



Town of Hamilton
 Planning Board
 Meeting Minutes of February 4, 2025

Pursuant to the Open Meeting Law, MGL Chapter 30 A, §§ 18-25, written notice posted by the Town Clerk delivered to all Planning Board members, a meeting of the Hamilton Planning Board was posted for February 4, 2025 at 7:00pm. This meeting was held at the Hamilton Wenham Public Library, 14 Union St. A zoom link was provided as a convenience for the public.

The Planning Board has seven members elected to three-year terms with one, two, or three seats up for election each year. The Planning Board typically meets the first and third Tuesday evening at 7:00 p.m. Planning Board members: Marnie Crouch, Chair, 2026, Emil Dahlquist, Clerk, 2025, William Wheaton, 2025, Beth Herr, 2025, Patrick Norton, 2026, Jonathan Poore, 2027, Darcy Dale (2027), Matt Hamel (associate) 2026, Jeff Austin (associate) 2027.

Call to order: *With a quorum present, Chair Crouch called the Planning Board meeting to order at 7:00 PM, identified the meeting was being recorded and those present:* Marnie Crouch, Jonathon Poore, Emil Dahlquist, Matthew Hamel, Darcy Dale, Jeff Austin, Patrick Norton, Beth Herr, William Wheaton. Others present: Mark Connors, Director of Planning.

Agenda:

1. REVIEW AND VOTE ON DRAFT MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS: January 7, 2025

Vote: *The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes with minor edits as noted.*

2. LAND USE APPLICATIONS:

SITE PLAN REVIEW: Town of Hamilton, Owner, Hamilton Recreation Department, Applicant – Request for Site Plan Review of a proposed open air, wood-framed pavilion at the Patton Homestead property at 650 Asbury Street (Assessors Tax Map 19, Parcel 1) Hamilton, MA 01936. The applicant and property owner is the Town of Hamilton and the proposed use of the structure is for cultural, social, and civic programming.

Robert Picardy and Amanda Delleveigne of Epstein, Joslin, & Picardy Architects were in attendance to present plans for an open air pavilion at the Patton Homestead property owned by the Town of Hamilton. They referred to the site plan, and showed a picture of a pre-fabricated pavilion that is representative of the construction. They estimated the project, if approved, would be completed by the end of 2025. The Board asked some specific questions about the plans regarding water flows, accessibility issues, how the building is going to be utilized, and the landscaping. Leandra DeFeo, President of the Friends of Patton Homestead described events at the Homestead and how the site has been utilized and is likely to be utilized. Chair Crouch noted that the Homestead hosts many veterans events and would encourage the site to provide handicap accessible access to the property so all veterans may participate. Ms. DeFeo noted they have a tight budget, and there is not a lighting plan yet. The plan includes electricity to the pavilion, and hopefully they will be able to add lighting in the future, with the understanding that any exterior lighting would need to be approved by the Planning Board. Chair Crouch stated the application was properly noticed, and the application was in good stead. She asked the architectural team to consider the comments from the Board.

Vote: *The Board voted unanimously to approve the site plan review application for the proposed open air wood frame pavilion at the Patton Homestead property at 650 Asbury Street.*

3. DISCUSSION of COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN & IMPLEMENTATION of EOHLC EMERGENCY MBTA COMMUNITIES REGULATIONS

Chair Crouch reported the Select Board voted to proceed with interim compliance for 3A Zoning. In her opinion, the Town is in a stronger position if they proceed with interim compliance and proceed to a vote. If it is voted down, then it will get the attention of the State. She recommends advising the Select Board to file the most complete and comprehensive response on the form to the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) and then also attend the State public hearing on February 21st. She believed it was incumbent on the Town to proceed on both tracks and let the data convince the EOHLC to modify the draft regulations to account for unique conditions in Hamilton and other similarly situated communities. She noted a number of conditions and issues that severely restrict the amount of new housing that can be built in Hamilton. As an example, the Town of Lincoln successfully argued to EOHLC that housing on a military base in Lincoln should not count towards their number of households because the Town lacked jurisdiction to regulate those units. The Board discussed the difficulties of adding so much housing downtown, such as difficulty crossing the train tracks in an emergency situation, and installing adequate sewage facilities. Discussed shifted to the original Town vote to fund the Utile consultants, and how the consultants should be used going forward, in terms of the Master Plan, Form-based Code, and the 3A regulations. J.Poore reiterated the Planning Board has a voice, and power, and although they can't change state law, they can use it to sculpt their own bylaws. He noted Form-based Code is the long term vision for the town. J.Poore referenced the slide deck on form-based code by E.Dahlquist that was

circulated several weeks ago, and asked if anyone had questions about it in terms of how the documents work, what kind of documents they will be getting from Utile and how to evaluate them for effectiveness. He also questioned if the Board agreed with the scope, the focus, the vision, and the metrics of what Utile has done so far. He asked if there are initial questions about the mechanics of the code first, and then to discuss the content. The Board referred to a map of downtown to discuss the current and potential zoning plus form-based code. The Board discussed where Form-based Code might apply and looked at various schematics of specific downtown blocks. They discussed specific corners and intersections that could be improved by having form-based code in place in the event that the parcel gets redeveloped. J.Poore spoke on how Form-based Code provides a long range vision for the Town and how it can maintain and enhance the scenic nature of Bay Road.

In response to a question regarding the interaction of 3A and Form-based Code, J.Poore clarified form-based code cannot negate the density requirements of 3A, but it can ensure future development conforms to the shape and form of the Town. When Utile completes the work, there will be visual map renderings to show specifically what developments would look like with form-based code.

W.Wheaton pointed out there is sufficient available land to zone for the required 3A units in the downtown area, and the density is not appreciably different from what is existing; the difficulty is in providing for the total number of required units.

4. DISCUSSION of PUBLIC HEARING DATE FOR ZONING BYLAW AMENDMENTS:

Chair Crouch explained the Select Board has all five memorandums containing the proposed zoning bylaw amendments, and they are reviewing the amendments as requested by the Planning Board. Once they are remanded back to the Planning Board, the Planning Board can initiate the public hearing process pursuant to Chapter 48 Section 5.

M.Connors noted the Town could post the required notices in the new Hamilton-Wenham News weekly newspaper. Discussion continued regarding the timeline and dates for possible meetings.

OTHER ITEMS:

Master Plan Implementation: Chair Crouch stated the Master Plan was approved on August 6th, and now it appears the consultant gave the Town a document that is not straightforward to edit, and this has caused problems in getting it completed. She recommended the Town hire someone to finish the Master Plan, and noted it should not cost “that much”. An email should go to the Town Manager/Select Board to advocate for hiring a graphic designer to create a final version. Chair Crouch will draft the email for the Select Board.

Vote: *The Board voted unanimously to send an email communication to the Select Board suggesting that they find a way to fund a person who can put the Master Plan out for the public on the website.*

Adjournment:

Vote: *The Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at approximately 9:43pm.*

Documents:

[February 4, 2025 Planning Board Agenda](#)

[Draft January 7, 2025 Planning Board Minutes for review/approval](#)

[Patton Pavilion Staff memo, application/notice materials](#)

[Patton Pavilion Site Plan set](#)

[Draft EOHLIC Multi-Family Zoning Requirement for MBTA Communities \(outside link\)](#)

[PB Chair Memo Re: Section 3A Discussion and Action Plan](#)

Respectfully submitted by D. Pierotti, Recording Secretary, 2/9/25.

The minutes were prepared from video.