



Town of Hamilton
Planning Board
Meeting Minutes of June 17, 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 June 17, 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; Associates Matt Hamel, 2026, & Jeff Austin, 2027.

Call to order: *With a quorum present, Chair Crouch called the Planning Board meeting to order at 7:07 PM, identified the meeting was being recorded and those present:* M. Crouch, J. Poore, E. Dahlquist, P. Norton, M. Hamel, B. Herr, J. Austin, W. Wheaton. *Not present:* D. Dale. Others present: Mark Connors, Director of Planning.

Agenda:

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

a. April 8, 2025

b. April 29, 2025

There were a number of comments and revisions to the April 8 minutes, comments will be sent to M.Connors and a revised version will be circulated. Minor edits to April 29 will also be incorporated and recirculated.

2. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

3. LAND USE APPLICATIONS:

a. FORM A / APPROVAL NOT REQUIRED (ANR) REQUEST – In accordance with M.G.L. c. 41, § 81, the owners/applicants, Welch & Lamson, Inc. & Three Two Three Willow Realty Trust, represented by Richard Kallman, Esq., request the Planning Board's endorsement of a plan to allow for a lot boundary adjustment between 305 Willow Street (Assessor's Map 55, Lot 237) and 323 Willow Street (Assessor's Map 55, Lot 237A). The parcels are zoned Business.

R.Kallman began by explaining this is an ANR and he represented both properties; 305 Willow Street, the Welch & Lamson oil business, and 323 Willow Street, which is owned by the same family through a trust. The family has been in business in Hamilton for about 75 years. The oil business is being sold to another oil business in the area. During the process of selling, they discovered the property line runs through a building at 323 Willow Street. This ANR will create a new boundary line to run between the buildings, so the building at 323 Willow Street will be entirely on that parcel. There is also a small strip of formerly MBTA property that will transfer over to 305 Willow Street; this is all within the business zone. The Building Commissioner, Richard Maloney, has reviewed/approved the plan.

R.Kallman emphasized the use of the property was not changing. The use would become existing non-conforming under the new zoning that it not in effect yet, and would remain so as long as the use did not change. The Board did not see any issue with the application given that there is no change of use (oil business)

Vote: *The Board voted unanimously by roll call to approve the A&R application based on the representations of Attorney Coleman.*

a. ZONING BYLAW AMENDMENTS - The Planning Board will conduct a public hearing pursuant to M.G.L. ch. 40A, § 5, for consideration of proposed amendments to the Hamilton Zoning Bylaw. A description of the proposed zoning bylaw amendment under consideration can be found on the posted May 20, 2025 Zoning Bylaw Planning Board Public Hearing Notice. The full text of the proposed zoning bylaw amendments may be reviewed at the Town Clerk's Office, located at the Patton Homestead, 650 Asbury Street in Hamilton, during regular business hours, or by visiting the Hamilton Planning Board webpage at <https://www.hamiltonma.gov/government/planning-board/> This public hearing was continued from the Planning Board's May 20, 2025 and June 3, 2025 meetings.

- Chair Crouch noted at the last meeting the Board requested edits to the draft zoning bylaw amendments, and the edits were just received the previous afternoon, so the Board has had very little time to review them. The zoning is being separated into two articles, and though they have been separated, it is not clear to her how they work together. She was confused about the status of the business district according to the appendices, and had many comments overall. She believed Hamilton residents would be confused by the zoning amendments.

- Town Counsel Robin Stein explained the direction she had, and the approach she took. She reviewed with multiple articles on the warrant, the one that goes first, if it passes, is effective. Once the article is in place, then the second article is adding to, or amending the first article; that's the concept. The first article is going to be anything that requires a majority vote, allowing and regulating multifamily housing, and the things that go along with both the new overlay and the 3 districts contributing to 3A compliance, the downtown residential Willow Street district and the Bay Road district. The other 2 districts will be in a separate article, because they are "as-of-right" and that article requires a 2/3 vote. The two documents together represent the intent of the town. The Board asked that this explanation be written up and included in the warrant.
- Appendix A/article 1 are intended to create compliance with 3A MBTA Zoning. If that passes, the town is in compliance. But if article 2/appendix B does not pass, those standards would not apply. If article 1 fails, then article 2 would have to be passed over, as it is dependent on the framework in article 1. As long as a majority of the Planning Board voted to recommend the article, it can be brought back to Town Meeting again, and is not subject to the two-year ban.
- The suggestion was made to reconfigure the zoning to separate the form-based code from the 3A overlay districts instead of the current proposal, with the rationale it would be easier to explain to the public and simpler conceptually. However, concerns were raised the process was too far along at this point to start over with a different configuration, and potentially passing 3A districts without sufficient protection from the form-based code would ultimately be detrimental to the town.
- Attorney Stein continued to review the edits and revisions she made to the articles, explaining the rationale for the various changes. The question was asked what if elements of the zoning are struck by the EOHLC, and Attorney Stein responded amendments would have to come back to town meeting, but the state would provide a grace period. If they strike something, such as a sunset clause, which does not affect the zoning in essence, it would just be removed. Another question was raised regarding whether 3A could supersede a condo development agreement. Attorney Stein clarified 3A is zoning, and it represents opportunity, it does not supersede existing private property agreements on a site, or existing uses.
- The Board proposed to reduce the maximum building footprint of 8,000 square feet down to 4,000 square feet in order to reduce the scale of potential buildings, to something more like attached row houses, achieving the same density but in multiple smaller buildings. The Board also wanted to add a requirement with respect to open space, that is not the building or vehicular parking space.

Vote: *The Board voted unanimously by roll call to approve the addition of open space, subject to what M.Littel finds in the model, and the change to 4,000 square feet.*

- The remaining topic discussed was the section on existing nonconformities.

Vote: *The Board voted unanimously by roll call to adopt the changes to the nonconformity section as recommended by Attorney Stein.*

- There was a question submitted from the public whether Harborlight could flip their planned development of 45 units of affordable housing in the pending 3A zone to market rate housing with more units. The Board generally agreed this was unlikely, but also there is no way to speak to what Harborlight could choose to do, other than that their mission is to build affordable housing, not market rate units.

Vote: *The Board voted unanimously by roll call to close the public hearing.*

- There will be a joint meeting between the Select Board and Planning Board on June 24, 2025. The warrant must be posted by June 30, 2025 for the July 14 Town Meeting.
- Chair Crouch stated the most important thing is to have a narrative to explain the mechanics of the zoning and how the two warrant articles work together. Attorney Stein will draft the narrative to send to the Planning Board to further explain the policy intent. She also clarified that the warrant is the Select Board's and they ultimately decide what content is included. Attorney Stein also stated the vote the Board takes on the articles is strictly to recommend or not recommend that Town Meeting adopt the zoning. The first vote the Board takes on the zoning articles is the vote that counts in terms of whether the zoning could be brought back in less than two years in the event the vote fails.

B. Herr made a motion to adjourn the meeting. J. Poore seconded the motion.

Vote: *The Planning Board voted unanimously by roll call to adjourn at approximately 9:40PM.*

Documents:

- [Meeting Agenda](#)
- [April 8, 2025 Draft Minutes for Review/Approval](#)
- [April 29, 2025 Draft Minutes for Review/Approval](#)
- [ANR Application – 305-323 Willow Street](#)
- [ANR Plan – 305-323 Willow Street](#)

Respectfully submitted by D. Pierotti, Recording Secretary, 7/6/25. The minutes were prepared from video.