



## Planning Board

### Meeting Minutes of January 20, 2026

*(Meeting was recorded for future broadcast by Pepperell Community Media)*

#### Board Members:

**Present:** Albert Patenaude, Jr. (Chair), David Ganong (Clerk/Full Member), Joan Ladik (Full Member), Amanda Huntington (Full Member), and Sean Dorey (Full Member)

**Not Present:** Sandra Hartnett

**Staff:** Jason Cleghorn (Town Planner)

**Attendees:** Pepperell Community Media, various members of the public and town staff/officials

#### **1. Call to Order – 6:30p.m.**

The remote/hybrid public meeting was called to order at 6:31p.m. by Mr. Patenaude.

A roll call vote was taken of the Board Members that were present. Albert Patenaude, Jr. David Ganong, Joan Ladik, Amanda Huntington and Sean Dorey all confirmed that they were present at the meeting, either in person or remotely.

Mr. Patenaude provided an overview of meeting protocols/ground rules, noting that the meeting was being recorded and conducted both remotely via GoToMeeting and in person in Conference Room A of Town Hall, consistent with Governor Healey's executive order extending temporary provisions pertaining to open meeting law through June 30, 2027. He outlined the ground rules, explaining that all supporting materials were available on the town's website, the chair would introduce each speaker and invite comments from members by name, and all votes would be conducted by roll call vote.

#### **2. Consent Agenda:** Review and/or Accept Planning Board Meeting Minutes of October 20, 2025, November 17, 2025, and December 1, 2025

Mr. Patenaude explained that the consent agenda would be addressed as three separate items due to varying member attendance at each meeting.

Mr. Patenaude asked for a motion to accept the meeting minutes of October 20, 2025, so moved by Mr. Ganong, seconded by Mr. Dorey. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Patenaude asked for a motion to accept the meeting minutes of November 17, 2025, so moved by Mr. Ganong, seconded by Mr. Dorey. All in favor, with Mr. Patenaude abstaining. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Patenaude asked for a motion to accept the meeting minutes of December 1, 2025, so moved by Ms. Ladik, seconded by Mr. Dorey. All in favor, with Mr. Ganong and Ms. Huntington abstaining. Motion passed unanimously.

**3. Public Hearing:** PMIN-26-1 Minor Site Plan: 129 Main Street – Joseph Lisio – Conversion of office to barbershop

Mr. Patenaude opened the public hearing and asked Mr. Cleghorn provide an overview of the requested relief.

Mr. Cleghorn explained that applicant, Joseph Lisio, was seeking to convert a former realtor's office at 129 Main Street into a three-station barbershop. This represented a change from low-intensity office use to higher-traffic commercial use, requiring minor site plan review.

Joseph Lisio and Pat Harrington, representing JMG LLC, explained they had purchased the property at 129 Main Street and wished to relocate Mr. Lisio's barbershop from 127 Main Street, where it had been located since 1987 when his father operated it. Mr. Lisio said that he and his son would continue to work there. The only changes to the property would be removing non-weight-bearing interior walls to open up the front portion of the building that had been previously divided into smaller office spaces by the last owner. The plan was to create an open area suitable for the barbershop.

Ms. Ladik asked about the zoning classification, and Mr. Patenaude confirmed the property was still within the same zoning district as the previous location. The board discussed that this was a minor site plan review involving a change of use with no exterior structural changes. Mr. Lisio explained there were eleven parking spots in the main lot adjacent to the building, with a drainage separation leading to an additional secondary parking lot with eleven more spots. With three barbers, he estimated a maximum of nine vehicles would be on site at peak times: three employee vehicles and up to six customer vehicles (three current customers and three waiting customers).

Mr. Patenaude asked about designated handicap parking spaces, and Mr. Lisio confirmed there were currently no marked handicap spots on the property. He indicated that any of the first three spots in the front lot would work well for handicap accessibility and that he planned to make the building more accessible over time, noting there were a few steps at the entrance.

The board discussed the parking lot entrance and exit configuration. Ms. Ladik inquired whether there would be designated entry and exit points. Mr. Lisio explained that the secondary lot had multiple exit points, while the main lot exit was parallel to Canal Street, approximately sixty feet from the stop sign at Main Street with about thirty more feet before reaching the parking area. The Board noted that an infiltration strip needed to remain in place for drainage purposes.

Regarding exterior signage, Mr. Lisio stated he planned to use the existing sign frame next to the front entrance but would square off the top, which was currently shaped like a house for the previous real estate office. He confirmed he would install a barber pole as required by state regulations, either as a sticker or by relocating his existing pole from 127 Main Street.

