

**AMHERST PLANNING BOARD**  
**Wednesday, June 3, 2009**  
**Town Room, Town Hall**  
**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Jonathan Shefftz, Acting Chair; Jonathan O’Keeffe, Bruce Carson, Denise Barberet, Richard Howland, Stephen Schreiber, Eduardo Suarez (7:12 PM)

Alan Snow, Tree Warden

**ABSENT:** David Webber, Ludmilla Pavlova-Gillham

**STAFF:** Jonathan Tucker, Planning Director; Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner

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Mr. Shefftz opened the meeting at 7:08 PM. Due to the number of people who were present for the public hearing, Mr. Shefftz turned directly to the first scheduled public hearing.

**II. PUBLIC HEARING – SCENIC ROAD – JOINT HEARING WITH TREE WARDEN**

**Proposed Roadway Improvements – Sand Hill Road and State Street:**

Public Shade Trees potentially impacted by this project include the following:

Impacts include removal or root damage

Area 1 and 2 include  
Between House# 7-16 Sand Hill Rd  
14” Oak  
15” Pine  
3” Pine  
18” Oak  
8” Pine  
22” Oak  
8” Oak  
11” Twin Oaks  
24” Oak  
7” Maple  
10” Maple  
8” Oak  
14” Oak

Area 3 includes  
Between House #115-120 Sand Hill Rd.  
10” Oak  
5” Oak  
15” Oak  
30” Oak  
22” Pine  
5” Maple

Area 4 includes  
Between House# 109- 114 State Street  
10” Maple  
6” Maple  
12” Maple  
3” Maple  
14” Maple

Mr. Shefftz read the preamble and opened the public hearing. The request involves removing shade trees along Sand Hill Road and State Street, designated as Scenic Roads in Amherst. Jason Skeels, Town Engineer, presented the application. Paul Dethier of the Department of Public Works was also in attendance.

Mr. Skeels explained that the Tree Warden is technically the applicant but the work will be done by the Town. He gave an overview of the rules, regulations and standards governing the construction and repair of roads in the Town of Amherst and throughout the country. He presented information from

AASHTO (the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials) on the geometric design of roadways. The October 2004 traffic counts show that there were over 1400 cars per day using Sand Hill Road. He noted that this was not even a high usage period for the pond area [Puffer's Pond]. The design speed is 30 mph. That is the de facto speed limit since there is no posted speed limit for Sand Hill Road. The recommended minimum width of a roadway for that speed is 20 feet with 5 foot wide clear shoulders on each side for pedestrians and vehicles.

Mr. Skeels also presented a sheet of roadway design standards. He noted that the width of a typical passenger vehicle is 7 feet, and that most other vehicles such as fire trucks, garbage trucks, one-ton pick-up trucks, etc., are 8 feet wide. Sand Hill Road as it exists has variable widths. At its maximum the paved surface is 21 feet wide. At its narrowest the width is about 16 feet. The narrower sections of roadway do not have any space for pedestrians to stand or get out of the way if there are two vehicles passing one another.

Mr. Skeels proceeded to describe the proposed plan, noting that the Town of Amherst subdivision standards require a minimum roadway width of 20 feet, and usually require a much wider right-of-way than Sand Hill Road has.

Mr. Skeels described the plan one area at a time, beginning with the overall plan. The improvements will start at Pine Street and continue down Sand Hill Road to Mill Street, up to the foot of the bridge. The work will also involve drainage improvements on State Street at a point a little south of Campbell Court. The new road is proposed to be 22 feet wide.

Ms. Brestrup pointed out to the Board members that a new plan had been submitted, with only four areas of proposed work shown on it. The plan that had been sent out in the Planning Board packets had six areas demarcated.

Mr. Skeels described the process of grading slopes at a roadway edge, to create a slope that is able to be maintained. He described the work to be done in Areas 1, 2 and 3. He spoke about which trees would sustain root damage and which ones would need to be removed.

