



TOWN OF FAIRHAVEN, MASSACHUSETTS
PLANNING BOARD
Town Hall · 40 Center Street · Fairhaven, MA 02719

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 25, 2025 at 6:30pm

Held both at Town Hall & Remotely via Zoom

1. GENERAL BUSINESS:

- a) **Chair's Welcome and Media Notification:** Chair, Cathy Melanson, opened the meeting at 6:33 PM and advised who was present. The media notification was written on the agenda for the meeting and thus was not read aloud.
- b) **Quorum/Attendance: Present:** Cathy Melanson, Sharon Simmons, Patrick Carr, Ruy daSilva, Kevin Grant, and Rick Trapilo in Town Hall.

Absent: Jessica Fidalgo and Diane Tomassetti

Recording Secretary Hailey Hemingway and Land Use and Planning Director Bruce Webb were present in Town Hall.

2. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

SP25-02 - Walmart – 42 Fairhaven Commons Way : Special permit proposal to modify the existing parking lot striping and signage and increase the number of pickup parking spaces. The property is located (Map 26 Lot 13), submitted by Walmart Real Estate Business Trust.

Mr. Webb spoke regarding changes for the pickup parking area and exterior and signage to support those changes to the parking area. They propose making additional change to parking and pedestrian infrastructure which will make it safe for both customer and employees. Still allowing plenty of parking with their 1/250 formula so Mr. Webb would recommend approval.

Mr. Greg DeBona from Bohler Engineering zoomed in to meeting to address the board. Mr. DeBona stated there are currently 8 pickup spaces, off-center to the main vestibule. Because of the remodel work inside the building designating a new pickup operation for efficiency and moving the pickup parking away from the front door avoids conflict with customer traffic. Online pickup is based on Walmart employees bringing orders out to customer vehicle. A new double door with an awning is planned for the pickup orders and only accessible by the employees and a new pedestrian crossing for the employee's safety. Therefore this an increase from 8 spaces to 13 spaces for pickup. Walmart regulations also require refreshing of parking striping, pavement flow and stop controls.

Mr. Trapilo inquired if there were any plans for additional lighting and trees. Mr. DeBona confirmed that the plans include one additional light pole to support the pickup operation.

Mr. Grant inquired if this project was companywide or just site specific. Mr. DeBona confirmed this was a nationwide update and based on Walmart's matrix as to what is needed at each site.

Mr. Carr inquired about a list that was brought as an attachment.

Mr. Webb stated he requested the 18 items for himself and the building commissioner to clarify what work was under whose jurisdiction, so Mr. Webb asked for a simplified list of all the work that they were proposing as part of this project.

Mr. Carr inquired about the bus stop for the public coming in and out of the building to the bus area. Mr. DeBona confirmed the plans include just those pedestrian stop improvements that are along the front drive so they are all within the site not anything beyond the front drive in the front of the Walmart.

Mr. daSilva made a motion to approve SP25-02 42 Fairhaven Commons Way Walmart, seconded by Mr. Grant. The motion passed unanimously via roll call vote. (6-0)

3. RECEIPT OF PLANS:

FA 25-01 14 Plaza Way: Form A proposal to configure 14 Plaza Way, (Map 27 Lot 013) by dividing the existing property to four separate properties resulting in Parcel A (24,893 sq. ft.) Parcel B (41,618 sq. ft.), Parcel C (20,098 sq. ft.), Parcel D (512,067 sq. ft.) in order to create four separate lots – the proposed new parcels A and B having frontage on Huttleston Ave, and the proposed new parcels C and D having frontage on Alden Rd.

Mr. Webb spoke regarding the application to divide the property of 14 Plaza Way into the four resulting parcels.

Mr. Scott Baptista from GM2 Associates stated there was a revision. The configuration of the lots changed slightly. So A, B, C, and D are now one, two, three and four with slightly different areas. They all meet the requirement.

Ms. Simmons mentioned the numbers of the square footage looked like it did not match.

Mr. Webb apologized that was his oversight the original sub plans were received with a slight error the applicant actually found the error and brought it to his attention and provided an updated plan set. Mr. Webb also stated one item about parcel four is that the intensity use schedule for business does call for 95% of a business lot to be upland however the original lot did not meet that anyway so it was pre-existing non-conforming so it shouldn't be an issue.

Mr. Scott Baptista from GM2 Associates introduced himself, his company is representing MCZ Realty with the parcel at 14 Plaza Way. The original parcel was subdivide into three parcels with the remaining fourth parcel being let over, all lots have the required area and frontage on a public way so they are just looking to split the lots.

