

Hamilton Planning Board
Meeting Minutes
February 23, 2023
Memorial Room, Town Hall
577 Bay Rd., Hamilton, MA

This meeting was held in person for Board members and by Zoom webinar for all other participants and interested parties.

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 7:02 p.m.

Members Present: Jonathan Poore, Bill Wheaton, Emil Dahlquist, Beth Herr, Rick Mitchell, Marnie Crouch (Chair)

Attended on Zoom: Ken Barnes, Matthew Hammel

1. Discussion of Town Pursuit of Strategic Plan for Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary

Chair decided to take this Agenda item first. Board engaged the question of what development on the site would be by right with site plan review and conditions, and what development would be special permit. The Board reviewed slides from the January 10 visioning meeting, and noted the following list that emerged from that meeting regarding what should be preserved and protected on the site:

- Enhance external buffers
- Preserve internal buffers
- Honor heritage landscapes
- Protect historic buildings
- Maintain scenic vistas
- Respect trail and walk networks
- Avoid steep slopes
- Preserve mature trees

This list emerged out of the Board considering three important components in any development: protecting the environment, ensuring economic development, and providing for the social needs of the town. There was some concern by a Board member that the board might have presumed what the optimum development would look like without knowing how it's going to be developed. He acknowledged that there's a dynamic tension between trying to preserve and protect the best features of the land while remaining as flexible as possible to accommodate what may come. The board referenced the discussion from February 7th where developable areas were identified and outlined once the areas that need to be preserved and protected were eliminated. Three scenarios showing low, medium, and high density, along with mixed density, were then presupposed on this developable land. These scenarios have allowed for different road systems depending on density and increased use of utilities such as the septic system.

There was an attempt to combine scenarios from the Planning Board with scenarios from Barry Abramson to consider the net annual fiscal benefit to the Town. There was discussion among the board about the sheer wealth of data being presented and an acknowledgement that there is tension inherent in the process. The Board is being asked to research scenarios and work with the consultants toward the deadline of the Town Meeting, while maintaining the preferences outlined by the Board.

2. Interviews of two Associate Member Candidates

Matthew Hamel spoke to the reasons why his family relocated to Hamilton from Boston and his background and fit with serving on the Planning Board.

Following this discussion the chair asked for a motion to transmit Matthew Hamel’s resume and application to the Select Board for final consideration. The Planning Board and the Select Board jointly appoint Associate Members to the Planning Board. Motion was made and seconded and approved unanimously by the Board.

3. Approval of Minutes

The chair asked for a motion to approve the minutes subject to grammatical corrections. These are the minutes pertaining to February 15, 2022, April 5, 2022, April 21, 2022, May 3, 2022, May 15, 2022, June 7, 2022, June 23, 2022, July 12, 2022, July 26, 2022, August 16, 2022, and February 14, 2023. The motion was made and seconded.

Jonathan Poore	Aye
Bill Wheaton	Aye
Emil Dahlquist	Aye
Beth Herr	Abstained
Rick Mitchell	Aye on all but January 23, 2022 when he was absent.
Marnie Crouch	Aye

Beth Herr abstained because she was not a member for many of the meetings.

Motion to adjourn was made and seconded and approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:33.

Respectfully submitted as approved at the 07-25-2023 meeting.

Marnie Crouch