



City of Auburn, Maine

Office of Planning & Permitting

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PLANNING BOARD MINUTES May 12, 2026

1. ROLL CALL:

Ed Bearor (Chair), Riley Bergeron, Chelsea Eaton, Bob Hayes, Maureen Hopkins, Bilal Hussein, Kathy Shaw, and Andrea Westbye

Absent: Tim DeRoche

Staff members present: Sam Peikes (Planning Coordinator)

Ed Bearor elevated Chelsea Eaton and Kathy Shaw to full voting members on alternating agenda items. Kathy Shaw will vote on 3A and 4A and Chelsea will vote on 3B and 4B.

2. MINUTES: Acceptance of the April 14, 2026 meeting minutes.

Motion made by Bilal Hussein and seconded by Bob Hayes to approve the April 14, 2026 minutes with amendments. Vote 7-0 Motion Carries

3. OLD BUSINESS

A. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING FINAL SITE PLAN/SUBDIVISION REVIEW: Hampshire Commons Apartments, 143 Hampshire Street (PID 250-311, 250-310, 250-309) - Application by Gorrill Palmer on behalf of Auburn Residential Development Corp to construct a 32-unit housing first residential development. The 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. This item is continued from the April 14, 2026 meeting.

Sam gave a staff report stating this is a resubmission for final plan approval and that it received preliminary approval at the April 14, 2026 meeting with conditions. Since that meeting, they have addressed those conditions and responded to the conditions of approval under special exception.

Marty Sidlowski of Auburn Housing Authority re-introduced the team and gave a brief history of AHA.

Steve Boucher of Gorrill Palmer gave an overview of the project and reviewed the survey, existing conditions plan, land transfer recording plan, site layout and utility plan, ground drainage and erosion control plan, and landscape plan.

Virginie Stanley of Invivid Architecture reviewed the architecture and floor plans.

The public hearing was opened.

Stephen Beale of 575 Johnson Road – pointed out there is a technical detail that needs to be clarified. He said on the presentation the applicant is identified as Auburn Housing Authority, however the agenda indicates that Auburn Residential Development Corporation is the applicant.

Amanda Bartlett of Developer's Collaborative confirmed the Auburn Residential Development Corporation is the correct applicant. She explained it acts as an intermediary for the Auburn Housing Authority during development, after which ownership will officially transfer at closing to the permanent owner, Hampshire Commons LP.

Mike Thurston Chairman of Auburn Housing Authority Board – stated that chronic homelessness is driven by untreated physical and mental health conditions that ultimately cost far more than providing stable housing and support. He emphasized that with voucher-supported units and appropriate services, the community can end homelessness rather than merely manage it.

The public hearing was closed.

Motion made by Riley Bergeron and seconded by Bob Hayes to approve the final plan for Hampshire Commons Apartments located at 143 Hampshire Street (PID 250-311, 250-310, 250-309) in the Traditional Downtown Neighborhood (T-4.2) district pursuant to Chapter 60, Article XVI, Division 2 – Site Plan Review, Division 3 – Special Exception and Division 4 – Subdivision. Vote 7-0 Motion Carries

- B. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING FINAL SITE
PLAN/SUBDIVISION REVIEW: Wahan Oaks Subdivision, 146 Manley Road (PID 198-037 & 198-038). Application by Trillium Engineering Group on behalf of Homes for All, LLC for a proposed 14 lot single-family subdivision. The property is located in the Traditional Neighborhood Development district (T-4.2B) and will be reviewed under Chapter 60, Article XVI, Division 2 – Site Plan Review and Division 4- Subdivision Review. This item is continued from the December 9, 2025 meeting.

Sam gave a staff report stating this subdivision received preliminary approval at the December 9 meeting with conditions. Since that meeting, they have provided a stormwater plan, are filing a permit by rule for wetland, have a sewer and water capacity letter, and location of wetland disturbance areas. They are opting to pay the fee in lieu of providing open space that will go to the Recreation Department and will be used toward improvements to Mt. Apatite trail improvements. Sam recommends this item be tabled to the June meeting due to it not being complete and missing information on exterior lighting, sidewalk design details, building design details, landscaping details, information regarding how the proposal meets the intent of the form based code, and documentation stating that they're proposing frontage off of a private road that's not accepted.

Kyle Berwick of Trillium Engineering Group answered questions from the Board.

The Board unanimously agreed the application is not complete.

