



**TOWN OF
MONTAGUE
MASSACHUSETTS**

TOWN HALL
One Avenue A
Turners Falls, MA 01376

PLANNING BOARD
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**MONTAGUE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, June 22, 2026 6:30pm

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

Opened by the Chair. 6:30pm. The meeting was recorded

ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ron Sicard (Chair), George Cooke. Sam Guerin, Sage Winter. ABSENT: Bob Obear.
STAFF PRESENT: Maureen Pollock, Director of Planning and Conservation Emily Inness and Paola Martinez (Innes Land Strategies Group). Also Present: Kristi Bodin, Skip and Colleen Descavich.

Meeting Minutes from May 26, 2026 were tabled.

FORM A (ANR) SUBDIVISION APPLICATIONS:

DISCUSSION: Review and discuss the draft zoning text for the Farren Neighborhood, including parcels on Rod Shop Road, Masonic Avenue, Cabot Street, and Depot Street; and to review and discuss draft design guidelines for the Farren Neighborhood parcels and the former Farren Hospital Site itself

The Planner gives an overview of the grant, aimed at rezoning the former Farren Hospital site and Rod Shop Road site for redevelopment. There have been multiple community meetings over the last six months to inform the work of Innes Land Strategies. Abutters were invited and meetings were well attended. This project has a working group comprised of local residents.

Emily Innes and Paola Martinez of Inness Land Strategies present to the Planning Board. The pros and cons of three zoning options are discussed at length. Input from the Planning Board will inform the final deliverables.

Paola Martinez presents a map of current zoning. She reports that residents were clear about what uses weren't a good "fit" in the future. Martinez presents three zoning options: A/B/C. Each option is discussed with the Planning Board.

A: Creates a new Mixed Use Gateway District that allows for more residential density. Option A limits light industrial but allows commercial. A new Rod Shop Road Mix-Used District would also be created.

B: Similar to Option A but modifies the definition of Historic Industrial on Rod Shop Road instead of creating a new zone. This option could impact other Historic Industrial zones in Montague. The Planner reviews future plans in other Historic Industrial Districts on Montague- including bridge replacement and demo of the Strathmore.

C: Similar to Option B but increases the Mixed-Use Village Center District along the back of the Farren Parcel and keeps Neighborhood Business District Zoning on Depot Street.

The Planner requests input from the Planning Board.

Ron Sicard asks about battery storage and solar. Inness replies that battery storage and solar are not in the use table. It is noted that part of the Historic Industrial on Rod Shop Road is protected wetlands which limit development.

Existing and proposed uses are compared. Martinez discusses different uses that are allowed by permit, by special

permit or not allowed. Definitions of Light Industrial and Heavy Industrial are discussed. Square footage for a use can trigger special permits. Existing uses do not have to comply with zoning changes, unless uses are changed or extended. Dimensional standards and standardization of language (building height vs. Story height for example) were considered in the plan.

The Planner asks the Board if they have questions about uses or dimensional requirements. Members of the Board show support for having three-story buildings at both ends of the Farren parcels and four-story buildings in the center of the parcel. (Option 2)

Ron Sicard asks Emily Innes if Option C is the most flexible. She reminds the group that option C can impact other Historic Districts. The Planner informs that group that existing Historic Industrial allows battery storage and solar by special permit.

Ron Sicard asks the Board if they have preference for Option on Options A, B or C. Sam Gurin likes Option B. His preference is to create a Gateway District and better define the Historic Industrial District Zone for Road Shop Road. Ron Sicard agrees. General support for Option B.

Design guidelines are discussed, as informed by community engagement. The community strongly identified a preference for walkable development with active frontages, places to sit and destinations. There was a tendency toward traditional materials with a modern approach. The guidelines are drafted to encourage development that is appropriate, functional, attractive and designed with the community in mind. *These design guidelines are an overlay and do not impact other Historic Industrial District. The Design Guidelines are a mix of “broad and specific” suggestions for architecture, public space and integration, and neighborhood health for use by the Planning Board and prospective developers.

A member of the audience suggests a rotary. Inness says that’s outside of the scope of this project. Sam Guerin brings up the point that subdividing the parcel will require road plans.

Ron Sicard thanks Emily Inness and Paola Martinez for the presentation. The Planner informs the group that under the zoning bylaws the Planning Board can make a vote to approve the design guidelines as they relate to the Farran property, because the Design Overlay District was approved by Town Meeting. Design Guidelines for the Road Shop Road area would need to be approved by Town Meeting in a similar way. Alternately, the Planning Board could wait and do Rod Shop Road Overlay together.

Colleen Descavich comments that Montague City used to have more traffic when the hospital was active. George Cooke asks Colleen Descavich if she likes Option A, B, C. She likes Option B and reiterates the need for redevelopment walkable and allow for connection and recreation. Sam Guerin agrees that the bike path extension is an important priority. Kristi Bodin likes Option B and C.

The next step for Inness Land Strategies is to finish the deliverable with this input from the community and Planning Board. Once the final plan is approved by the Planning Board, it will go to the Select Board followed by a public hearing. Eventually Rod Shop Road zoning amendment will be voted by Town Meeting.

The Planner encourages the public to keep an eye on the Planning Board agenda for future meetings.

MOTION by S. Guerin to ADJOURN. Seconded by G. Cooke. Vote Unanimous. 7:58pm