



PLANNING BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, January 14, 2025 at 6:00 PM

Town Hall - 41 South Main Street Randolph, MA 02368

MINUTES

Pursuant to the temporary provisions pertaining to the Open Meeting Law, public bodies may continue holding meetings remotely without a quorum of the public body physically present at a meeting location until March 31, 2025. The public is invited to participate in the meeting in person, via telephone or computer.

A. Call to Order - Roll Call

Chairman Plizga called the meeting to order at 6:00pm

PRESENT

Alexandra Alexopoulos

Araba Adjei-Koranteng

Tony Plizga

Peter Taveira - joined the meeting at 6:02pm

ABSENT

Lou Sahlu

B. Chairperson Comments

Chairman Plizga wished everyone a happy new year.

C. Approval of Minutes

1. Minutes of 12/10/2024

The Board approved the minutes of December 10, 2024, as presented.

Motion made by Plizga, Seconded by Adjei-Koranteng to approve the meeting minutes of December 10, 2024, as presented.

Voting Yea: Plizga, Adjei-Koranteng

Voting Abstaining: Alexopoulos

D. Public Speaks

None

E. New Business

1. Board Organization for 2025 - Chairperson & Vice chairperson

The Planning Board voted unanimously for Tony Plizga to remain Chairperson and for Araba Adjei-Koranteng to be Vice Chairperson.

2. EV Charging Stations - working draft of ordinance

At the last meeting, the Board briefly discussed the working draft of the EV Charging Stations zoning ordinance. The Board continued the meeting until they had additional Board members present to review the working draft. The final draft will be forwarded to Town Council and then sent back to the Planning Board for a public hearing.

Chairman Plizga asked the Planning Director, Michelle Tyler to provide an overview of the importance of this zoning ordinance. Mrs. Tyler explained that electric vehicles are becoming more common and the need for EV charging stations is increasing, especially when you look at the Commonwealth's goal to be at net zero emissions by 2050. Recently, new charging stations have gone in around town rather randomly without guidelines impacting parking and traffic circulation. Mrs. Tyler feels it makes sense to have some regulations in place that will allow the Town to manage where these sites are, how the traffic circulates around them, and to address the various types of charging stations: Level 1, 2 and 3. Mrs. Tyler ran the draft language by the Fire Prevention office at Randolph Fire understanding that they are largely impacted by the batteries at these charging stations. Mrs. Tyler feels it is important to address this sooner rather than later, as charging stations are going in even at some municipal buildings. Recently the school put in four charging stations in eight parking spaces with no oversight.

Chairman Plizga would like to go through each section of draft ordinance. Mrs. Tyler stated that she pulled the language in the ordinance from other municipalities and has a presentation ready to go for the public hearing. In bold, are the section titles with the Board discussion below.

A. Definitions

Regarding the *Battery Exchange Station* definition, Member Taveira asked for clarification about the references to the term “*fully automated*.” Mrs. Tyler recommended striking the text from the definition. Member Taveira and Chairman Plizga agreed.

The Board had a brief discussion about hydrogen power. Mrs. Tyler believes anything involving hydrogen power would be heavily regulated by state fire code and would not fall under this ordinance.

B. Applicability

Mrs. Tyler stated that applicability pertains to whether or not they are allowed. Chairman Plizga's interpretation of the language is that residential use is limited to Level 1 and Level 2 charging stations. Mrs. Tyler agreed. Member Adjei-Koranteng sought confirmation that charging stations are allowed in Historic Districts. Mrs. Tyler stated that they cannot be prohibited, but do require review by the Historical Commission for structures 100 years and older.

Mrs. Tyler stated that, in section (4), municipal properties fall under the same guidelines as private entities for meeting ADA regulations.

C. Process for Review

(a) New residential construction.

Mrs. Tyler stated that EV Charging Stations are as of right for new construction, so no other entity besides the Building Commissioner, Electrical Inspector and possibly the Fire Department will review.

(b) Retrofitting residential parcels.

Mrs. Tyler stated that an electrical permit is required. Parcels with three or more dwelling units are considered commercial and require a site plan review by the Planning Board.

(c) New commercial, industrial, mixed-use or other non-residential construction.

Mrs. Tyler stated that any new construction project has some level of review for the location battery charging stations.

(2) Battery exchange station(s). A special permit from the Planning Board is required.

Chairman Plizga stated that if a battery exchange station goes in a special permit is required from the Planning Board along with permitting from Randolph Fire. So it will go through a screening process before it is approved.

(D) Design Criteria

(1) Design should be appropriate for the location and use.

Mrs. Tyler stated that the design criteria is somewhat loose, but pointed out that EV charging stations should not be tucked away where they are not easily accessed, but shouldn't necessarily be in a premium spot closest to the building. There should be a balance. They shall not be in buffer strips and depending on the configurations may required bollards.

(2) Size.

The parking space size should meet the minimum size requirement of nine feet by eighteen feet stalls.

(3) Number.

No minimum number of EV Charging spaces is required, however, no more than ten percent (10%) of the total number of parking spaces may be designated as EV charging stations.

(4) Minimum parking requirements.

An EV charging space may count for one-half (1/2) of a space in the calculation for minimum parking spaces that are required pursuant to other provisions of the zoning ordinance.

(5) Signage.

Each EV charging space shall be posted with signage indicating whether the space is only for EV charging purposes. Mrs. Tyler stated that not all EV charging spaces need to be designated as such. Days and hours of operation shall be included if time is limited or tow-away provisions are to be enforced by the owner. Information identifying voltage and amperage levels or safety information shall be posted.