Motion made by Riley Bergeron and seconded by Bob Hayes to table the final site plan subdivision review for Wahan Oaks Subdivision to the June 16th meeting. Vote 7-0 Motion Carries

4. NEW BUSINESS

- A. PUBLIC HEARING SITE PLAN/SPECIAL EXCEPTION REVIEW: Bear Self Storage & Auto Facility, 864, 868, 878 and 900 Center Street and 1193 Turner Street (PIDs 301-017-002, 301-018, 301-019, 301-017 and 300-009) – Application by Wright Pierce on behalf of Bear Holdings, LLC and Bear, LLC to construct a 9,000 square foot auto sales/service building with paved vehicle display areas and gravel areas for rental of storage containers. The property is located in the General Business (GB) district and Suburban Residence (SR) district and will be reviewed under Chapter 60, Article XVI, Division 2 – Site Plan Review and Division 3 – Special Exception.

Sam gave a staff report stating this is a resubmission of an application that the Planning Board approved August 13, 2024 with conditions but construction was never started and they did not come back to request an extension so the approval has expired. She said the applicant has responded to stormwater comments and made updates to satisfy that condition and they are requesting a waiver from providing a traffic impact analysis. She said staff would like to confirm if they have met with assessing to combine the four lots and recorded it as one lot as requested on the last plan. (3 are in GB and 1 in SR).

Jan Wiegman of Wright Pierce gave an overview of the project, reviewed the site and grading plans, said they are requesting a waiver for the traffic study, and explained there are two applicants because 4 lots are owned by Bear Holdings LLC and one is owned by Bear LLC.

The Board discussed that the proposed storage facility violates Suburban Residential zone regulations and because it is located on a separate lot from the auto dealership, it fails to qualify as an accessory use. The Board also noted ongoing community concerns regarding conex boxes, which are prohibited in this zone and that the proof of financial capacity is insufficient.

The public hearing was opened.

There were no comments.

The public hearing was closed.

Motion by Ed Bearor and seconded by Maureen Hopkins to deny the application for Bear Self Storage and Auto Sales Facility as being proposed due to the proposal being for uses that are not permitted in the zone for which the applicant seeks approval. Vote 7-0 Motion Carries

- B. PUBLIC HEARING SITE PLAN/SPECIAL EXCEPTION REVIEW: Town Farm Recovery Options – 249 Merrow Road (PID 186-012) - Application by Zack Cameron to change the use of the residential property at 249 Merrow Road to an outpatient recovery facility. The property is located in the Industrial (I) district and will be reviewed under Chapter 60, Article XVI, Division 2 – Site Plan Review and Division 3 – Special Exception.

Sam gave a staff report stating that the application is a change of use and that all proposed changes will be on the interior of the building. She also said the applicant is requesting a waiver from providing a boundary survey and that the last survey is old but none of the property lines are changing.

After it was pointed out there is no proof of financial capacity, Sam explained the project is being self-funded.

Zack Cameron gave a brief overview of the project and indicated he can get something signed regarding financial capacity by the person who is going to be the owner/operator tomorrow and send it to Sam.

It was noted that the applicant must demonstrate they are not located within 2000 ft from any property that is occupied by a church, school, family day care home, small day care facility, day care center, or public park or playground.

The public hearing was opened.

There were no comments.

The public hearing was closed.

Motion by Ed Bearor and seconded by Maureen Hopkins that the application for Town Farm Recovery Options is incomplete and to postpone it until the June 16th meeting. Vote 7-0 Motion Carries

- 5. OTHER BUSINESS:** Introduction to LD-1829 “An Act to Build Housing for Maine Families and Attract Workers to Maine Businesses by Amending the Laws Governing Housing Density”. Staff will introduce the new state law and discuss potential changes to Chapter 60 zoning.

Sam explained LD 1829 stating that the new law is requiring multiple dwelling units per lot and changing density and minimum lot size requirements. She said the City is working on ordinance updates to Chapter 60 and is requesting additional meetings to review the proposed changes, get the Board’s input, and receive public comment. A Meeting was scheduled for Thursday, May 28.

- 6. PUBLIC COMMENT: None**

- 7. MISCELLANEOUS:**

Maureen expressed concerns about the way waivers are treated more like variances to specific standards in the ordinance and requested staff let the Board know if they are doing it correctly and if there will be some revisions made to the ordinance.

Bilal gave an update on the Comprehensive Plan.

- 8. PLANNING BOARD ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

- 9. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Kathy Shaw and seconded by Riley Bergeron to adjourn at 8:07 p.m. Vote 7-0 Motion Carries

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