Mr. Cleghorn suggested adding a condition for no outdoor storage, given the sizable parking lot. Mr. Patenaude agreed this made sense considering the potential for increased traffic and the need to maintain parking availability. The Board concurred that requiring a designated van-accessible handicap parking spot and prohibiting additional use for storage or other purposes without returning to the Planning Board were appropriate conditions.

The Board discussed whether Mr. Lisio intended to post signs restricting public parking in the secondary lot during off-hours. Mr. Lisio noted that the lot had been commonly used by the public, including people visiting Cumberland Farms or using the rail trail. While he didn't want the parking to be abused, he indicated he didn't mind people using some of the space if it helped neighboring locations, particularly noting that the parking lot next to his building was related to the boat dock. He stated he had no immediate intentions of posting restrictive signage but might consider it if it became an issue.

Mr. Ganong emphasized the importance of ensuring the building department followed through on accessibility parking requirements, noting that enforcement of such requirements was not always consistent and could become a social media issue.

Mr. Patenaude asked for a motion. Ms. Ladik so moved to accept PMIN-26-1 Minor Site Plan for 129 Main Street with the conditions as discussed, including designation of a handicap-accessible parking spot and no outdoor storage without returning to the planning board. David Ganong seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with all members voting in favor.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Ladik: Aye  
Mr. Ganong: Aye  
Ms. Huntington: Aye  
Mr. Dorey: Aye  
Mr. Patenaude: Aye

**4. Discussion:** MA Senate Bill S.2836: “Yes in My Backyard”

Mr. Cleghorn provided an extensive briefing on Senate Bill S.2836, which has moved from the Housing Committee to Ways and Means. He explained that while the exact timeline remains uncertain, some version of this legislation requiring increased housing density will likely pass, given the state's focus on housing production. He outlined two paths available to the town: inaction, which would result in state-mandated zoning changes with no local control or financial benefits, or proactive planning to retain maximum local authority while accessing state revenue streams through programs like Chapter 40R, 40S, and 40Y. The bill would require communities to allow higher density housing, including up to five dwelling units per acre in areas with water and sewer service. He noted that Pepperell already allows similar density in its urban district through special permits, suggesting a potential overlay district approach that would make such development by-right while capturing state incentive payments of \$3,000 per unit.

Board Members discussed the challenges of public communication, referencing the failed 40R proposal and the need for accurate information dissemination to counter misinformation on social media. They emphasized the importance of proactive community outreach and addressing concerns about infrastructure capacity, schools, and emergency services through the financial offsets provided in the legislation.

The Board agreed to continue studying the legislation and developing strategies for community engagement, with Cleghorn recommending that members read the full bill and consider outreach approaches for different demographic groups in town.

**5. Discussion:** 2026 Goalsetting

Mr. Cleghorn reported that he has received goal submissions from three Board Members and requested the remaining members submit their priorities. He plans to collate all submissions for public discussion and ranking at a future meeting, noting that the goals received so far have been reasonable and actionable items.

The Board discussed the importance of public goal-setting processes and agreed to continue this item at the next meeting once all member input is collected.

**6. Reports/Correspondence/Discussion:** (Matters may arise that the Chair did not reasonably anticipate)

Mr. Cleghorn provided the following updates:

**DLTA Grants:** Two technical assistance projects were funded through the District Local Technical Assistance program. The primary project will conduct a comprehensive study of all commercially zoned properties in town, analyzing utilization, expansion potential, and development opportunities. Additionally, the remaining local match requirement for last year's Housing Production Plan was eliminated through additional state funding.

**Tucker Sidewalk Project:** The grant application for approximately \$898,000 was successfully submitted with strong supporting documentation including letters from residents, the Planning Board, and Town Administration.

**Joint Meeting:** The Select Board has requested a joint meeting with the Planning Board in late February or early March to discuss zoning priorities and master plan implementation, with Mr. Cleghorn advocating for a structured agenda with specific topics rather than an open-ended discussion.

**Future Meetings:**

- February 2, 2026
- February 17, 2026 (Tuesday)

**Adjournment:**

Mr. Patenaude put a motion on the floor to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Dorey. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:00p.m.

These Planning Board Meeting Minutes of **January 20, 2026**, were accepted by the Board at their meeting on March 16, 2026.

*Respectfully submitted by:*  
*Cheryl Lutcza, Assistant to the Planning Board/Department*