The intersection of Sand Hill Road and State Street will be narrowed, green space will be added and sight distance will be improved. One of the original site plans showed some impacts to trees near the bridge, but the plan has been redesigned to eliminate tree removal here.

In Area 4 there will be drainage improvements designed to handle storm water flowing off Sand Hill Road. Storm water drainage will eventually be discharged to a wetland. Prior to discharge the storm water will be cleaned of sediments and oil, some will be infiltrated to the ground and then the remainder will be discharged to the adjacent wetland. Three large infiltration galleries will be installed underground on the northwest side of State Street. These infiltration galleries need to be installed off the roadway edge and therefore some trees will be removed.

Mr. Suarez asked questions about the methods used to clean up the oil and sediments from the storm water and Mr. Skeels described how the drainage system would work, including water and oil separators. The structures will require cleaning at least twice a year. One of the trees in this area (10" Maple) is already dead and will be removed. The remainder of the trees on the list for this area will either sustain root damage or will need to be removed.

Mr. Skeels stated that he is looking for approval of the plan for tree removal from the Planning Board and the Tree Warden.

Mr. Tucker asked the Tree Warden to make a statement about the health of the trees.

Alan Snow, Tree Warden, stated that the majority of trees in two of the areas were in pretty good health. There is one dead tree in Area 4, along with a stand of young trees that can probably sustain a little root damage and still survive. Area 1 will sustain the greatest damage to the mature tree canopy. The older trees will experience a greater degree of root impact. There are no serious defects in the trees in Area 1, although they might benefit from some root and structural pruning.

Mr. Snow stated that in Area 3 there is a 22" White Pine tree that has a lot of decay, damage from the pileated woodpecker and root damage from erosion. Other than that the trees are in good condition.

Mr. Shefftz asked the Tree Warden to clarify his position with the Town. Mr. Snow stated that he is a volunteer, not a town employee. He is a Mass. Certified Arborist with an Associate's Degree in Arboriculture and a Bachelor's Degree in Urban Forestry. He has over 20 years experience working in the field. He was also a member and past chair of the Shade Tree Committee.

Mr. O'Keeffe asked Mr. Skeels to clarify how much of the damage to the trees would be due to the proposed widening of the road and how much would be due to moving the road to be within the boundaries of the public way.

Mr. Skeels stated that in Area 1 the roadway is pretty far outside of the ROW and that is where the most damage would be sustained by pulling the roadway back to be within the ROW. In Area 1 the level of damage would not change substantially if the road were not widened. In Area 2 there could be less damage if the road were not widened. In Area 3 there is a combination of damage caused by the moving of the road to within the ROW and the widening. Even moving the road 1 foot to get it back within the ROW would end up damaging trees because of the need to regrade the slope. One oak might be saved if there is no roadway widening in Area 3. In Area 4 the footprint of the road will not be changing. The tree removal is necessitated by construction of the drainage improvements.

Ms. Barberet commented on the heavy amount of traffic on the road and the speed of the traffic given the existing poor condition of the roadway surface. She asked what effect the widening and repaving of the road would have on the volume and speed of traffic in the future. She noted that this road is a popular short-cut.

Mr. Skeels stated that the road is a high-volume, narrow, rural road, but there are some things that can be done to keep speeds down. Since the ROW has sharp curves, the roadway, once it is relocated to be within the ROW, will have sharper curves. This will help to slow traffic. In general the road will be safer overall, regardless of the volume of traffic because there will be space for the cars and the pedestrians. If the town merely paves the road without widening it, people will still drive faster.

Mr. Schreiber summarized the priorities of the roadway improvement plans as follows:

- 1) Widen the road so that it meets town standards;
- 2) Put the road back into the town right-of-way;
- 3) Fix the drainage and deal with the environmental issues.

Mr. Skeels stated that by solving the drainage problems the roadway pavement will last longer.

