



PLANNING BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, August 12, 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. 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 order at 6:01pm.

PRESENT

Planning Board Members

Alexandra Alexopoulos

Araba Adjei-Koranteng

Tony Plizga

Peter Taveira - joined the meeting via Zoom at 6:28pm

Lou Sahlu

Town Council Members

Jesse Gordon

B. Chairperson Comments

None

C. Approval of Minutes

1. Minutes of 7/22/2025

The vote to approve the minutes was held until the next meeting.

D. Town Council Participation

1. A simultaneous meeting of the Randolph Town Council may take place during this meeting if a quorum of that board chooses to attend.

Councilor Jesse Gordon was the lone member of the Town Council to participate in the meeting, which did not constitute a quorum.

E. Old/Unfinished Business

1. Zoning update review

The Planning Director, Michelle Tyler, provided the Planning Board and Town Council members with an overview of the work that has been done to date in coordination with the consultants. Mrs. Tyler provided the members with a copy of the draft zoning update, which included notable recommendations and a spreadsheet that tracked any changes made to the current zoning and then went on to review each of the eleven (11) zoning articles.

Article 1 - Purposes & Authority

Article 1 remained unchanged from its original format.

Article 2 - Definitions

Recommended updates:

1. Eliminate definitions for terms not used in the ordinance
2. Expand definitions that have not previously been clear (e.g. vehicle uses)
3. Categorize definitions that are specific to a use/sub-section/special permit
4. Add definitions and criteria for Townhouses

Article 3 - Establishment of Districts

The Planning Director Michelle Tyler notified GIS of the recent zoning map changes and deletions to districts and requested an update. Mrs. Tyler has been working with the Assessor Janet Teal as well, to ensure that the Zoning districts mirror the Town's GIS; however, updates in the Assessor's Database won't be recognized until January, after the real estate billing cycle is complete. Mrs. Tyler also requested that a layer/theme be added in GIS to identify the Historic District properties on the map.

Councilor Gordon would also like to see a layer/theme added to identify the Crawford Square Redevelopment project properties on the map. Mrs. Tyler will look into adding this update. Councilor Gordon thanked the Planning Board for their work on this project before leaving the meeting.

Further recommended updates:

1. Eliminate Residential 2 Family District (R2FD) as no parcels are assigned this designation. The dimensional requirements were retained for Two-Family dwellings.
2. Eliminate Business Housing Authority District (BHAD) as no parcels are assigned this designation.
3. Change Residential Multi-family (RM55+) to Residential Multi-Family District (RMFD) in compliance with case law. Existing zoning language restricted ownership by age, a discriminatory practice. A condo association or HOA for a multifamily development can implement residency restrictions if applicable.

4. Update all zoning language associated with the above uses

Article 4 - Use Regulations/Table of Uses

Recommended updates:

1. Add color to the table for categories
2. Specify governmental/regulatory uses permitted in each district, but clarify that a site plan review is required. Mrs. Tyler pointed out that this will likely be administrative but, in some cases could involve the full Planning Board, which hasn't happened in the past.
3. Eliminate districts per recommendation (BHAD, R2FD and RMF55+)
4. Delete Great Pond Commerce Center Overlay District (GPCCOD) which is an overlay district- all criteria are outlined in special districts
5. Consolidate various retail and office uses based on size and where it is permitted or by special permit
6. Under residential, added criteria for Townhouses and make adjustments regarding lodging and temporary housing
7. Add language to make note that if a use isn't specified, it's not permitted
8. Sand/gravel/earth moving change the Special Permit granting authority from Town Council to Planning Board with added parameters
9. Residential greater than 25 units change the Special Permit granting authority from Town Council to Planning Board.
10. Two Family dwelling change from requiring a Special Permit from Planning Board to as-of-right based on dimensional requirements
11. Tattoo studio - change from the Special Permit granting authority to as-of-right in certain districts
12. Wedding/Reception Center - delete this as a USE to a more generalized description such as a convention center or exhibition hall.

Article 5 - Dimensional Regulations

Mrs. Tyler stated that they retained the table but made some modifications.

Recommended updates:

1. Add requirements for two-family dwellings for continuity
2. Add criteria for Townhouses
3. Delete lot width (frontage, area and depth have remained)

4. Increase % of impervious lot coverage (with a maximum square footage) to accommodate parking needs. This was based on a discussion in a Zoning Recodification workshop related to the need to increase parking for growing households.
5. Increase building height to 6 stories/75 feet in the Blue Hill River Highway District (BRHD), west of Route 28, and Great Bear Swamp Highway District (GBHD), which was reviewed by the Randolph Fire Department. The higher the building height, the greater the buffer strip to abutting residential properties, with a proposed increase based upon building height of ten (10) feet per building per story. New construction will have sprinkler systems.
6. Added graphics for building height based on roof type.

Discussion:

Chairman Plizga feels that the Townhouse maximum building height dimensions of 2 stories/ 32 feet in Residential Single Family High Density (RSHDD) and Residential Single Family Medium Density (RSMDD) should match Single Family and Two-Family maximum building height dimensions of 2 1/2 stories/ 40 feet. Mrs. Tyler pointed out that the reduced height for Townhouses was to make the building feel less bulky next to a single-family home. The Board discussed changing it so that Townhouse, Single Family and Two-Family maximum building heights are consistent within the table, but ultimately decided to keep the Townhouse height at 2 stories/ 32 feet in RSHDD and RSMDD.

Chairman Plizga wanted to discuss *Section 5.2 - Frontage* in reference to a lot that was recently denied as buildable by the ZBA due to the frontage restrictions. Chairman Plizga read the following excerpt from *Section 5.2*: "in no event to reduce the frontage to less than eighty-five (85) feet or reduce the minimum lot area to seven thousand five hundred (7,500) square feet." Currently, ZBA could approve lots within this threshold. It is his understanding that the lot could potentially be buildable by creating a subdivision with a private road with a hammerhead as a way to create the required frontage. Chairman Plizga feels that by adding the road, you are actually taking away more pervious material than if you just allowed them to build there.

