



PLANNING BOARD MINUTES February 10, 2026

- 1. ROLL CALL:** Ed Bearor (Chair), Riley Bergeron, Tim DeRoche, Bob Hayes, Maureen Hopkins, Bilal Hussein, and Andrea Westbye

Absent: Ngengele Adlophe (Student Representative)

Staff members present: Sam Peikes (Planning Coordinator) and Eric Cousens (Public Services Executive Director)

- 2. MINUTES:** Acceptance of the January 13, 2026 meeting minutes.

Motion made by Tim DeRoche and seconded by Maureen Hopkins to approve the January 13, 2026 minutes. Vote 5-0 Motion Carries

- 3. PLANNING BOARD BUSINESS:** Election of a Planning Board Chair and Vice Chair.

Motion made by Maureen Hopkins and seconded by Andrea Westbye to nominate Ed Bearor as Chair. Vote 5-0 Motion Carries

Motion made by Tim DeRoche and seconded by Andrea Westbye to nominate Maureen Hopkins as Vice Chair. Vote 4-0-1 (Maureen abstained) Motion Carries

Riley Bergeron arrived at 6:05 p.m.

- 4. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING/ SITE PLAN REVIEW/SUBDIVISION REVIEW:** 15 Academy Street (PID 230-132) Application by Gorrill Palmer on behalf of Auburn Town Center Apartments, LLC for final approval of the construction of a 53-unit residential development. This property is located in the Traditional Downtown Neighborhood (T-4.2) district and will be reviewed under Chapter 60, Article XVI, Division 2 – Site Plan Review, Division 3 – Special Exception, and Division 4 – Subdivision.

Sam Peikes gave a staff report stating that the item was continued from the January 13th meeting due to it needing to be reviewed under special exception because of the size requirement of the building and development in form-based code.

Kaleb Bourassa of Gorrill Palmer gave a brief overview stating that they reformulated some of the previous material provided to the Board to meet the special exception requirements.

After concern was expressed that the Board did not receive a letter demonstrating the applicant's financial capacity, Matt Leonard, the project manager, explained that no matter how much money he gives the bank, they are not going to write specific language to that effect.

The public hearing was continued from the January 13th meeting for the special exemption.

Ron Rousseau – 20 Elm Street – submitted a written statement opposing the project and the waiver being requested for the width requirement. He said waivers are intended for rare and exceptional circumstances, not meant to bypass standards meant to protect neighborhoods. He expressed concern that the design is out of scale with the neighborhood, would alter its character, that the neighborhood has limited capacity for increased traffic, parking demand, storm water runoff, and visual impact, and that it would set a precedence.

Motion by Tim Deroche and seconded by Bilal Hussein moved to close the public hearing. Vote 6-0 Motion Carries

Bob Hayes arrived at 6:19 p.m.

After it was requested by the Board, the applicant confirmed that the color, texture, and materials as shown on the plans submitted is what will be constructed if this plan is approved.

Motion made by Riley Bergeron and seconded by Bilal Hussein to approve the proposal on behalf of Auburn Town Center Apartments, LLC for the construction of a 53-unit residential development at 15 Academy Street pursuant to Chapter 60 Article IV, Division 14 – Form Based Code, Article XVI, Division 2 – Site Plan, Division 3 – Special Exception and Division 4-Subdivision with the following conditions:

- 1. No permits shall be issued until 15 additional off-street parking spaces are secured or the applicant otherwise provides the spaces required by the ordinance at the time the permit is issued.**
- 2. Prior to issuance of building permits, the final subdivision plan shall be recorded at the Androscoggin County Registry of Deeds.**
- 3. No plans shall be recorded and no permits issued, until the applicant demonstrates that final easements are signed and recorded.**
- 4. Any significant changes to the rendering given to staff would need additional Board approval.**

Vote 5-2 (Ed and Maureen opposed) Motion Carries

5. NEW BUSINESS:

Public Hearing Chapter 60 Zoning Amendment: L.D. 427 “An Act to Regulate Municipal Parking Space Minimums”. Staff will be presenting proposed changes to Chapter 60 zoning for compliance.

Sam Peikes gave a staff report stating LD 427 requires that the municipality may not allow more than one off-street parking space per dwelling unit within a designated growth area and allows a developer to satisfy municipal parking requirements through an off-site parking agreement within existing facilities located within 1/4 mile of the development site. She reviewed the changes with the

Board and noted that the amendments in the mobile home park overlay need to be added. The Board made some changes to the wording in Section 60-607 (10).

Motion made by Tim DeRoche and seconded by Maureen Hopkins to open the public hearing. Vote 7-0 Motion Carries

Stephen Beale – 575 Johnson Road – expressed concern regarding the addition of mobile home parks being added to the motion due to the public notice given not including the reference to mobile home parks and that it’s a substantive addition that would require public notice.

Motion made by Riley Bergeron and seconded by Bilal Hussein to close the public hearing. Vote 7-0 Motion Carries

Motion made by Tim DeRoche and seconded by Riley Bergeron to postpone a decision on LD 427 to a date certain of March 10, 2026 so that the changes to the mobile home park overlay can be included. Vote 7-0 Motion Carries

Public Hearing Chapter 60 Zoning Amendment: Sec. 60-44 Unsewered Lots. Staff will be presenting proposed changes to Chapter 60 zoning to allow for the development of unsewered lots less than 20,000 square feet in specific instances.

Eric Cousens indicated there was a public hearing related to housing laws that was scheduled for today with the State legislature that would modify some of the provisions or the proposed changes and recommended the Board accept public comment but delay a recommendation until we find out where the legislation stands on it.

The public hearing was opened.

Stephen Beale of 575 Johnson Road – advised the board to use caution in redrafting any part of this ordinance due to overlapping regulations, that it may have minimal effect, and could raise concerns about spot zoning.

Motion made by Maureen Hopkins and seconded by Riley Bergeron to close the public hearing. Vote 7-0 Motion Carries

Motion by Bilal Hussein and seconded by Maureen Hopkins to table discussion on the proposed zoning changes to Chapter 60 relating to unsewered lots. Vote 7-0 Motion Carries

6. OTHER BUSINESS:

Comprehensive Plan Update. Staff and Chair of the Comprehensive Plan Committee will be presenting an update on the Future Land Use Map, policies, and actions to date.

John Cleveland and Lauren Caffé gave an update on the project timeline, final vision statement, required components of a comprehensive plan, draft future land use map, policies and actions, and next steps.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Stephen Beale of 575 Johnson Rd – asked the status of the sub-committee reviewing policies and procedures and if the public would have an opportunity for input.

Ed said he, Maureen, the former Chair of the Board, and city staff met twice last summer and have not met since. Maureen said no proposed amendments were made and that she would like to see more participation. Andrea Westbye and Bilal Hussein expressed interest in participating on the sub-committee. They will try to arrange a meeting before the next Board meeting.

Bilal requested a report of projects the Board has approved and the status of them.

8. MISCELLANEOUS

The City Council is working on a draft ordinance that proposes to strengthen protections of natural resources for solar and residential permit projects to inhibit projects that impact prime farmland soils, soils of statewide significance and wetlands.

Sam Peikes said there will be a special public hearing February 19 to bring the proposed changes before the board.

9. ADJOURNMENT

**Motion made by Tim DeRoche and seconded by Bob Hayes to adjourn at 7:48 p.m. Vote 7-0
Motion Carries**

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