Mr. Schreiber noted that people actually drive slower on this road because of the dangerous situation. Can it be posted at a lower speed? Mr. Skeels explained that speed limits are set by doing a traffic study and finding out the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile of the speed of drivers. Establishing this speed as the posted limit must then be approved by MassHighway and the Select Board before being posted.

Mr. Schreiber stated that the goal should be to prevent the road from being used as a short cut. The volume of traffic should be reduced. He also asked about prescriptive easements with regard to the right-of-way issues.

Mr. Skeels stated that the Select Board and Town Meeting would probably want to do things properly by doing a taking and paying the landowners for the property that is being taken.

Mr. Suarez thanked Mr. Skeels for the presentation. He stated that he is familiar with the roadway. The neighbors are not happy with the roadway surface, but he is concerned with the potential dangers presented by a nicely paved road and about the potential increase in traffic. There will be more pedestrians and bicyclists using the road and he is concerned about the potential for accidents. He supports paving the road and installing the drainage improvements, but he is concerned about the safety of residents of the area and of the people who use the pond. Mr. Suarez suggested that speed bumps might be useful in controlling the speed of traffic.

Mr. Skeels stated that installation of a sidewalk would cause even more impacts. The plan calls for the minimum improvements that will increase safety for pedestrians.

Mr. Howland stated that the pavement weaves within a larger right-of-way. The purchase of pieces of right-of-way from the neighbors would probably not be expensive. There are a lot of quite old trees here and removing the old trees would probably be good for the remaining trees. The road has to be widened, the right-of-way issue is minor, and the trees have to be removed to make it safer. Should there be a plan to replant new trees? Perhaps the road could be kept rural but also safe. There are a lot of trees up the hill, so the area will not appear to have been clear cut. New trees can be planted in new locations.

Mr. Skeels did not have any objections to planting new trees. He stated that the DPW did not want to deal with takings because it lengthens the process. Takings need to go through the Select Board and Town Meeting and it is too late to make this current Town Meeting. Lawsuits sometimes result from takings and this can extend the process by several years. The road is in bad condition and needs to be repaved soon.

Mr. Howland stated that the land can be taken with a Special Town Meeting and that the taking of easements might be considered in lieu of outright takings.

Mr. O'Keeffe asked about the required width and whether it would be possible to pave 20 feet of roadway and leave the extra 2 feet as unpaved for pedestrians. Mr. Skeels stated that this could be done, but the 2 feet would need to be level enough for someone to walk on and would need to be confined to one side of the road to make an area wide enough for a pedestrian. Mr. O'Keeffe also stated that the sharper curves would act to lessen the speeds and offset the impact of having a smoother surface.

Mr. Shefftz asked about the width of vehicles other than cars. Mr. Skeels stated that although these vehicles are not much wider than cars [8 feet versus 7 feet] they have larger turning radii and sometimes have extended mirrors and therefore need more pavement width to make turns. The extra space will also be good for pedestrians and cyclists.

Ms. Barberet asked about the possibility of abandoning the pavement and turning this into a dirt road (like Long Hill Road in Leverett). Mr. Skeels stated that anything within the riverfront area and uphill from the river is impossible to maintain as a dirt road and the surface would wash off into the river in a storm. The stretch from Puffer's Circle to Pine Street might be able to become a dirt road.

Mr. Schreiber asked about striping. Mr. Skeels stated that this road would not be striped.