Chairman Plizga proposes a reduction to the ZBA variance threshold from eight-five (85) feet to sixty (60) feet for minimum frontage for a single family dwelling, but keep the current minimum frontage of eighty-five (85) feet for multifamily dwellings to avoid the need for a road. The required minimum square footage of seventy-five hundred (7,500) square feet would remain the same. Mrs. Tyler stated that set-back requirements would also remain the same.

Chairman Plizga feels it would be helpful to property owners and developers. Member Alexopoulos has concerns about loosening regulations and properties becoming too dense. Mrs. Tyler reminded the Board that even with the reduced minimum frontage, the applicant would still need to appear before the ZBA to demonstrate a hardship for a variance.

The majority of the Planning Board was in favor of the Planning Director bringing the proposal to the Zoning Recodification Committee for discussion. Member Alexopoulos was not in favor, but would like feedback from the Committee.

Article 6 - Non-conforming Uses, Structures, and Lots

No substantive changes were made to Article 6.

Article 7 - Off-Street Parking

Recommended updates:

Commercial/Retail Parking - decreased the commercial parking threshold to prevent vast amounts of under-utilized parking lots. It will also decrease the impervious surface.

Residential - added a line for Townhouses that requires two (2) spaces for each dwelling unit

Warehouse/Industrial - still discussing language with the Building Commissioner being mindful of how parking needs may change depending on the building use

Section 7.5 Construction Requirements - text was added to clarify what constitutes a parking lot renovation

Article 8 - Signs

Mrs. Tyler noted that Article 8 is still a work in progress, with some changes based on case law. The Sign Application for Permit will need to be updated to capture any approved changes.

1. Move non-accessory signs to this section
2. Create a table of signs permitted by district (ie. whether or not a sign can be electronic or illuminated). Add sections for free-standing signs or those on buildings, as well as temporary signs (banners, yard signs, realtor signs).
3. Provided graphics for clarity on sign measurement and sign types
4. Change language to create an ordinance that controls the time, place, and manner of speech without discriminating based on the content of the message (2015 Supreme Court Reed vs Town of Gilbert, Arizona)
5. Outline special provisions that apply neither to districts or sign amenities.

Discussion:

Member Adjei-Koranteng asked why electronic signs are excluded in Business Districts 1 and 2. Mrs. Tyler explained that some businesses are nestled into residential areas where electronic signs may be problematic to the neighbors.

Article 9 - Special Regulations

Mrs. Tyler explained that the current zoning didn't evolve with changes in technology for wireless communications. The following recommendations bring zoning up-to-date:

1. Move Wireless Communication Facilities to this section

2. Create new sections for Wireless Communications to encapsulate those that can be mounted on utility poles and rooftops
3. Retain the requirement for a Special Permit from Town Council for towers, and make others by-right with site plan review
4. Add Municipal Cannabis Equity, as required by statute.

Article 10 - Overlay and Special Districts

The Planning Director, Michelle Tyler, stated that the Zoning Recodification Committee recommended eliminating the Plan Review Authority (PRA), which was a requirement in some of the overlay districts. Mrs. Tyler explained that the PRA does not have any regulatory authority to oversee the work. Chairman Plizga feels the PRA has been somewhat disorganized and believes the Planning Board is better qualified to review applications and make recommendations to the Special Permit Granting Authority (SPGA). Mrs. Tyler noted that where the decision of the SPGA differs from the recommendations of the Planning Board or Conservation Commission, the reasons shall be stated in writing.

Recommendations:

1. Recommend eliminating all instances of "Plan Review Authority" and including a requirement that Planning Board and Conservation Commission review the plans. The change does not eliminate any other statutory requirements that may be outside of the Zoning Ordinance such as Stormwater Permits and review of Historic Structures or within a Historic District. Specific text will be added in the Zoning for the *Planning Board and Conservation Commission Reports and Recommendations* requirements.

Article 11 - Administration and Enforcement

Updates to Article 11 were provided by the Town's attorney to comply with regulatory requirements and to ensure there was continuity in the language used throughout the document.

Site Plan Peer Review did not change except for the recommendation for the Planning Board to serve as the site plan administrator for residential projects with greater than 25 units. Chairman Plizga stated that if the Town Council chooses to remain the SPGA, the Planning Board's recommendation would be for them to forward the project to the Planning Board for site plan and design review to provide a report.

Zoning Updates for the Future:

1. Inclusionary Zoning - to address affordability and subsidized housing inventory
2. Short-term Rentals - to address AirBnB and similar
3. Canteen trucks/vendor carts - to identify areas (e.g., Industrial Parks) for as-of-right use with license Board review

Next steps in the Zoning Recodification process:

The recommended changes will go back to the Zoning Recodification Committee for review, then to the consultant for an update, then back to the Planning Board before it is sent to the Town Council. Once it is adopted, it will go to General Code, where the zoning will be completely updated. Chairman Plizga asked the Board members to get any additional questions or concerns to the Planning director, Michelle Tyler, by the end of August.

Upcoming meetings:

Mrs. Tyler reminded the Board that they have a continued public hearing on September 9, 2025, for the North Street two-family special permit. Also, a continued public hearing for Ledgeview / E.G. Schaner Circle on September 23 at 6:15 pm, which was opened on October 8, 2024, to consider recinding the undeveloped subdivision.

F. Board Member Comments

None

G. Adjournment

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

September 9 & 23

October 14 & 28

The meeting adjourned at 7:23pm.

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