

TOWN OF LUNENBURG

Office of the Planning Board

Matthew Brenner *Chair*
Timothy Willsmer *Vice Chair*
Amanda Reid *Clerk*
Matthew Allison *Member*
Glenn McLeod *Member*



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Vacancy – Land Use Director
Logan O'Connell – Admin Asst.

MINUTES

2025-05-12

MEETING POSTED: [Yes](#)

ADDRESS: Town Hall – 17 Main St, Lunenburg, MA 01462

TIME: 6:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Matthew Brenner (Chair), Timothy Willsmer (Vice Chair), Amanda Reid (Clerk), Glenn McLeod

ABSENT: Matthew Allison

CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE

Matthew Brenner called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M. The pledge of allegiance was led by **Glenn McLeod**.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None at this time.

CHAIR / DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Chair M. Brenner outlined the context of Community Scales' upcoming presentation on MBTA Communities Act compliance options. Noted Town's intent to eventually hire a new Planner.

APPOINTMENTS

Community Scale – MBTA Communities Act compliance options

Nels Nelson (Community Scale) presented. Community Scale was directed to Lunenburg through Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP), who funded a technical assistance grant.

Lunenburg is categorized as an "Adjacent Small Town". Compliance deadline is December 2025. Noted this isn't a *building* mandate—the requirement is to have by-right multi-family capacity at 15 units per acre. Presentation is on options for *where* to put that capacity, which can include some existing housing.

Option A: 131 White St

4.92 eligible acres. 54 units currently existing.

Yields 32 units at 15 units per acre.

Yields 98 units at 20 units per acre.

Currently age-restricted (senior housing), restriction needs removal to count for MBTA Communities.

Option B: 37 Youngs Rd ("Tri-Town Landing").

9.21 eligible acres. 131 units currently existing

Yields 138 units at 15 units per acre.

Yields 202 units at 22.03 units per acre.

Yields 240 units at 26 units per acre.

Currently zoned as a Smart Growth District (40R)¹, containing the following zoning that needs to be removed to be "by-right":

Section (4) Density and unit type

(a) There shall not be more than 204 dwelling units.

(b) Twenty percent of the units shall be one-bedroom units, 70% shall have two bedrooms and not less than 10% shall have three bedrooms.

Option C: 40 Leominster-Shirley Rd

25.12 eligible acres. 0 units currently existing (undeveloped land).

Yields 376 units at 15 units per acre.

Yields 502 units at 20 units per acre.

Currently zoned Office Park / Industrial, would need to be re-zoned.

If implemented as a single-parcel district, the Town can set a maximum capacity (i.e. a cap on the number of acres that can be redeveloped). Unavailable for multi-parcel districts.

Option D: 1-9 Rogers Way

37.13 eligible acres. 120 units currently existing.

Yields 556 units at 15 units per acre.

Yields 742 units at 20 units per acre.

The options above can be combined as needed. Board to hold public information / feedback sessions between now and 06-23 meeting (when an option is chosen).

Chair M. Brenner confirmed with N. Nelson that no wetlands were present in the Rogers' Way site.

G. McLeod asked if the Board could modify these options after public feedback. Per **N. Nelson** it's possible but may be harder to communicate the end-product: authoring the zoning is easier than getting people to agree on specifics.

G. McLeod asked if Community Scale had worked with any of the communities that had pushed back against this act. Per **N. Nelson** they worked with Wakefield, initially rejected at Town Meeting. Followed back to do a different district, passed a second time. Also worked with Duxbury down on the coast, they were waiting to see what happened with Milton case – was also rejected.

The Board briefly compared "paper compliance" (i.e. using mostly existing units like Tri-Town) and "real compliance". **M. Brenner** noted the type of housing MBTA Communities aims for usually doesn't increase the population of children. He prefers paper compliance but noted benefits for some "real" options, i.e. a

¹ Eligible due to district being adopted prior to August 10, 2022.

mixed-use corridor near the Shirley station. Clarified with **N. Nelson** that the Town can only have 25% capacity associated with mixed use.

