



The
TOWN OF
MONTAGUE
MASSACHUSETTS

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PLANNING BOARD
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**Tuesday, May 27, 2025 PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

The Montague Planning Board
Tuesday, May 27, 2025. This meeting was recorded.
ZOOM Opened by the Chair. 6:30pm

ROLL CALL:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Elizabeth Irving, Ron Sicard, Sam Guerin, Sage Winter, Bob Obear, George Cooke.
STAFF: Maureen Pollock, Town Planner and Conservation Agent
Also in attendance: Emily Innes (Innes Associates), Jeff Singleton, Lilith Wolinski

MOTION by R. Sicard to approve the minutes from April 30, 2025. Seconded by B. Obear. VOTE AYE: MOTION PASSES (6-0) 6:33pm.

MONTAGUE CITY VILLAGE CENTER REZONING PROJECT

Innes Associates Ltd. will provide a presentation and collect feedback regarding April 17 community workshop, including break-out exercise results; discuss meeting focus for June 10 community meeting

Consultant Emily Innes shares her findings from the public workshop, which was held on April 17 at the Great Falls Discovery Center. There are two projects (former Farren site and Rod Shop Road) with different funding. Both projects focus on rezoning.

Innes reviews the timeline for the meeting with the Select Board and working group. Innes describes past plans between 2013-2024 as providing a vision for the former Farren site. In this phase her team will develop zoning around that vision. It's a multi-stage process to turn information into the "rules of the road" for development. Specifically, Inness and Associates is looking for three components: Use Table, Dimensional Standards, Subdistricts vs. Single Entity Zoning.

Initial Conclusions:

People are looking for a mix of building scales.
The Town should have more control over Special Permits.
Playgrounds, Pocket Parks and Gardens were identified as important public space.
Medium Economic Value was identified by 3 of the 4 breakout groups.

Innes shares her idea for the upcoming June 10 public meeting. The goal of the meeting is to determine if the community vision identified in April 17 meetings is still justified. Participants will be asked to rate three scenarios with numeric scores which will be used to make some zoning determinations. Dimensional and development standards also need to be considered and discussed.

Slide Deck Entered into the Record

The Planner asks about numeric ratings related to direct public benefits. Inness responds that they will "structure the buckets" to get the most important information.

Sage Winter asks for clarification about how the information at the first meeting will be used in the second

meeting. Inness responds that the community will be asked to comment on three different hybrid scenarios for the purpose of understanding what best meets the goals of the community. They aren't looking for architectural design or to design the site. Inness and Associates is looking for what type of parcelization will meet community goals.

Ron Sicard asks if there is feedback from construction companies commenting, just because folks want something, it might not be practical to build. Inness agrees and hopes that developers will come to the public meeting. Draft zoning is a good opportunity for feedback from construction companies, as well.

Sage Winter asks if this is a conceptual study or are the parcels going to be divided. Inness responds that zoning sets dimensional standards but does not parcel-out the property; that would be part of an RFP.

Jeff Singleton "does not understand the process at all. Why do we not start with the current zoning and what it allows and what the different options are for zoning?" Inness responds that current zoning, dimensional standards and current uses were covered in the first public meeting. Singleton disagrees. The Planner reviews current building uses.

Bob Obear asks if folks want to build a home near the power station. Obear thinks that as a developer he would hesitate to invest significant capital in such proximity to a power station. Bob doesn't think that housing is a good fit. Inness thinks there is a berm, but the power station is an eyesore.

Lilith Wolinski comments that Cabot Station has been there for about 100 years.

Main buckets: Affordable housing, public benefits, neighborhood services and retail, economic value to the community. Sage Winter would like to add "investment potential" to this list. Bob Obear reiterates the detriment of the power station and questions whether the property will warrant this level of investment? He believes the rear of the property is more suitable for light industrial. There is a shortage of light industrial space, and it could bring in jobs. Inness responds that the 2024 report did include market feasibility analysis. The project is funded through Mass Housing Partnership; Inness will reach out to them to ask if they have concerns about the power station.

The Planner comments that the site is on a bus route and close to services. Sage Winter comments that fencing and trees can be used as a buffer. Winter commends Emily Inness and Associates for the way they have guided public conversation.

Inness will speak with her team about the possibility of adding light industrial near the power station.

E. Irving asks what provisions have been included to afford flexibility in the future. Inness responds that she tries to write flexibility into zoning as much as possible noting that the public hasn't identified specific sub areas. "We need some rules, but how do we set up dimensional standard so it can be divided in a flexible way."

Lilith Wolinski (in chat) comments about the positives of the Montague City location and believes that neighbors does NOT want more light industrial development.

The presentation was closed at 7:34pm.

FORM A (ANR) SUBDIVISION APPLICATIONS:

ANR 2025-02: Edward Stone, 265 Federal Street Parcel #40-0-52

The Planner shows the plan which would be divided into two lots. The applicant meets all requirements regarding frontage and access. The lots are not certified as building lots.

MOTION by E. Irving to endorse ANR 2025-02: Edward Stone, 265 Federal Street Parcel #40-0-52. Seconded by Bob Obear. VOTE: Bob Obear (AYE), Elizabeth Irving (AYE), Ron Sicard (AYE), Sam Guerin (AYE), George

Cooke (AYE). MOTION PASSES (5-0) 7:41pm.

MOTION by E. Irving for Ron Sicard (chair) to sign on behalf of the Planning Board. Seconded by S. Guerin. VOTE: Bob Obear (AYE), Elizabeth Irving (AYE), Ron Sicard (AYE), Sam Guerin (AYE), George Cooke (AYE). MOTION PASSES (5-0) 7:43pm.

ANR 2025-03: Edward D. Demers and Carol J. Novak-Demers, 0 Letourneau Way Parcels #14-0-094, #14-0-093, 14-0-047; and 0 Rear Turnpike Road Parcel #14-0-095

George Cooke recuses.

The Planner shows the plan and GIS of the parcel on Letourneau Way. The plan meets all dimensional and access requirements.

MOTION by E. Irving to endorse ANR 2025-03: Edward D. Demers and Carol J. Novak-Demers, 0 Letourneau Way Parcels #14-0-094, #14-0-093, 14-0-047; and 0 Rear Turnpike Road Parcel #14-0-095 and for or Ron Sicard (chair) to sign on behalf of the Planning Board. Seconded by S. Guerin. VOTE: Bob Obear (AYE), Elizabeth Irving (AYE), Ron Sicard (AYE), Sam Guerin (AYE), Sage Winter (AYE). MOTION PASSES (5-0) 7:46pm.

George Cooke returns to the meeting.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Review and discuss draft Accessory Dwelling Unit regulations with possible vote to refer to the Selectboard
Review and discuss proposed applications for funding from FY26 Community One Stop for Growth Grant programs.

The Planner heard back from FRCOG and FRTA; bus stops are considered bus stations. Municipality cannot limit the bad audio they can be counted. The mention of short-term rentals was cut from Montague ADU zoning language.

MOTION by R. Sicard to ADJOURN. Seconded by E. Irving. VOTE: Elizabeth Erving (AYE), Bob Obear (AYE), Ron Sicard (AYE), George Cooke (AYE), Sam Guerin (AYE). MOTION PASSES (5-0) 7:51pm.