

# TOWN OF LUNENBURG

## Office of the Planning Board

Matthew Brenner *Chair*  
Timothy Willsmer *Vice Chair*  
Amanda Reid *Clerk*  
Matthew Allison *Member*  
Glenn McLeod *Member*



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Christopher Reilly – Land Use Director  
Logan O'Connell – Admin Asst.

### MINUTES

### 2025-02-10

**MEETING POSTED:** [Yes](#)

**ADDRESS:** Town Hall – 17 Main St, Lunenburg, MA 01462

**TIME:** 6:00 P.M.

**PRESENT:** Matthew Brenner (Chair), Timothy Willsmer (Vice Chair), Amanda Reid (Clerk),  
Matthew Allison, Glenn McLeod

**ABSENT:** None

### CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE

**Matthew Brenner** called the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M. The pledge of allegiance was led by **Matthew Allison**.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

None at this time.

### CHAIR / DIRECTOR'S REPORT<sup>i</sup>

Per **C. Reilly**, Katie Paight from the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) will join remotely to answer questions about state-mandated Floodplain Map updates.

### ANRs (Approval Not Required)

#### 215 Sunset Ln<sup>ii</sup>

**Greg Roy** (Dillis and Roy) presented for applicants David & Brenda Pajari. Proposed Land Swap of ~900 sqft piece with neighbor at 205 Sunset Ln. Total land areas are unchanged. Properties are in the outlying zoning district, both meet 80,000 sqft lot size requirement & have prerequisite frontage. No new building lots being created. Purpose is to provide easier lot access to 215 Sunset Ln—previously attempted through an easement, denied by Zoning Determination from Building Commissioner.

No buildings currently on 215 parcel, one is proposed. Land swap would add ~50 ft. Of frontage to 215 Sunset Ln while leaving enough for 205 Sunset Ln.

**M. Allison** and **G. Roy** noted a previous ANR application on this property -- a previous engineer tried to split the lot via a Common Driveway (before the Special Permit process was used), which wasn't granted.

**T. Willsmer moved to endorse ANR for 215 Sunset Ln.**

**A. Reid seconded.**

**Voice vote, passed unanimously.**

### 171 Arbor St<sup>iii</sup>

**Brian Marchetti (McCarty Engineering)** presented for applicants PSG Realty 393-435, LLC & Raudonat Family Revocable Trust. This ANR is needed for lot line approval & beginning construction. A planned follow-up ANR relies on the book and page info from this one's recording at the the Registry of Deeds.

Property received previous permits (Stormwater Permit<sup>iv</sup>, Conservation approval, Zoning Special Permit for relief from lot width through the building, Special Permit for Common Driveway<sup>v</sup>).

Parcel A (17,000 sqft piece on back side of property) being transferred to John Raudonat in exchange for Parcel B (1500 sqft "sliver" providing frontage required for the Common Driveway Special Permit).

**T. Willsmer moved to endorse ANR for 171 Arbor St.**

**A. Reid seconded.**

**Voice vote, passed unanimously.**

## ZONING WORKSHOP

### Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

**C. Reilly** explained – the State revised their guidance extensively late last week; notably impeding local powers. Previous bylaw draft included Special Permit requirement for a second ADU & certain lot line setback requirements, both now removed to reflect State updates.

**G. McLeod** confirmed with C. Reilly – this law went into effect February 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Town must apply it to current ADU applications. Opined it was an example of local communities' lack of control over zoning changes, advocated clear messaging that these aren't voluntary / community-driven bylaw amendments due to the State's mandated changes.

**C. Reilly** explained background – previously, the Zoning Board of Appeals issued Special Permits to add an Accessory Dwelling Unit onto existing single-family homes. State has removed this process as part of highly aggressive housing production strategy, making it by-right.

### Floodplain Map Updates

**C. Reilly** introduced **Katie Paight**, a Floodplain Management specialist from the DCR's Flood Hazard Management program.

FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) offers flood insurance to anyone in participating communities, which must adopt & enforce regulations for areas on their respective Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) to qualify for membership. Lunenburg is within the Nashua River watershed, whose FIRM maps are being updated by FEMA (effective July 2025). Communities like Lunenburg are voluntary NFIP members. Lunenburg joined in 1982 (the last time its floodplain map was updated).