G. McLeod asked about risks of paper compliance (e.g. unexpected redevelopment, failing to pass the State / Attorney General, etc.) **N. Nelson** opined that further development of Tri-Town was unlikely since it already has un-used capacity. (It allowed for ~ 200 units but only 131 were built). Noted the State has rewarded “real-compliance” communities by making numerous grants for associated infrastructure available, and that paper compliance was more frequent than they anticipated.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

63 Lancaster Ave – Scenic Road Alteration (PBSR-25-1)

A. Reid read the public hearing notice. The joint hearing with the Tree Warden was opened at 6:40 P.M.

Dan Clapham (Unitil Forestry Supervisor for Fitchburg District) presented. Application is for removal of large dying sugar maple tree currently shedding limbs, to be replaced with similar tree. Previous Public Hearing for its removal in 2019, the Select Board supported but Planning Board did not. Has further decayed since then & caused 1-2 power outages, dropping large limbs onto the powerline & the land. Tree is on the property boundary of 63 Lancaster Ave & the Scenic Road’s outlie.

Bill Bernard (Tree Warden) has looked at tree – is in rough shape. Supports removing it.

Robert Gibbons (63 Lancaster Ave) owns property. Has only been there 2-3 years, has seen major limbs fall every snow season. Acknowledged beauty but concerned about dead wood in the cavities / danger to the public.

Chair M. Brenner noted sugar maples can rot out inside / shed old limbs while being “healthy” & not at risk of falling, asked what difference is here. **Dan** replied it’s at the end of its life (retention), currently bringing its growth towards the center & shedding outer branches. This is fine in other settings but is dangerous in its current location.

A. Reid agreed given plan to replace tree.

Motion: T. Willsmer, to close the public hearing for 63 Lancaster Ave.

Second: A. Reid.

Voice vote, passed unanimously.

Motion: T. Willsmer, to approve the removal of the tree as designated in the public hearing, to be replaced in the public right-of-way with a similar tree as able and appropriate.

Second: A. Reid.

Voice vote, passed unanimously.

1083 Northfield Rd – Special Permit, Stormwater Management Permit

(Out of order). The Board received a prior request for continuance from the applicant. **Chair M. Brenner** and **L. O’Connell** discussed whether to formally open the hearing and continue it or defer opening to the next meeting to avoid Mullin Rule quorum issues. The Board never officially opened the hearing for these. Continued to 2025-06-09 at 6:05 P.M.

Motion: T. Willsmer, to continue the public hearings for 1083 Northfield Rd Special Permit & Stormwater Management Permits to 2025-06-09 at 6:05 P.M.

Second: A. Reid

Vote: Voice vote, passed unanimously.

100 Townsend-Harbor Rd – Stormwater Management Permit

A. Reid read the public hearing notice. The hearing was opened at 6:56 P.M.

Mikael Lassila (Tauper Land Survey) presented for applicant/owner Peter M. Stafford. Previous permitting: Board endorsed a 5-lot ANR (Approval Not Required) last fall. Lots were removed from Chapter 61a program, Town chose not to exercise Right of First Refusal. Now being developed.

Locus is on easterly side of Townsend-Harbor Rd heading towards Hickory Hills. Perimeter is primarily wooded with stone wall, breaks along Townsend-Harbor Rd. Site includes 4.2 acres of hay field, 1.23 acres of wetland. (Total restricted area approx. 2.2 acres given wetland buffer zones). Drainage systems flow outward from high knoll in site center.

Soil testing / possible placements of on-site septic systems drove the lot orientation. (Lots 1 & 4 are reduced frontage, lots 2, 3 & 5 standard frontage). Septic systems submitted concurrently to Nashoba Board of Health. Proposed utility connections to Water District.

Plan to leverage grading to condense the development: sewage disposal systems are elevated due to high water table (avg ~ 2 ft to groundwater), planned homes are “drive-under”. Total disturbance is 2.4 acres. Project generally clustered within existing clearings.

