



**TOWN OF
MONTAGUE
MASSACHUSETTS**

TOWN HALL
One Avenue A
Turners Falls, MA 01376

PLANNING BOARD
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**MONTAGUE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, May 26, 2026 6:30pm

Town Hall Annex, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls and via Zoom

Opened by the Chair. 6:32pm. The meeting was recorded

ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ron Sicard (Chair), George Cooke. Bob Obear, Sam Guerin. ABSENT: Sage Winter

STAFF PRESENT: Maureen Pollock, Director of Planning and Conservation

MOTION by George Cooke to Approve the meeting minutes of March 24, 2026. Seconded by Ron Sicard. VOTE: Ron Sicard (AYE), George Cooke (AYE), Bob Obear (AYE), Sam Guerin (AYE). MOTION PASSES 4-0. 6:34pm.

DISCUSSION: Review and discuss the draft Farren Neighborhood zoning text.

The Planner gives an overview dated May 18, 2026 from Innes Land Strategies Group, Inc. The project goal is to create zoning to encourage the re-adaptive reuse of the historic buildings especially on Rod Shop Road and Masonic Ave and the couple parcels to the north and south of the former Farren hospital site. The Planner shows the focus area and the result of exercises done with the community during the May 12th input session at the Shea Theater. The new zoning for the Farren would continue on south side of Cabot Street. Parcels to the north of the Farren are "Mixed Use Gateway". Parcels to the east are "Mixed Use Road Shop Road." The Planner covers the permitted uses for these zones by right or by site plan review for example: housing by types, craft workshops/light assembly, farming, forestry, parking garages, public utilities, non-profit clubs, educational uses. The proposal promotes more density and mixed use. The proposal also covers demolition, dimensional requirements including setbacks and building height.

The Planner asks the Board their opinion on building height on the north side of Cabot Street. Emily Inness suggested that those buildings become 4 instead of 3 stories.

Sam Gurein asks if we should reconsider "Central Business" zoning rather than creating another citing "Montague already has 13 districts and 4 overlays." Guerin doesn't think creating two new districts to spot address a problem that exists in multiple villages of Montague is worth it. Guerin asks about the applicability for Historic Industrial Zoning District. Guerin is advocating for broader changes to the Central Business District, and sort of reconsidering the utility of the Historic Industrial post-Strathmore demolition. Guerin "excited about Mixed-Use village center district and would rather think about how to apply across the villages in tandem with the Central Business rather than creating two more districts by the Farren. The Planner will bring these comments/concerns to the project team for consideration.

The Planner continues with the conversation about having 4 story buildings on the north side of Cabot Street. George Cooke, Bob Obear and Sam Guerin are in favor of 4 story buildings facing Cabot.

George Cooke asks about participation by property owners on Rod Shop Road. The Planner informs the Board that a number of property owners are actively involved. Concerns by other property owners regarding permitted use fall under pre-existing non-conforming.

One Stop for Growth Grant Application Proposals – Letters of Support.

Grant #1: The Planner is finishing a wayfinding project with a consultant and local sign maker Jess Marsh Wisseman. The One Stop Grant would fund finalizing the sign designs and to create bid ready documents. Grant #2: plan and design public infrastructure for the Farren site (i.e. new sidewalks, stormwater, roads, bike path, bus stop). Grant #3: construct an ADA accessible ramps into the first floor storefronts for the stretch of sidewalk from 112 to 104 Avenue A. They already have a design for this project. The Planner requests support. General conversation about the placement of wayfinding signs. The Board expressed support and the Ron Sicard is happy to submit a letter of support on behalf of the Board.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Planning Board is invited to the Farren Neighborhood Zoning & Design Guidelines Project - Public Meeting #2: Thursday, June 4th, 6:00–7:30 pm via Zoom. The meeting purpose is give the public an opportunity to review and discuss the draft zoning text and draft design guidelines for the Farren Neighborhood parcels; and to review/discuss draft design guidelines for the former Farren parcels. Meeting details found here: <https://montague-ma.gov/d/14117/Farren-Neighborhood-Zoning--Design-Public-Meeting-2>

Window Insert Community Build Pilot Program – Learn more here: <https://montague-ma.gov/p/1633/>

The Town Open Space and Recreation Plan is nearly complete and a copy will be submitted to the state for final review and approval.

MOTION by R. Sicard to ADJOURN. MOTION PASSES (4-0) 7:28pm