For the Town to remain in the program, it must (1) adopt an effective map by July 2025 and (2) adopt the "minimum standards" of the program, outlined in the provided model bylaw. Although these "minimum standards" have been part of the Federal code since the late 80s, FEMA wants them adopted locally for greater visibility.

(Out of order): If it chooses not to, Lunenburg may be removed from program: existing NFIP flood insurance policies wouldn't be renewable & new policies couldn't be made. The choice to remove an individual community from NFIP is made by FEMA. Private flood insurance policies exist but are generally more expensive and lack certain protections like fixed rates.

**G. McLeod** asked about notifying affected residents. Per **K. Paight**, the "local rules and regulations" Lunenburg agreed to adopt by joining NFIP are spread across (1) the State Building Code, (2) the Wetlands Protection Act, and (3) a small remainder in local Floodplain bylaws. When adopting a new FIRM map, the list of properties in or outside of a floodplain may change.

- If someone is newly mapped into the floodplain, it's the community's responsibility to notify them.
- If someone is purchasing a property with federally backed assistance in the floodplain (i.e. mortgage, loan, disaster resistance) it is the lender's responsibility to notify them that the property *must* have flood insurance for the life of that assistance.

**C. Reilly** asked about notable map differences. K. Paight hadn't directly compared 2025 and 1982 maps, but noted the new map's higher accuracy, user-friendliness, & interactivity. Old map was never digitized, isn't available on MassMapper or national flood hazard layer--recommended checking with local Building Commissioner or Conservation Official to see floodplains on old map. Updated map is partially accessible (via FEMA Flood Map CHanges Viewer) but won't be widely published until July.

**C. Reilly** will write draft Zoning Amendment based on the model bylaw & map info, review it with K. Paight to make sure it conforms with DCR, have it available for Board in approx. 2 weeks.

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The Board discussed the Warrant Article submission process. Per **C. Reilly**, the *placeholder language* required by February 1<sup>st</sup> was submitted on-time. The warrant article's *finalized language* (printed in the warrant for Town Meeting) is due by March 17<sup>th</sup>. The "golden rule" with *placeholder language* is to "stay within the four corners" of the intent of the language, which is difficult with the State's moving targets.

**M. Brenner** listed frustrating procedural obstacles: Interim Town Manager set an unusually early deadline for Town Bodies' Warrant Article submissions to ease the new Town Manager's transition in, but it put volunteer Boards in a precarious position. Board work on *local* concerns is impeded by influx State & Federal mandates requiring bylaw changes. Opined such mandates should be constructed at the Federal level to avoid strain on municipalities--"why should we have a hand in it if we don't *actually* have a hand in it?"

## PUBLIC HEARINGS

### 494 Electric Ave – Site Plan Approval (SPA), Stormwater Management Permit (SMP)

(cont. from 2025-01-27)

**Chris Anderson** (Hannigan Engineering) presented for D&A Lunenburg, LLC. Applicant intends to construct a new parking lot to service existing restaurant facility / modify existing parking in front of the structure, & construct an additional retail space on the property. Noted concerns from abutters & various Town Departments, reviewed changes in response:

- Stormwater Runoff – Existing accessory structure had a gutter overflowing onto adjacent properties, plan to capture and redirect into Stormwater system. Received Peer Review from GEI<sup>vi</sup>, satisfied with all stormwater and hydrology calculations.

- Parking – pulled back parking immediately against Pierce Ave to meet setback requirements. No vehicles directly facing abutting properties across Pierce Ave. Maintaining solid wall fence and evergreen plantings along this side of property. Reviewed access points into the Parking Lot, added dividers to designate traffic lanes based on C. Reilly’s previous feedback, added striping / landscape barriers for designated pedestrian travel path.
- Misc – Moved dumpster pad to opposite side of Pierce Ave to shield appropriately / protect from view.

Noted Conservation Commission’s issuance of Order of Conditions relative to the Stormwater Basin.

Fire Dept had concerns about turning radius: Hannigan Eng. provided data for a vehicle *larger* than Lunenburg’s largest truck. **C. Anderson** explained it encompassed the turning radius of smaller vehicle but offered more data if requested by the Board.

