



Town of Hamilton
Planning Board
Meeting Minutes of July 1, 2025

Pursuant to the Open Meeting Law, MGL Chapter 30A, §§ 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 July 1, 2025 at 7:00 PM. 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 PM. 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 Marnie Crouch called the Planning Board meeting to order at 7:03 PM, identified the meeting was being recorded and those present: J. Poore, E. Dahlquist, P. Norton, B. Herr, M. Crouch. Absent: D. Dale, M. Hamel, J. Austin, W. Wheaton. Others present as noted.*

Agenda:

2. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

a. TREE REMOVAL, SCENIC ROAD – The Hamilton Planning Board will hold a public hearing pursuant to M.G.L. Ch. 15C, on July 1, 2025 at 7 PM at the Hamilton-Wenham Public Library, 14 Union Street, Hamilton. The applicant, The Engineering Corp. (TEC), proposes to remove trees along Bridge Street, a designated scenic road, as part of a public road improvement project. *This application was tabled from the June 3, 2025 Planning Board meeting.*

Tim Olson, Hamilton DPW Director, described the removal of two trees on Bridge Street on the lower Bridge Street area between Bay Road and Miles River Road. The project would improve drainage and flooding issues by installing subsurface drainage, catch basins, and drain pipe. Repaving and drainage improvements were planned along Miles River Road as well. T. Olson noted that one tree near the intersection of Bridge Street and Miles River Road was removed prior to winter as it posed a safety risk during the winter season. T. Olson added that a resident from 14 Bridge Street claimed that three pear trees in front of their home have leaf spot disease. Pending an evaluation by a professional arborist, T. Olson asked for approval from the Planning Board to remove these trees if necessary. Chair Crouch requested that the DPW come before the Board for approval within 4-6 weeks of future tree removals for safety concerns. T. Olson mentioned that the DPW had been given money to replant new trees along the scenic roads.

J. Poore raised a concern about drainage from the ongoing Bridge Street development crossing over the surface of Miles River Road. T. Olson replied that the DPW and TEC would do what they could to force the water to the sides of the roadway or use catch basins while working within the right of way. P. Norton asked whether the project had been presented before the Conservation Commission. Jason Brzezowski of TEC confirmed that the Conservation Commission requested that the applicants come before the Planning Board to approve the tree removal before proceeding with their project. J. Brzezowski noted that all the proposed work would take place outside of the wetland boundaries and within the right of way to avoid pursuing any permanent easements on private property.

J. Poore asked if there were any monitoring provisions for the stormwater structure to check that it is not overrun. T. Olson confirmed that the structure would be monitored annually and maintained or cleaned as needed.

Vote: *P. Norton made a motion to approve the Bridge Street tree removal application. J. Poore seconded the motion. The Planning Board voted unanimously by roll call to approve the application.*

1. REVIEW AND VOTE ON DRAFT MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

April 8, 2025 (revised), April 29, 2025 (revised), May 13, 2025, May 20, 2025, June 3, 2025

Vote: *The Planning Board voted unanimously by roll call to approve the minutes of April 8, 2025.*

The minutes of May 20, 2025 were held since they were not included in the meeting materials.

The minutes of April 29, 2025, May 13, 2025, and June 3, 2025 were held pending minor edits as noted.

3. OTHER BUSINESS:

a. Discussion of July 14, 2025 Special Town Meeting

There was discussion about the Planning Board's role in the Special Town Meeting, including helping the public to understand the role of form-based code in managing 3A. There was consensus for the Town Council to address technical questions, including legal permutations; the Planning Board to address form-based code planning issues; and Utile to address 3A compliance issues.

There was some discussion regarding the use of language when communicating at the Special Town Meeting and with the public about the form-based code. P. Norton raised the concern that using words like "protect" to describe the form-based code's effect on the town was too subjective. J. Poore noted that referring to numbers and metrics would be more effective for educating the public on form-based code. He provided the example that if a bigger building is less desirable than a smaller building, then there is more protection under the form-based code than there is under the current zoning.

There was some discussion about the updated information flow chart designed by E. Dahlquist. Chair Crouch read aloud an email from D. Dale (not present) expressing a few disagreements with the flow chart, including that Hamilton is not guaranteed state funding whether it is compliant or non-compliant with 3A, that the Planning Board should demonstrate how the form-based code protects Hamilton and its residents, and that much of the information in the flow chart is speculative. Some Board members, including Chair Crouch and E. Dahlquist, were supportive of having a handout of the flow chart at the Special Town Meeting to provide a breakdown of the form-based code for residents as they considered their vote, while other Board members, including B. Herr and P. Norton, were unsupportive of a handout as it could prompt distraction and speculative questions during the meeting. It was noted that William Bowler, the town moderator, would have the final say regarding the materials included in the meeting.

A member of the public on Zoom – who did not identify themselves – asked if the form-based code provided protection for the Asbury section of town. E. Dahlquist replied that there were no form-based code applications on Asbury Street, but the metric was changed to limit the size and square footage of buildings in that area. J. Poore noted that the answer to that question depended on the definition of "protection," and clarified that the form-based code limits the size of buildings, parking, and the relationship of buildings to one another, which some people may consider protections.

There were two additional questions from the public, including an inquiry about whether Hamilton would fall out of compliance with affordable housing metrics if 3A units were to replace Harborlight Homes' development. The other question concerned whether form-based code was really a protection, and whether there was proof that it would be upheld in a 3A zone. E. Dahlquist replied that the Town of Hamilton dictates how the form-based code is implemented. Chair Crouch added that 3A is a zoning requirement, not a building requirement, so 3A only provides for the potential of development.

4. ADJOURNMENT:

Vote: The Planning Board voted unanimously by roll call to adjourn at approximately 8:10 pm.

Documents:

- [Meeting Agenda](#)
- [April 8, 2025 Draft Minutes for Review/Approval](#)
- [April 29, 2025 Joint Meeting with Select Board Draft Minutes for Review/Approval](#)
- [May 13, 2025 Draft Minutes for Review/Approval](#)
- [June 3, 2025 Draft Minutes for Review/Approval](#)
- [Scenic Road Hearing \(Bridge Street\) staff memo and associated materials](#)
- [Scenic Road Hearing applicant narrative](#)
- [Scenic Road Hearing Plans](#)
- [Images of relevant area of Bridge Street](#)

Respectfully submitted by A. Brennan, 7/25.

The minutes were prepared from video.