



## Planning Board

### Meeting Minutes of February 2, 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), Sean Dorey (Full Member) and Sandra Harnett (Associate Member)

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 6:30p.m. by the Mr. Patenaude.

A roll call vote was taken, and the following Board Members confirmed they were present either in person, or remotely: Joan Ladik, Amanda Huntington, Albert Patenaude, Jr., Sean Dorey, David Ganong and Sandra Hartnett.

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. Public Hearing: PMAJ-25-1 and LDP-25-2      13 Jersey St.      Construction of water treatment plant**

Mr. Cleghorn introduced the project as a town-initiated Major Site Plan Review and Land Disturbance Permit for a DPW facility for the Jersey Street water treatment plant related to PFAS removal. He noted that he had sent a 5-page summary document to the Board earlier that day and indicated that the engineer of record was available online, along with Paul Brinkman (DPW Director).

Mr. Brinkman addressed the Board and provided a comprehensive presentation covering the project overview, construction considerations, safety measures, and environmental benefits. He explained that the facility would have a peak capacity of 1.3 million gallons per day and is necessary to remove PFAS chemicals from the water supply due to new regulatory limits that will significantly decrease allowable PFAS levels. He described the proposed facility location between the existing treatment plant and Crawford Way, with plans to underground existing overhead electrical lines to Jersey 2 well. He outlined construction hours from 7:00AM to 5:00PM, with no noise permitted before 8:00AM, and confirmed that contractors would primarily use the Jersey Street access rather than going through the Crawford Way neighborhood. The project includes safety features such as exterior lighting, security cameras, pipe gates, daily staffing, alarmed doors, and fenced wells. He explained that lighting would be downcast and limited, with screening between the facility and neighborhood. He projected

that noise levels would actually decrease compared to current operations, as existing pumps would be relocated into the new building's basement.

Ms. Ladik inquired about the construction timeline and waste disposal process. Mr. Brinkman explained that the bid process would be lengthy due to prequalification requirements, with a target of being under contract by June and a three-year window for completion. Regarding waste disposal, he described how granular activated carbon (GAC) absorbs PFAS contaminants and can be regenerated approximately five times at specialized facilities before requiring replacement.

Ms. Hartnett asked about carbon removal frequency and water wastage. Mr. Brinkman explained that carbon replacement occurs every 3-4 years under normal operating conditions, requiring large trucks for the 12-foot diameter, 20-foot high vessels. He noted that water waste occurs primarily during startup when new carbon must be rinsed, generating up to half a million gallons of wastewater over several days that would be sent to the wastewater treatment plant.

Mr. Patenaude raised several operational questions about construction timing, access road paving, safety measures for nearby ball fields, and potential future restroom connections for the recreational facilities. Mr. Brinkman confirmed the access road would be paved and discussed dust control measures using calcium chloride. Mr. Ganong expressed interest in collaborating on restroom facilities for the recreation commission.

The discussion covered staffing details, with Mr. Brinkman clarifying that five water operators would relocate their operations to the new facility, using it as their primary work base while maintaining administrative functions at 47 Nashua Road.

Mr. Patenaude reviewed zoning compliance requirements, noting that screening, signage, and lighting provisions must meet residential district standards. The Board examined the proposed screening plan, which includes mixed tree species on a berm for height advantage, with Ms. Ladik suggesting additional low-growing evergreen plantings for complete coverage.

Mr. Patenaude opened the meeting up to public comments.

Resident, Steven Rodman (16 Crawford Way), thanked Mr. Brinkman for considering neighborhood impacts and asked about screening timeline and gate security.

Resident, Anthony Caruso (20 Crawford Way), inquired about building height and distance from Crawford Way. Mr. Cleghorn provided measurements of approximately 190 feet from the street curve to the building face.

Mr. Cleghorn raised the issue of third-party peer review for town-initiated projects, noting that while the project appears well-designed from a planning perspective, stormwater calculations fall outside his expertise. The Board discussed the appropriateness of requiring peer review for municipal projects, similar to private developments. The Board consensus supported a third-party stormwater review given the project's location in a well protection zone. Mr. Ganong emphasized the importance of peer review for such a significant investment involving public water supply, while other members agreed that stormwater review was the primary concern due to the sensitive location.

Mr. Patenaude outlined potential conditions including coordination with parks and recreation for access road management, safety measures for ball field separation, lighting limitations to 12 feet or less, designated employee parking areas, earth-tone building colors, and motion sensor lighting to reduce neighborhood impact.

Mr. Patenaude asked for a motion. Ms. Ladik so moved to continue the public hearing on PMAJ-25-1 and LDP-25-2, 13 Jersey Street construction of a water treatment plant for the town of Pepperell to March 2, 2026 at 6:30p.m. Mr. Dorey seconded the motion. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Mr. Cleghorn provided several updates to the Board as follows:

The Select Board had established March 26th as the date for a joint meeting with the Planning Board, requesting members confirm their availability

He reminded Board Members that goal submissions were still needed from some members, with a deadline of February 17th to ensure the item could be included on the agenda.

He reported on a staff meeting held the previous week with representatives from the Barn Door, including himself and other Town Staff (Paula Terrasi, Susan Smith and Paul Brinkman). The Barn Door representatives had requested to appear before the Planning Board for an open discussion about their future plans. Based on the meeting, Mr. Cleghorn recommended allowing them to present on February 17th. Mr. Patenaude expressed support for the presentation while emphasizing the need for careful boundaries during the discussion. He stressed that any questions must recognize the presentation as informal, not a public hearing, and that Board Members should avoid indicating preferences that could appear prejudicial since potential future plans might require zoning changes. Ms. Ladik inquired about the Barn Door's current zoning status. Mr. Cleghorn confirmed the property is in a residential zone and currently operates under a ZBA special permit for their existing business activities.

**Future Meetings:**

- February 17, 2026 (Tuesday)

**Adjournment:**

Mr. Patenaude asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting, so moved by Ms. Ladik and seconded by Mr. Dorey. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:45p.m.

These Planning Board Meeting Minutes of **February 2, 2026**, were accepted by the Board at their meeting on March 16, 2026.

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