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**G. McLeod** noted abutter concerns of traffic to property going through neighborhoods / own concerns about pedestrian endangerment from car queues forming on Electric Ave (at property’s exit & before the turn onto Pierce Ave towards the entrance). C. Anderson said traffic from side roads was minimal, & the proposed modifications would provide well-defined traffic control features currently lacking at Pierce Ave (proper turning radii, defined travel path, etc). Suggested adding pedestrian crossing signs for safety concerns. **G. McLeod & A. Reid** suggested moving entrance from Pierce Ave to Electric Ave to reduce future traffic at crosswalk.

(Out of order): **C. Anderson** confirmed for M. Brenner – application entails no changes to the *capacity* of Il Forno, only available parking. Plan includes inter-building canopy for patrons and a patio previously removed by Building Dept request, no other changes to buildings.

**M. Brenner** asked C. Anderson the intent of separating parking for restaurant & the retail site. Intent was to keep the two business elements separate / avoid connecting directly to Electric Ave since it’s consistently busy. Separate design also lets customers see & turn into other parking lot if first lot is full, rather than missing it and driving away. Trying to avoid curb cuts along Electric Ave.

**C. Reilly** noted using a dedicated right-hand “slip lane” for traffic is best practice, like at Lunenburg CVS. Although the CVS generates more traffic than the restaurant currently, **M. Allison** expected an application to increase business capacity in the future, which would increase traffic. **A. Reid** was frustrated about this, noting applicants claimed to have enough parking when the secondary building was previously permitted. (Out of order): **C. Reilly** noted Graves Engineering Inc (GEI) isn’t a “full-house” peer review service – it’s beneficial to have multiple options available (e.g. traffic-specific experts) for an application’s unique concerns.

**G. McLeod** asked about moving the entrance location closer to the proposed retail building. Per **C. Anderson**, they want it as far as possible from Pierce Ave to give drivers time for decision-making.

Discussion turned to the ownership status of Pierce Ave. **M. Allison** recommended deferring the application until Town Counsel returns a determination and emphasized that options being discussed tonight could be nullified by that determination’s results, potentially wasting time. **M. Brenner** will discuss with Town Counsel at his office hours on Feb 11th.

**M. Allison** noted the size of the retail component qualifies it as a shopping center under Town bylaw, which requires a traffic analysis. **M. Brenner** offered to schedule a publicly available site visit to actively deliberate

on-site rather than working off memory. Board and Applicant both interested. (Scheduled at end of meeting).

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**M. Brenner** invited public comment.

**Dave MacDonald (155 Island Rd)** – Recommend inviting Bill Bernard (Department of Public Works) to site visit due to his engineering background. Thanked Board for efforts, emphasized desire to streamline. **G. McLeod** suggested inviting Police and Fire as well / explaining why their input is wanted.

**Bob Pease (11 Wintergreen Ct)** – Town needs to support businesses better. Questioned merit of a traffic study since application's proposals don't directly cause a traffic increase. On pedestrian safety, agreed with pursuing crosswalk signage & turning lane options. The Board needs to examine how it can work within its regulations to help businesses. **M. Allison** replied – the Board's first stakeholder is residents. Noted high turnout of concerned abutters when this development started. Determination of Pierce Ave's ownership would impact many people who aren't present tonight, needs to be resolved before anything else.

**Atty. Jeff Avini** on behalf of applicant – please relay any new info from Town Counsel on Pierce Ave. We can't *deny* anybody access: Pierce Ave shows on a plan, [residents] have the right to use it. Our title abstractor reached out directly to Town Counsel.

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**T. Willsmer moved to continue the public hearing for 494 Electric Ave to 2025-02-24 at 6:05 P.M.**

**A. Reid seconded.**

**Voice vote, passed unanimously.**

After discussing scheduling options, the **Board scheduled a site visit for 2025-02-19 at 5:00 P.M.**

### 213 Electric Ave – SMP<sup>vii</sup>

**A. Reid** read the Public Hearing Notice at 8:09 P.M.

**Daniel Sheehan** (Haley Ward) presented on behalf of applicant Red Bird Construction, Inc. Project is construction of 5 multi-family dwelling units (duplexes) with driveways and associated Stormwater Management features. Post-construction will mostly be vegetative landscape, grass. Driveways generally pitched towards separate rain gardens, filter strip along side and clay dams proposed. Has also submitted Notices of Intent for 213 and 221 Electric Ave to Conservation Commission. Only outstanding item from GEI's Peer Review<sup>viii</sup> is test pits.

