Julie for bringing up this idea, as others have.

Ben Gamlin (sp?), former professional Planner, asked if there is a role for the Select Board in this process.

Megan Rhodes responds “technically not, by State law” however the group is working to keep them informed and to get their endorsement.

Ben recommends that the final plan be tied to a prioritization process and to the annual Town budget so that it is used as intended. He recommends some practical ways to set priorities.

E. Irving recommends that FRCOG present chapter summary slides for use regularly in the future.

Topics Not Listed within 48 Hours

The Planner discusses her work on the Digital Equity Plan and partnership with the senior center. Trainings have been popular and there will be a new Wi-Fi hotspot at Peskeompskut Park. HRA and Montague Housing Authority are taking steps to provide free internet for their residents. An affordable connectivity program exists for free/low-cost internet to low-income residents.

The Planner reports that the Phase II assessment for the First Street Habitat for Humanity project indicates that the soil needs to be cleaned. The Town is looking for a grant to pay for the work; the Planning Board might want to request ARPA funding to move the project forward.

MOTION by R. Sicard to adjourn. Seconded by E. Irving. Vote: Ron Sicard (AYE), Elizabeth Irving (AYE), Sam Guerin (AYE), George Cooke (AYE). MOTION PASSES (4-0) 6:36pm.