Mr. Snow presented his viewpoint. He stated that the town can apply for a waiver to do something different with respect to the roadway design. He noted that this is a Scenic Road and that the proposed plan as designed will drastically change the scenic road characteristics. He has spoken with some of the residents who love the feeling of the road. The grading on the side slopes will be grassed and will change the way the road looks. The town voted back in the 70's to designate a series of Scenic Roads around town. The intent was to maintain certain characteristics. He questioned whether the gains from the improvements were worth the cost of losing these characteristics and questioned whether the proposed improvements would make the road safer for pedestrians. Henry Street had road improvements done recently and it has become a faster road. He questioned the need for paved shoulders on this scenic road. He does not want to set a precedent for changing scenic roads. The Public Shade Tree Committee voted unanimously to recommend to the Tree Warden not to accept this request for removals. Mr. Snow agrees that we do not need to remove these trees. He thinks that the DPW should ask for a waiver from the town standards for roadway design so that the trees do not need to be removed. The Shade Tree Committee has five members.

Mr. Tucker explained that the Public Shade Tree Committee is a subcommittee of the Conservation Commission created to work with and advise the Tree Warden on a range of issues and responsibilities. They are not a permitting board; they are an advisory body which has been in existence for more than 30 years.

Mr. Shefftz asked about Vincent O'Connor's statements quoted in the Site Visit Report regarding the DPW's intent to go before the Select Board to ask for waivers from town roadway design standards.

Mr. Skeels stated that Vince O'Connor is on the Public Works Committee, but he does not represent the Public Works Department. If the DPW is not allowed to design the road as they think it should be designed, then they will ask for waivers. Mr. Skeels would decline to put his engineer's stamp on such plans because he doesn't think they would be safe.

Members of the public spoke as follows:

Ryan Quinn of 12 Sand Hill Road expressed appreciation for the DPW's efforts to try to create a plan to improve conditions on Sand Hill Road. He asked how many pedestrians and bicyclists used the road each day and he noted that Puffer's Pond and the Mill River Conservation Area are very popular and that there are a number of trails in the area. There is a sidewalk loop that begins and ends near Sand Hill Road but does not include Sand Hill Road. Therefore pedestrians are drawn to the area but there is no place for them to walk on the road. This Scenic Road has a special feel which would be

lost if the road were widened. He mentioned other roads that are safe for vehicles but not enticing for pedestrians.

Peter Kibbler of 115 Sand Hill Road expressed opposition to the roadway improvement plans as designed. The area used to be a sand pit. The road runs along the edge of the old sand pit. He has a steep driveway that is bordering on too steep for access. He has concerns about the intersection of the roadway with his driveway and his neighbor's driveway. Maybe the road should not be open to two-way traffic. Perhaps it should be a one-way road uphill. Some people speed down the hill. A smoother road will potentially cause more accidents. He reported that someone on a bicycle was hit by a car in the vicinity of Sand Hill Road just that evening. The potholes have made the road safer this spring. He finds it dangerous to exit his driveway onto Sand Hill Road because of the speed of the traffic.

Richard Rubin of 14 Puffer's Circle spoke in support of the roadway improvements. This is a dangerous road that needs to be repaired and probably widened. The trees lean over the road. A school bus and PVTA vehicles drive here every day. This is both a Scenic Road and a town road. It is dangerous to walk on the road. The road abuts a conservation area where there are a lot of trees. There will be only a few trees that will be removed as a result of the roadway improvements. Trees can be replanted within the conservation area. The road needs proper drainage to handle the storm water, the oil and the sediment and it needs to be repaved and widened. The work should be done soon. Perhaps the road could be made one-way. It really needs a sidewalk all the way down to the pond. Mr. Rubin stated that the current condition of the road has a deleterious effect on vehicles.

Mr. Shefftz asked about the process that allowed the construction of the crosswalks and blinking lights along Route 9 at Amherst College. Mr. Tucker stated that these crosswalks are raised platforms, not speed bumps, linking paths on either side of the road. Amherst College paid for these raised platforms and the blinking lights, and they were installed with town permission. Sand Hill Road serves as an access road between Bridge Street and Montague Road. If the road becomes one way, then emergency response time will be lengthened. It is not possible to close the bridge or make Sand Hill Road one way at this time. Maybe, with planning, similar traffic calming methods can be considered in the future.