**C. Reilly** asked how soon test pits could be completed. **D. Sheehan** expected the next couple weeks, but wanted to wait for Conservation Commission's site walk / avoid presenting temporarily disturbed land.

**G. McLeod** clarified that this Peer Review was preemptively sought by applicant. Prefers applicants *electing* to spend their own money vs. *needing* to for Board requirements.

**M. Allison** noted that since certain drainage components were shared, a maintenance agreement between homeowners (to be recorded on the deed) would be needed. In **C. Reilly's** experience, the Board typically reviews the Homeowners Agreement for shared maintenance.

**T. Willsmer moved to continue the public hearing for 213 Electric Ave to 2025-03-10 at 6:05 P.M.**

**A. Reid seconded.**

**Voice vote, passed unanimously.**

## DECISIONS

The Board reviewed decisions for **560 Goodrich St** – Special Permit (SP), SMP, and **255 Sunny Hill Rd** – (SMP), and discussed Standard Conditions (SCs). Discussion below is re-ordered for clarity.

SMP decisions missing a requirement to record a shared maintenance agreement on the deed, although this was captured by a special condition in 560 Goodrich St's Common Driveway Special Permit decision.

**M. Allison** clarified – although 560 Goodrich has a shared SMP component, maintenance requirements are deed-recorded in unshared SMP systems as well to prevent maintenance lapses (i.e. informing the property's new owner after a sale).

**C. Reilly** noted recently discovered contradictions between certain deeds and Approval Not Required plans at the Registry of Deeds. Decisions must be recorded at the Registry of Deeds, so they'd ideally be "caught" by any property's potential buyer during its Title Exam.

**M. Allison** questioned the requirement for full Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance in the SCs, since these are private domiciles. **C. Reilly** will draft updated sets of SCs for (1) Site Plan Approval, (2) Stormwater Management Permits, and (3) Common Driveway Special Permits for the Board to review. The Board's previous understanding was that the SCs for SMPs *included* deed-recorded maintenance requirements. **C. Reilly** clarified these SCs were from Interim Land Use Director Richard Harris's decisions and may differ from those used by longtime Land Use Director Adam Burney.

**M. Allison** noted that the Town had Stormwater Regulations since 2008 but hadn't issued a Stormwater Management Permit until 2015, emphasized that standards need to be actively maintained and documented over time to be useful.

The Board deferred endorsement of the decisions, pending revisions to reflect the provision for deed-recorded maintenance requirements.

## BOARD DISCUSSIONS

### Master Plan Steering Committee (MPSC) Composition

Per **T. Willsmer** – continued issues with quorum. Planning to poll members of the board for alternative weekdays to meet.

**M. Allison** asked if further reductions to help quorum were possible. **T. Willsmer** received an email blaming quorum issues on other departments' absent representatives after last meeting, but he'd want more info before cutting those positions.

**M. Allison** noted the 6-month span since previous Chair Joeci Gilchrest had stepped down (just before the group's planned summer hiatus). Per **M. Brenner**, when the Chair stepped down all surveys were performed except the most recent, which was being planned. Subsequent quorum issues affected its quality.

For next meeting, **M. Brenner** asked T. Willsmer to (1) list which groups had and hadn't been attending (including verifying with them) and (2) if possible, get a concrete recommendation from the MPSC itself about which positions to cut. Prefers having MPSC's input instead of making top-down membership changes, but will fall back to Board intervention if needed.

**M. Allison** asked about the remaining contract with the Master Plan consultants (OverUnder, Inc). Per **C. Reilly** there's approx. \$20,000 left at around \$2,000 per meeting. The contract's original expiry date has already passed, but the consultants are continuing to work under that agreement. Full draft of the Master Plan's implementation chapter exists. Clarified that the Board is the only body that votes on adopting the Master Plan / making it "official" to the State.