Mr. Grant questioned parcel 4 if it was splitting the pre-existing building that is there. Mr. Baptista confirmed it was correct.

Ms. Simmons questioned the little dots on the plan assuming it looks like the potential road accesses in the parcel. Mr. Baptista confirmed it is an access easement.

Mr. Carr questioned what the pre-existing lots were prior and what the reason to divide them is. Mr. Baptista responded parcel 4 was one entire lot and also stated that's what the owner wanted just to split it up into separate parcels.

Mr. daSilva questioned if the easement D2 will be interrupted. Mr. Baptista confirmed that's all overhead wires.

Ms. Simmons made a motion to form a proposal to configure FA25-01 14 Plaza Way, seconded by Mr. Grant. Motion passed unanimously (6-0).

4. OTHER BUSINESS:

- Land use and Planning Department – Department Head Update

Mr. Webb gave the update to the board. Mr. Webb discussed with the board a question about an additional parcel to the 40R district. Mr. Webb put a warrant together to have a zoning map updated to get an updated look at the parcels issue with amount of wetlands shown on the past plan. Maximum 45 feet.

Second Item-The meeting minutes. Mr. Webb also apologized to the board about a mistake on the agenda. Mr. Webb wrote October 22, 2024 but it was supposed to be October 28, 2024. Mr. Webb explained to the board the October 28th, 2024 minutes are still to being finished. The December minutes and January minutes are done and they are waiting to be approved.

Third Item-Timothy Street/Hiller Avenue sub division. Mr. Webb discussed with the board he has been making daily visits to the site.

- Term lengths update from Kevin Grant:

Mr. Grant discussed with the board a past proposal to make the board smaller moving it down from 8 members to 7 members he also brought up concerns with the pattern. Following the pattern, there will be election years where there are four open seats. It might make an issue with more involvement in election years with 4 seats open, and not as much on years with 2 years terms. Mr. Grant brought up the option of changing term lengths or changing the amount of members on the board.

Ms. Melanson spoke with Ms. Lissa Horan, the Town Clerk, to check with Mass General law if term length can be changed. Ms. Melanson also spoke with town counsel about bringing board member amount up to 9 members.

Mr. Webb mentioned he is going to reach out to other towns about these questions and if they had similar experiences. Mr. Webb has not found any towns that have 4 year terms and not 3 or 5 years. Mr. Webb stated there is also issues with the amount because there are some years where there is no seat turnaround, but Mass General law states you have to at least have one seat a year.

Mr. Carr brought up concerns with changing the amounts.

Mr. Webb brought up information found where it says it needs to be 3 or 5 years terms. Mr. Webb stated that Franklin, Ma has 4 year terms.

Ms. Melanson stated the board will look for more information and this issue will be put on a future agenda.

- SRPEDD Update from Rick Trapilo:

Mr. Trapilo discussed with the board news about SRPEDD.

- Update on Town Meeting Committee, Meeting – Planning Board Rep Sharon Simmons

Ms. Simmons discussed the last meeting and various issues and ideas that were discussed.

- Closed Caption
- Check in at entrance-issues with door needing to stay locked
- Zoom check in's

- More Fairhaven TV
- More Facebook post
- Microphone
- Volunteer babysitters
- Recommendations for Charter Committee

Ms. Simmons mentioned next meeting is 2/26/2025. She is working with Mr. Mark Sylvia. Ms. Simmons brought up Mr. Sylvia's idea to make this committee a permanent committee, not a temporary committee.

- Any other business that may properly come before the Board, not reasonably anticipated when posting 48 hours prior to the meeting:

Mr. Carr discussed the Hiller Avenue meeting and mentioned it was an executive session. Mr. Carr would like to know if any information from the executive session can be brought to the public as far as the outcome and how planning board voted. Mr. Webb confirmed he would have it first go to town counsel to check on what information would be said. Mr. Carr explained he just wants transparency and openness to the public so they can see exactly what's going on and there is nothing hidden.

Ms. Simmons questioned when the minutes would be able to be released. Ms. Melanson explained the minutes are not released the same way.

- **NEXT MEETING:**

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 11, 2025 at 6:30pm.

Ms. Melanson adjourned the meeting at 7:32pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Paczosa
Recording Secretary,
Planning Board

Minutes approved at Board Meeting on 5/13/2025