



Fairhaven Planning Board

Town Hall · 40 center Street · Fairhaven, MA 02719

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, July 14, 2026 at 6:30PM

In person at Town hall or remotely log on to:

1) GENERAL BUSINESS:

- a) Welcome and Media notification – **Jessica Fidalgo**
- b) Pledge of Allegiance
- c) Quorum/Attendance
 - **Present:** Jessica Fidalgo, Sean Powers, Mona Phillips, Jenn Cardoza, Patrick Carr (Arrival 6:35PM), Ruy DaSilva, Miles Grant
 - **Absent:** Kevin Grant
- d) Meeting minutes draft to be reviewed- **6/30/2026**
 - **Motion to approve the minutes for 6/30/26 Miles Grant second Sean Powers passes 6-0**
- e) Correspondence:
 - i. Town of Acushnet, Fairhaven BPW
 - discussed correspondence including a public hearing in Acushnet regarding the PJ Keating property.
 - Michaela tasked to follow up on questions about a street opening moratorium from BPW.

2) PUBLIC HEARING:

3) RECEIPT OF PLANS:

- a) **FA27-01 – 16 Harding Road: Map20 Lot 71** -The division of the subject property into 2 lots, lot A & B as depicted on the plan. New lot "A" w/161.18 Feet of frontage and 24,800 SQ FT and lot "B" w/125 ft of frontage and 23,200 SQ FT
 - John Romanelli from Zenith Land Surveyors represented the George family, who are subdividing the property so their daughter can build a house with her husband.
 - Question asked: The new house lot being proposed is going on the Davis Street side, like, the front of the house, not Clark. Correct.
 - a conversation with the building inspector was had, because that's an unconstructed street, Harding Road, we know we're alright for.
 - A reference was made regarding how the lots show on the plan that can be confusing however all is correct regarding the split of the property.

Motion to approve the subdivision of the lot by Pat Carr second Miles Grant passed 7/0

Motion made by Miles Grant to pause meeting for 5 minutes so the board can sign the mylar seconded Sean Powers passed 7/0

Meeting resumed @ 6:45PM

4) NEW/OTHER BUSINESS:

- a) **SP26-01 77 Adams Street, Lot 30D Map 25:** The project consists of the conversion of the "circa 1800" historical church rectory building into Residential Treatment Program for First Responders -together with the construction of a proposed 424 sq. ft. addition which will result in an increase in parking. – **WITHDRAW WITHOUT PREJUDICE**

- Developer and applicant have asked to withdraw without prejudice, as it is not in the Planning board purview and is in front of ZBA.
- Patrick Carr and Ruy DaSilva recused themselves as they sit on ZBA.

**Motion made to withdraw without prejudice by Sean powers second Miles
Grant passed 5/0**

5) LONG RANGE PLANNING:

a) **Board discussion:**

i. **Bylaw Changes**

- A presentation by Danielle and Micheala was shared detailing lot sizes and explanation of lot coverage and building coverage.
- The board discussed whether to implement a broad, sweeping bylaw change or a more targeted "overlay" district/special permit process.
- A member suggested a historical district overlay to simplify complexities, noting developers desire predictability.
- The conversation clarified the goal is not state-defined "affordable housing" but creating more "attainable" homeownership options (starter homes, downsizing options) to address a scarcity caused by restrictive zoning.
- The benefits of this "smart growth" were highlighted: increasing school enrollment, expanding the tax base to address a projected deficit, and distributing infrastructure costs across more households.
- Emphasized the need for a clear, unified "intent" to guide the new planner, suggesting one option could be to start by focusing on one district, like the RA zone.
- A general discussion about the primary goals are to increase the availability of affordable and smaller homes.
- Research state zoning changes: The board needs to research new state-level changes to understand their impact on local objectives.
- A debate occurred regarding the scope of zoning changes, contrasting a town-wide bylaw overhaul with a more targeted approach for the town center.
- A member proposed creating a subcommittee to research which lots would work under new rules and present findings to the main group.
- A member raised a concern that a subcommittee might focus too much on the building aspect rather than looking at the entire zoning picture, reiterating a preference for viewing this as part of an overall bylaw change.
- The alternative is to introduce a mechanism allowing residents in specific parts of town to build differently, which is seen as a more palatable option.

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- The discussion shifted to the necessity of clarifying the board's core intent and the potential of an overlay district to manage complexity.
- The complexity of balancing multiple competing objectives was highlighted, with a focus on how an overlay district might address them while considering developer needs.
- The conversation centered on prioritizing affordability and smaller homes, and using special permits as a data-gathering tool to ease into zoning changes.
- A procedural question was raised about involving the new town planner, and a welcome was extended ahead of her official start date.
- A member expressed urgency for the Planning Board to take action on zoning bylaws for a potential special town meeting in the fall.
- The member stressed the need to challenge the board and its new members to create a structure and strategy for gaining approval at a town meeting.
- Member expressed frustration that two weeks have passed since the last meeting without any follow-up from the planning board or department to the Town Administrator regarding the special town meeting, calling it "two weeks wasted."
- reiterated that forming teams is the most time-efficient way to move forward, with teams of two or three members taking on a district.
- The proposed workflow for each subcommittee: use assessors' data and MLS to find available lots; analyze the sizes of those lots; compare findings against professional recommendations from Ted (the consultant); develop ideas and present them to the full board for feedback and refinement.
- A member suggested that debating the document provided by Michaela and Danielle is not a productive use of time, especially before the new planner has started; it was noted that at the last meeting the board decided it was not "confidence building" to move forward significantly without the new planner's feedback.

Jenn Cardoza made a motion to establish a sub-committee to gather information/comparisons and proposed dimensions and process and report back the findings to the full board. Second Pat Carr. Motion did not pass 2/5

Pat Carr made a motion to ask the Town Administrator for the Planning Board to go in front of the Select Board to discuss plans to be on the warrant for bylaw changes at a fall town meeting. Second Ruy Dasilva. Motion did not pass – 3/4

b) Committee Reports

- Chair announced the new town planner's start date is July 20, 2026, and invited a brief introduction.

- Dawn Quirk introduced herself, with a background in higher education (sustainability), Cambridge DPW (city operations), Mass DEP, and MIT project management.
- Her interests include planning and zoning, with a strong focus on stakeholder engagement and amplifying often-overlooked voices.
- She described her skills as connecting teams and translating complex concepts into simple explanations, and expressed belief she is well-suited to help move proposals forward amidst new laws and existing data and plans.
- She observed that the board's debate is healthy and aims to be a connective leader, stating an intention to "be your captain."

c) **Any other business:** that may properly come before the Board, not reasonably anticipated when posting 48 hours prior to this meeting.

6) **NEXT MEETING:** July 28, 2026 @ 6:30PM

ADJOURN: There being no further business before the board, the meeting is adjourned.