(6) Accessible Charging Spaces.

Mrs. Tyler stated that there currently there are no regulations – only recommendations - for accessible charging spaces other than the access aisle which must be at least five feet wide. Accessible spots are not exclusive to those with handicap placards. A "use last" sign should be installed directing folks to use the accessible spot last.

Chairman Plizga stated that mobility device accessible EV charging spots shall count as two (2) standard automobile parking spaces.

Member Taveira inquired about large EV vehicles such as campers or 18-wheelers that may need charging and asked if we need language for those types of vehicles. Chairman Plizga doesn't feel we need to give them special consideration.

Member Taveira asked about putting time limits on how long they can charge. Mrs. Tyler stated that they would not impose time limits for spots on private property.

(7) Pedestrian Accessibility.

Mrs. Tyler stated this section relates to pedestrian flow around EV charging stations. Site plan of the parking lot layout will be reviewed and approved to meet accessibility requirements.

(8) Maintenance.

The equipment must be maintained in all respects with a phone number or other contact information posted to report problems with the equipment.

In summary, the Planning Director, Michelle Tyler stated that for residential use (1-2 dwelling units) you will need an electrical permit. All other uses require a site plan review, such as multi-family properties with 3 dwelling units or more, commercial and industrial properties.

Member Adjei-Koranteng, asked if there are any restrictions on having the EV charging stations near a light pole. Mrs. Tyler stated there are not. The Board had a brief discussion about lighting. Member Alexopoulos stated any parking plans that come before them look at lighting plan already, so there is no need for special language related to lighting.

Chairman Plizga would like to remove the language in section (4) where it states that an EV charging space may count as one-half of a space in the calculation of minimum parking and in section (6) where it says mobility device accessible charging spaces count as two standard parking spaces, considering that minimum parking is already addressed in zoning ordinance section 200-22. Chairman Plizga reviewed the minimum parking criteria in section 200-22 and feels it is sufficient. Mrs. Tyler reminded the Board that they are currently in the middle of a zoning recodification and that zoning could change. The Board agreed that the language should be removed.

Motion made by Plizga, Seconded by Adjei-Koranteng to send the draft Electric Vehicle (EV) charging station section 200-33, as amended to be forwarded to Town Council.

Voting Yea: Alexopoulos, Adjei-Koranteng, Plizga, Taveira

F. Staff Report

FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map Changes – Upcoming Zoning Ordinance Update

The Planning Director stated that FEMA has been working on updating the flood insurance maps since about 2020. The new maps were recently approved and become effective in July. In addition to the map changes, the Town is also required to update the zoning ordinance with specific language regarding construction in a flood plain. The recommended draft regulations will go to the Town Council for their review, then back to the Planning Board for approval.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

Since the Board sent their ADU Ordinance recommendation to the Town Council, the State has issued guidance that will result in changes to the ordinance. One of the changes is related to Historic Districts. The Planning Director has sent recommended changes, based on the State's guidance to the Town's Attorney for review that she will review at the Town Council meeting on January 27 prior to a vote. Chairman Plizga asked for a copy to be sent to the Board.

Planned Residential Development (PRD) - Tiny House Development

The Planning Director has a few parties interested in a PRD. For this type of development, the Planning Board will review the plans and make recommendations to Town Council who is the Special Permit granting authority.

Scanlon Drive - Core Invest

The Planning Director is awaiting an update.

300 Pond Street - Flexcon

The project is awaiting stormwater review.

Mill Street Subdivision

The applicant did not follow up and has not gone to court for resolution.

Shaw's Plaza

The Planning Director will attend the ZBA hearing for the Planning Board's appeal to the repaving work at Shaw's Plaza. Mrs. Tyler is awaiting confirmation but believes it will be February 5.

Wilmarth Road - ZBA

Chairman Plizga stated that the ZBA will be holding a meeting for a lot of land on Wilmarth Road. They had subdivided the land and created a non-buildable lot that had about 20,000 square feet with only 60 feet of frontage. ZBA voted to accept the waiver subject to Town Council's approval by an improper motion, so they are reconsidering it.

G. Board Comments

Member Alexopoulos asked Mrs. Tyler the number of electric vehicles on the road in Randolph. Mrs. Tyler replied that she did not have the numbers available, but when she pulled the data in the fall there were 69,000 electric vehicles on the road in the state and 1,600 charging stations (2023 stats). The State's goal is to have 200,000 electric vehicles on the road and 16,000 charging stations by 2025, in order to meet the 2050 net zero emissions goal under the Massachusetts Clean Energy Climate Plan. Mrs. Tyler reminded the Board the numbers are based on the vehicles on the road with EV Plates not hybrid vehicles.

Member Taveira stated the Master Plan Committee will be meeting at the end of the month regarding facilities. Mrs. Tyler stated that she will be asking the Board to vote to get the process for updating the Master Plan underway.

Member Alexandra Alexopoulos thanked the Board for their support and heartfelt condolences with the passing of her husband, (Town Council, President) Billy Alexopoulos.

H. Adjournment

Upcoming Meeting Dates: 1/28/25; 2/11/25; 2/25/25

Meeting adjourned at 7:10pm

Motion made by Adjei-Koranteng, Seconded by Alexopoulos to adjourn the meeting.
Voting Yea: Alexopoulos, Adjei-Koranteng, Plizga, Taveira