

**PLANNING BOARD**  
**TOWN OF WILBRAHAM**  
240 Springfield Street  
Wilbraham, Massachusetts 01095

Jeffrey Smith, Chairman  
John McCloskey  
James Moore  
Tracey Plantier  
James Rooney  
Gordon Allen, Associate



John Pearsall, Planning Director

Phone: (413) 596-2800, Ext. 203  
FAX: (413) 596-9256

**MINUTES OF THE WILBRAHAM PLANNING BOARD**  
**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2020**

In attendance: Chairman Jeffrey Smith  
John McCloskey  
James Moore  
Tracey Plantier  
James Rooney  
Gordon Allen, Associate

Staff: John Pearsall, Planning Director

**Chairman Jeffrey Smith called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and asked those assembled in the room to proudly join the Planning Board in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.**

**1. Approval of Meeting Minutes – December 4, 2019**

**A. Regular Session**

Chairman Smith called for a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Session of the December 4, 2019 Planning Board meeting and asked if there were any comments or revisions.

**MOTION (MOORE, ROONEY): I move that the Board approve the minutes of the Regular Session of the December 4, 2019 Planning Board meeting as submitted. Approved (5-0).**

**B. Executive Session**

Board Member John McCloskey remained recused due to potential conflict of interest concerns as a residential abutter to the project under discussion. Associate Member Gordon Allen continued to serve as the Alternate Voting Member with regards to this matter. Chairman Smith called for a motion to approve the minutes of Executive Session of the December 4, 2019 Planning Board meeting and asked if there were any comments or revisions.

**MOTION (ROONEY, PLANTIER): I move that the Board approve the minutes of the Executive Session of the December 4, 2019 Planning Board meeting as submitted. Approved (5-0, with Mr. McCloskey recused and Mr. Allen serving as the Alternate Voting Member).**

*Materials referenced: Draft of the Minutes of the Regular Session of the December 4, 2019 Planning Board Meeting (3 pages) and the Executive Session of the December 4, 2019 Planning Board Meeting (2 pages) as prepared by John Pearsall.*

**2. Citizens Open Forum**

No citizens took advantage of the open forum opportunity.

3. **Building Commissioner's Report**

Building Commissioner Lance Trevallion was not in attendance at the meeting.

4. **Miscellaneous Information**

A. **Subdivision Status Report – January 2020**

The Board reviewed the above-listed document without any issue.

*Material referenced: As listed above.*

5. **Appointment – Edward Stevenson, Planning Board Member Emeritus**  
**Zoning By-Law Review and Discussion**

Chairman Smith welcomed former long-time serving Planning Board member Edward Stevenson, explained that the Planning Board has engaged in some preliminary discussion examining the effectiveness of the existing Ridgeline and Hillside Overlay Zoning District with an eye towards recommending possible changes to some or all of the existing regulations, and stated that the Planning Board decided to reach out to Mr. Stevenson with the hope that he could provide the Planning Board with some background and history concerning the adoption and subsequent administration of the Ridgeline and Hillside Overlay Zoning District regulations, to share feedback (both positive and negative) on the how well the bylaw has performed over time, and to offer any recommendations for changes to the existing regulations. Mr. Stevenson stated that the bylaw was developed in response to several poorly designed development projects on the mountain inappropriately undertaken by inexperienced developers including a particularly egregious case of clearcutting a visually prominent area on Ridge Road which triggered an unsuccessful and overreaching attempt to impose a complete moratorium on any new development in this area. Mr. Stevenson advised that overall he felt the bylaw worked well during his tenure on the Planning Board but admitted that there were instances when unauthorized work occurred because the parties claimed that they were unaware of the existence of the Overlay District Zone and the Town's zoning regulations. The Board thanked Mr. Stevenson for his input and agreed that the existing regulations do serve to help preserve the existing forest cover and maintain the character and ecological health of the community. The Board also agreed that it might make sense to revisit and possibly update the existing regulations at some point in response to the new storm water regulations, the increased demand for tree cutting to address damage from storms and invasive species or tree removal to accommodate solar energy systems and similar land use policy changes.

6. **2019 Annual Town Report**

The Board reviewed and approved the 2019 Annual Town Report as drafted.