Drainage systems are “country drainage”. Roof drains & footing drains direct away from street into respective drainage areas. Plan notes & best practices formulated according to NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System).

T. Willsmer asked about Lot 5’s work going into the wetland buffer zones. Per **M. Lassila** the 30 ft no-touch zone is respected. DEP typically allows abbreviated NOIs when 50+ from a “resource area”. Project is at 75 ft, our consultant recommended we do a Request for Determination of Applicability. Lot 5 will be only lot that goes before Conservation Commission. The tree line closely follows the 30 ft no touch, is a good demarcation for site work.

Ralph Swick (113 Townsend Harbor Rd) lives across from Lots 2 and 3. Explained local terrain issues on eastern side of Townsend Harbor Rd, shared photos. 1-photo-side: Photo from his driveway, looking into location for lot 2 and 3 driveways. There is a bank on the eastern side of Townsend Harbor Rd. 2-photo-side: Shows the bank on the eastern side. Concerned that flow will newly infiltrate Townsend-Harbor Rd when driveway is cut into that bank.

Chair M. Brenner noted the peer review process would likely include this. Per **M. Lassila** the pre-development area has almost 1.6 acres draining currently towards Townsend Harbor Rd, which this project reduces by half by redirecting back into the site. Since the driveways are high points sloping *into* each lot, the only portion draining out to the street is from the right-of-way to the paint.

Mike Rache (74 Townsend Harbor Rd) noted recent issues with basement flooding & rising groundwater, including neighbors. Believes it’s due to recent development at 1325 Mass Ave. Worried about any increases to the static water level from this project. Per **M. Lassila**, M. Rache’s property is near a large wetlands system (plan-bottom). Project’s design is typical, entire lot’s proposed impervious coverage for post-development is 6%.

Dave Stafford (100 Townsend Harbor Rd) owns property across from lot 4 driveway. Explained his lot has gotten wet & stayed wet into spring ever since the Town installed a catch-basin ~20 years ago (Analysis Point 3 on plan). Runoff from wetland system at plan-bottom-right goes through M. Rache's yard & into D. Stafford's parcel. Concerned about receiving more runoff (lack of contour line changes near Lot 4 plan).

D. Stafford asked about the requested waiver from Town Code [§ 204-1F\(2\)\(d\)](#), which requires certain annual pollutant removal levels equivalent to MassDEP's Stormwater Management Policy. **M. Lassila** replied that design parameters required to meet that policy weren't possible given site constraints (i.e. groundwater depth, soil conditions), which is why country drainage systems were used. Impervious area is the fastest conduit for pollutants, so directing stormwater across lawns & wooded areas mimics the behavior of the natural environment. ---

Chair M. Brenner clarified that the next meeting would also allow for questions and comments (will be continued pending peer review).

Thomas Colameta emailed prior (read by A. Reid). Opined site's previous Chapter 61a status was nominal / for tax purposes. Questioned Board's approval of multi-lot ANRs given current infrastructure strains in Town, cited school system as example. Noted personal issues with water levels. Worried about work on lot 5 within 100 ft buffer zone, as well as construction nuisance. **Chair M. Brenner** noted the Board's limited legal scope of considerations for this application (i.e. Stormwater context).

M. Lassila acknowledged the wetlands system's connection to lower portion of T. Colameta's property. Reiterated that current condition at property line is water flowing north, proposed drainage maintains that condition. Questioned ability for lot 5 to have any impact due to its lower elevation than property.

The Board discussed. **A. Reid** worried about efficacy of country drains. Prefers waiting for peer review & plans to visit the site. **M. Brenner** briefly discussed peer review costs with M. Lassila. Noted plan to revise fee structures when a Planner is hired.

Motion: Vice Chair T. Willsmer, to require \$2,000.00 for 53G account.

Second: Clerk A. Reid.

Vote: Voice vote, passed unanimously.

Jim Simpson (new owner, purchased from Peter M. Stafford) coordinated dropping off the check.