## ABUTTING COMMUNITY NOTICES

Three notices from Fitchburg Planning Board, none of local concern.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Master Plan Steering Committee

Discussed previously under "Board Discussions".

### Open Space Committee

Per **G. McLeod** – meeting 2025-02-12 on Right of First Refusal at 100 Townsend Harbor Rd.

### Municipal Bldg. Design Committee

Per **M. Allison** – highly detailed, in-depth, multi-disciplinary presentation made to Select Board on Tuesday, 2025-02-04. Current Town Hall becomes a meeting space, Ritter Memorial Building is occupied by various programs from the School Dept, and the "Annex" (small addition to Ritter Memorial Library) is occupied by PACC. Plans included revisions from various department heads. Renovations' subtotal was approximately \$22m (not including remediation). Not well received on Facebook.

### Capital Planning Committee

Per **M. Brenner** – met last week before Interim Town Manager left. Some of the voting was based on numbers that ended up being inaccurate (a continuing frustration). Have had multiple cases of received estimates being off by a factor of 100% or more—some resolved with subsequent reprioritization. Action on 5-year plan upcoming after giving the new Town Manager some time to acclimate.

### Economic Development Committee

Per **G. McLeod** – have not met since last meeting.

### Storm Water Task Force

Per **T. Willsmer** – next meeting is Thursday, 2025-02-20.

### Montachusett Regional Planning Commission

Per **A. Reid** – some discussion about Trump administration's halts to federal funding. Presentation by Senator Jamie Eldridge on closure of Nashoba Valley Medical Center pending next month. New route for MART (due to Nashoba closure), free rides to Emerson hospital from Ayer, Shirley or Harvard.

### Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee

Per **A. Reid** – meeting on Wednesday, 2025-02-12.

## MINUTES APPROVAL

The Board reviewed and approved minutes for 2024-12-09, 2025-02-13, and 2025-01-27.

## MEETING SCHEDULE

Upcoming meetings are **02-24** and **03-10** at 6:00 P.M.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

None at this time.

## BOARD COMMENT / CONCERNS

**G. McLeod** found the State's recent actions unresponsive to the electorate & out of touch with municipal financial constraints. Cited Legislature's "cookie cutter" approach with items like MBTA Communities Act / ADU amendments, and resistance to 2024's Ballot's Question 1 (auditing the legislature) despite an overwhelming yes vote. Wants more State support to avoid implementation burden of "unfunded mandates". **C. Reilly** noted experience in two communities that passed building moratoriums as last resort. **G. McLeod** noted representative Margaret Scarsdale's upcoming office hours on 02-18 at the Lunenburg Adult Activity Center.

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**A. Reid** thanked Annie Aubrey (Executive Assistant to Town Manager) for handling the Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MMPO) caucus this week.

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**M. Allison** criticized the unusually short deadline for the Board to submit warrant articles' preliminary language. Worried about ability of final language to stay "within the four corners" of the preliminary language's intent since the State changed certain guidance (ADUs) *after* the Board's submission.

## ADJOURNMENT

**A. Reid** moved to adjourn. **M. Brenner** seconded.

Voice vote, passed unanimously. Adjourned 9:19 P.M.

Minutes by Logan O'Connell, Admin Asst.

## DOCUMENTS REFERENCED

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- <sup>i</sup> 2025-02-10 Staff Report
- <sup>ii</sup> 2024-12-11 – Plan of Land 205 & 215 Sunset Lane
- <sup>iii</sup> 2024-12-01 Plan of Land in Lunenburg, Mass Prepared for PSG Realty 393-435, LLC
- <sup>iv</sup> See record [PBSW-24-7](#) on OpenGov.
- <sup>v</sup> See record [PBSP-24-3](#) on OpenGov.
- <sup>vi</sup> 2025-02-10 494 Electric Avenue Site Plan Review
- <sup>vii</sup> 2024-12-12 Definitive Site Plan for Electric Avenue in Lunenburg, Massachusetts. See record [PBSW-24-9](#) on OpenGov.
- <sup>viii</sup> 2025-02-06 213 Electric Avenue Stormwater Management Review