

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Planning Board?

The Planning Board has five elected members. The Board is responsible for reviewing proposed development projects and making decisions on them in accordance with state statutes and local bylaws and regulations. The Planning Board is also charged with long-range planning for the community, including creating and updating the Town's Master Plan.

When does the Planning Board meet?

The Board typically meets at 7:15 p.m., in the Town Hall, on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month. In July and August the Board is generally on summer schedule and will meet once that month. You may check the town's website for the current agenda.

Are Planning Board meetings open to the public?

Yes, unless the Board deems it necessary to enter into an executive session meeting through MGL.

What is the role of the Planning Board?

The establishment of the Planning Board is authorized by Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 41, Section 81A. The Planning Board is charged with the following duties:

- Adopting a master plan and official town map of the Town
- Conducting studies, and when necessary, preparing plans of the resources, possibilities and needs of the town
- Serving as the local authority for the Subdivision Control Act; adopting Rules and Regulations governing the subdivision of land in Millbury, reviewing all preliminary and definitive plan submittals
- Drafting and submitting zoning amendments for consideration by the town. When a zoning amendment has been put forward, the Planning Board holds the public hearing and may also report its recommendation to the Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting
- Serving in some instances, as the special permit granting authority
- Reviewing and approving of acceptance of streets as town public ways with the recommendation to the town meeting; recommending roads for consideration as a scenic road
- Serving as site plan review authority

How can I get a copy of the Zoning Bylaw?

The Zoning Bylaw may be purchased [\$20.00] at the Town Clerk's office in Town Hall. In addition, a link is provided in the Planning Board section of the town's website where it can be viewed and/or downloaded at no cost.

How can I find out what zoning district my property is located in?

Please refer to the town's zoning map. A link has been provided in the Planning Board section of the town's website, and a copy is available in the Planning & Development office at the Town Hall.

Does the Planning Board have to review my project?

The Planning staff is available Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to meet with anyone interested in discussing a potential project, the permitting process, and/or the requirements for application submittal. It would be prudent to schedule an appointment to ensure staff will be available.

How do I know if I need site plan approval for my project?

Please refer to Section 12.4 of the Zoning Bylaw. Projects that require site plan approval may include the construction or exterior expansion of a residential or non-residential building or structure, change of use, the construction or renovation of parking facilities and special permit uses described in Section 14.11.

What is the schedule of fees if I'm applying for Planning Board approval?

Please review our fee schedule which is available on the town's website, on the Planning & Development page, or in the Planning & Development office.

How soon can I get on the Planning Board's agenda?

There are two kinds of applications heard by the Planning Board: those that necessitate publication of a legal notice and those that do not. If an application is submitted in a timely manner and does not require a public hearing, it may be placed on the Board's next available agenda. If an application requires a public hearing it could take between 21 and 45 days from submission of an application to public hearing date. Scheduling is dependent on current project load and advertising requirements.

Can you recommend land surveyors or professional engineers?

The Department does not recommend land surveyors or professional engineers. However, the Planning & Development office is happy to provide you with a list of engineers and surveyors known to work in the area and you are welcome to look through our application files for contact information.

How can I find out more about what is proposed?

Applications, plans, and supporting materials are on file in the Planning & Development office and are available for review. Office hours are Monday – Friday from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Why and when will I receive a hearing notice by mail?

You will receive a hearing notice if you are an abutter (as defined by law, generally within 300 feet) to a proposed development that will be reviewed by the Planning Board at a public hearing. In addition, notices are published for two consecutive weeks in the local newspaper.

Am I required to attend a public hearing if I receive a hearing notice?

You are not required to attend a public hearing if you receive a hearing notice. The notice is only to inform you that a hearing is being held, in the event that you may want to attend and/or make verbal and/or written comments on the application that is the subject of the meeting.

What should I expect at a public hearing?

At the first hearing the applicant will present plans and explain what is being proposed. Following the presentation the Board will read comments it has received into the record and the Board will ask questions. Then there will be an opportunity for those in the audience to ask questions or offer opinions. Comments may also be submitted in writing. The hearing may be closed or continued to a later date. Continued hearings may take several meetings in the future, depending on the complexity of the project.

How can I make my concerns known if I cannot attend?

Comments may be submitted in writing prior to the close of the public hearing. These letters should be signed and include the name and address of the writer. Copies will be provided to the Board members.

What happens after the hearing?

After the hearing is closed no new information can be submitted. The Board deliberates and generally either approves the plan with conditions, or denies it if it does not meet town standards. Interested individuals are welcome to attend and listen, but may not make further comments. The decision is voted on and filed with the Town Clerk by the decision deadline.

Will I be notified of the decision?

Notices of decision are not sent to abutters. You may request a copy of any decision from the Planning & Development office or the Town Clerk's office.

How can I appeal?

Appeals may be made to Superior Court (and in some cases, Land Court). There is a 20 day appeal period (from the date the decision is filed with the Town Clerk) on special permits, site plan review, and definitive subdivision plans. You will not receive notice of any appeals filed by other parties.