Motion: Vice Chair T. Willsmer moved to continue the public hearing to 2025-06-09 at 6:05 P.M.

Second: Clerk A. Reid

Vote: Voice vote, passed unanimously.

BOARD DISCUSSIONS

Master Plan Steering Committee – Reorganization (new member)

Per Chair M. Brenner, Finance Committee is ready to send a new member to the Master Plan Steering Committee (MPSC).

Motion: T. Willsmer, to add a member to MPSC (representative appointed by Fin. Comm)

Second: A. Reid

Vote: Voice vote, passed unanimously.

Office Update

Per **Chair M. Brenner**, the office is still getting a lot done in the absence of a planner. Floodplain Map Update was submitted to DCR. Working with EOHLC on Housing Choice Designation application.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Master Plan Steering Committee

Per **Vice Chair T. Willsmer** – minor reorganization issues. Some people on other boards leaving their positions, need those Boards' new appointees to MPSC.

Chair M. Brenner noted Over Under has received latest MPSC feedback (approx. 50% response).

Open Space Committee

Per **G. McLeod** – nothing since last meeting, will meet Wednesday. Noted previous plans for joint meeting with Planning Board on refining Chapter 61 / Right of First Refusal process.

Municipal Bldg. Design Committee

M. Allison not present to report.

Capital Planning Committee

Per **Chair M. Brenner** – has not met. Assuming members leaving their primary boards (Peter Beardmore and Tom Alonzo) won't continue with CPC, will verify with them.

Economic Development Committee

Per **G. McLeod** – ongoing conversation about trying to make Lunenburg more business-attractive. Met with with Chair of the Planning Board and the EDC. Will meet with Lunenburg Business Association (LBA) and Planning Board Chair tomorrow.

Chair M. Brenner noted the LBA is a non-government organization.

Storm Water Task Force

Per **Vice Chair T. Willsmer** – delivered intro blurb at Town Meeting. Hoping to start public engagement with the Town on future planning soon.

Montachusett Regional Planning Commission

Per **Clerk A. Reid** – met last week on Thursday for side info on MBTA Communities. Shirley is in compliance now. The grant they were able to get seems to only be for the MBTA community & its surrounding area, *and* transit stations.

MRPC also reorganizing / producing two sets of documentation—one to appease federal government, and one that's business-as-usual. **Chair M. Brenner** thanked Glenn Eaton for his ongoing leadership at MRPC.

Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee

Per **Clerk A. Reid** – haven't met, will meet on Wednesday.

MINUTES APPROVAL

The Board reviewed the minutes for the 2025-04-28 meeting.

Motion: Clerk A. Reid, to approve the 2025-04-28 minutes.

Second: G. McLeod.

Vote: **Passed 3-0-1. (Vice Chair T. Willsmer abstained).**

MEETING SCHEDULE

Upcoming meetings are **06-09** and **06-23** at 6:00 P.M.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None at this time.

BOARD COMMENT / CONCERNS

Chair M. Brenner returned to MBTA Communities. Wants to take info from Nel's presentation tonight & have a couple public meetings. (Large discussion).

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: **Vice Chair T. Willsmer, to adjourn.**

Second: **Clerk A. Reid**

Vote: **Voice vote, passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned 8:29 P.M.

Minutes by Logan O'Connell, Admin Asst.

DOCUMENTS REFERENCED

2025-05-12 EMail to planning@lunenburgma.gov – Thomas Colameta Jr

2025-05-12 Lunenburg MBTA Communities 3A Draft Zoning Scenarios – Community Scale

63 Lancaster Ave ([PBSR-25-1](#) in OpenGov):

EMail & Photos from Property Owner, Scenic Road Application.

100 Townsend-Harbor Rd ([PBSW-25-2](#) in OpenGov):

2025-04-08 Stormwater Plan for Land in Lunenburg, Massachusetts Located at 100 Townsend Harbor Road (Plan No. 24-224-SW) – Tauper Land Survey, Inc.

Photos from abutter – Ralph Swick.