



PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

February 19, 2026

- 1. ROLL CALL:** Tim DeRoche, Chelsea Eaton, Bob Hayes, Maureen Hopkins (Acting Chair), Bilal Hussein, Kathy Shaw, and Andrea Westbye

Absent: Ed Bearor, Riley Bergeron, and Ngengele Adlophe (Student Representative)

Staff members present: Sam Peikes (Planning Coordinator)

Maureen elevated Chelsea Eaton and Kathy Shaw to full voting members.

- 2. NEW BUSINESS:**

Public Hearing Chapter 60 Zoning Amendment: City Council initiated request for the Planning Board to review proposed changes to Chapter 60 (Zoning) in the Agriculture and Resource Protection zone to strengthen protections for natural resources for solar and residential permit projects and make a recommendation to the Council.

Sam Peikes gave a staff report and reviewed highlights of the proposed changes. Planning staff met with the Sustainability & Natural Resources Management Board (SNRB) on Tuesday to go over the proposed changes. One of the items discussed was that the costs for the soil scientist should be the responsibility of the developer or applicant doing the solar project. She will incorporate comments from both Boards into an updated draft to bring to the City Council.

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

Stephen Beale of 575 Johnson Road – indicated he is in favor of the restrictive amendments especially with respect to the solar array.

Michelle Melarango of 576 Trappe Road – said the city should ensure that property taxes in areas upgraded to moderate or high growth areas don't rise significantly for existing owners unless they build, subdivide, or sell, so current rates are grandfathered to protect farmers from steep increases and potentially losing their land and businesses. She also said land with confirmed PFAS contamination should be eligible for solar by special exception, since this may be one of the few viable ways for agricultural operations to remain financially sustainable.

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

**Motion made by Bob Hayes and seconded by Andrea Westbye to authorize the zoning change to go to City Council with the pending comments from both SNRB and the Planning Board and include the recommendation to the City Council to include provision for PFAS contaminated soils and how those are to be handled in reference to the proposed revisions.
Vote 7-0 Motion Carries**

3. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

4. MISCELLANEOUS

- Bob suggested the Board spend some time reviewing and discussing the Comprehensive Plan.
- Bilal requested staff find out what percentage of the AG/RP currently falls under prime farmland of statewide significance.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Tim DeRoche and seconded by Bilal Hussein to adjourn at 6:30 p.m. Vote 7-0 Motion Carries

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