**MOTION (ROONEY, PLANTIER): I move that the Board approve the 2018 annual as drafted. Approved (5-0).**

*Materials referenced: Draft of 2018 Planning Board Annual Report prepared by John Pearsall (3 pages).*

7. **Nonsub Plan 20-01 – Land of the Church of the Epiphany, 20 Highland Avenue**

The Planning Board reviewed a plan to divide the existing church property located at 20 Highland Avenue into two lots: Lot B consisting of 14.7 acres including the existing church with an address to remain 20 Highland Avenue; and Lot A consisting of 7.3 acres of vacant land designated "Not A Building Lot" with an address to become 19V Cooley Drive.

**MOTION (MOORE, ROONEY): I move that the Board approve Nonsub Plan 20-01 as submitted and authorize the Chairman to endorse the plan with the Board's determination that approval under the subdivision control law is not required. Approved (5-0).**

The plan was endorsed by Chairman Smith.

*Materials referenced: Nonsub Plan 20-01 Application Form submitted on 1.6.2020 (1 sheet) and Approval Not Required Plan of Land prepared by Levesque Geomatics, Inc., dated 12.10.19 (1 sheet).*

8. **Chapter 61B Notice of Right of First Refusal - Land of Fusco, 240 Monson Road**

The Planning Board reviewed a request from the Board of Selectmen soliciting comments on a proposed real estate transfer of a portion of property located at 240 Monson Road where the Town has a right of first refusal. The Planning Board noted that the proposed real estate transaction involves a property line adjustment previously shown on approved Nonsub Plan 19-06 [see the minutes of the 11/13/2019 Planning Board Meeting] and agreed to send a memo to the Selectmen supporting the issuance of the requested right of first refusal.

**MOTION (ROONEY, MOORE): I move that the Board send a letter to the Board of Selectmen stating the Planning Board has no objection with the Town waiving its Right of First Refusal on the property located at 240 Monson Road if such action is deemed appropriate and determined to be in the best interest of the Town by the Selectmen. Approved (5-0).**

*Materials referenced: Letter with attachment from Board of Selectmen dated 12.19.19 (2 pages plus attachments).*

9. **Ridgeline & Hillside District Site Design Review – Land Clearing for Proposed Septic System Land of Fusco, 240 Monson Road**

The Planning Board met with landowner Joseph Fusco to review a proposal to allow tree clearing on a small portion of property located at 242 Monson Road for the purpose of conducting a percolation test and installing a possible septic system to serve the existing home under construction on adjacent property located at 592 Ridge Road as shown on an annotated plan. The Board noted that the proposed tree clearing area was relatively limited in size and located at the edge of a cleared meadow where the trees were heavily damaged by invasive vines and brush, and not located in a visually sensitive topographic area.

**MOTION (PLANTIER, MCCLOSKEY): I move that the Board, acting as the Ridgeline & Hillside District Design Review Board, approve the applicant's proposal as submitted to allow tree clearing on a small portion of property located at 242 Monson Road for the purpose of conducting a percolation test and installing a possible septic system to serve the existing home under construction on adjacent property located at 592 Ridge Road and waive the requirement for further review under the Ridgeline and Hillside District regulations per section 9.3.10 of the Zoning By-Law based on a finding that the proposed tree clearing is minor in nature, is not located in a visually sensitive topographic area, and will not create significant negative impacts to the environment nor be in conflict with the any of the established goals of the Ridgeline & Hillside District regulations.. Approved (5-0).**

*Materials referenced: Proposed Tree Clearing Plan for Septic System, annotated and undated, (1 page).*

10. **ZBA Special Permit Application for Review – Multi-tenant Commercial Building JAZ-1 Investments, LLC – Land of PeopleBank, 1997 Boston Road**

At the request of the Board of Appeals, the Planning Board reviewed for compliance the exterior design of the proposed new 12,183 square foot multi-tenant commercial building as shown on plans submitted by JAZ-1 Investments, LLC to be constructed on property located at 1997 Boston Road. The Planning Board found the modern industrial exterior design of the building to be appropriate for the intended use.

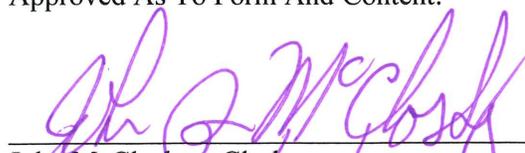
*Materials referenced: Commercial Development Site Plan prepared by BL Companies, revised 12.17.19 (22 sheets)*

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:55 PM. The Board will reconvene at its next meeting on **Wednesday, January 29, 2020 at 6:00 PM.**

Submitted:

Approved As To Form And Content:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John Pearsall, Planning Director  
Date: 2-14-2020

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John McCloskey, Clerk  
Date: 2/19/20