Mr. Schreiber asked about the maximum slope of a driveway. Mr. Skeels stated that the roadway work could return driveways to a slope that is close to their existing slope. The roadway improvement plans are conceptual and will need to be refined as the design progresses. The work cannot be done before DEP and Conservation Commission approval and it is not budgeted for anytime soon. It cannot be funded by ARRA [federal government recovery] funding because this road is not a route that is significant to the regional area. The town has a schedule for patching roads one day a week, but the work is concentrated on the major roads. Patching Sand Hill Road is not reasonable because of the drainage problems.

Sally Lawall of 71 Sand Hill Road expressed mixed feelings about the proposed plans. She noted that there were no problems with the road until the school busses started using it.

Diana Stein of Red Gate Lane stated that the trees arching over the road protect the paved road surface from further degradation by shading the road.

Mr. Snow noted that shade trees prevent extreme heating of asphalt, which increases the life of the road, and that the tree canopy intercepts storm water falling from the sky. He further noted that the Tree Warden does an assessment of town-owned trees to determine when they need to be taken down.

Mr. Schreiber stated that all of the trees proposed for removal are on the north side of the road and therefore will have little effect on shading of the pavement.

Marie Desch of 55 Sand Hill Road spoke in support of the roadway improvements. The road is in the worst condition that she has seen in 34 years. It is a safety issue. There have been accidents. A sidewalk is needed along with the other improvements. She does not have a problem with the tree removal and believes that the trees shading the road keep the ice from melting in the winter, thereby prolonging hazardous road conditions.

Mr. Schreiber MOVED: to close the public hearing. Mr. O’Keeffe seconded and the motion was passed 7-0.

Mr. Suarez stated that he is very familiar with this area and that there are quality of life issues here. There are issues for EMT services, people who drive and walk along the road and drainage. However, this is a Scenic Road and he would like to see a road that is safe, accessible for EMT services, has good drainage and continues to be scenic. The town ought to consider a one-way road, going up the hill. There should be space on the road for pedestrians and bikes.

Mr. Howland MOVED: to recommend to the Tree Warden and the Town Engineer that the plan is not in a condition that will meet the goals of the town, it destroys the scenic qualities of the road and it should be rejected. Mr. Suarez seconded the motion.

Mr. Tucker asked about the impact of just the drainage improvements. Mr. Skeels explained these impacts, stating that the new drainage pipe would be placed within the paved road, that the tree removal would be decreased if only the drainage improvements were done and that only trees on State Street would need to be removed if the work were limited to drainage.

Mr. Shefftz pointed out that this public hearing was advertised as a tree issue and that the Board and the public had spoken about many other issues during this meeting.

Mr. Tucker stated that under the Scenic Roads Act the town has jurisdiction over public shade trees and stone walls. Based on this jurisdiction, Planning Boards around the state have been able to speak about proposed changes to existing scenic historic roads. In Amherst, the Scenic Roads Act has provided a “vehicle” to talk about roadway design. He noted that rejection by the Planning Board could drive this design [in a different direction].

Mr. Schreiber spoke against Mr. Howland’s motion and in support of the proposal. He noted that the town has experts who have looked hard at the issues and that the road is in a precarious condition and that the Planning Board cannot “second-guess” the Town Engineer. This has historically been a disturbed landscape in that it was a sand pit.

Mr. O’Keeffe commented that this is a long-term project and that the Board needs to choose from the options with which it has been presented. The status quo is clearly unacceptable. One option is to pave the road and do the drainage improvements, only, but this will not improve the safety situation.

There will be more cars and the pedestrians and cyclists will be less safe. He agreed with Mr. Schreiber's comments.

Mr. Shefftz spoke in support of Mr. O'Keefe's comments. The proposal from the DPW has costs and benefits. A one-way road will face far more obstacles. This is a modest proposal from the DPW which will result in the road being safer. He will vote against Mr. Howland's motion although he will be sad to see healthy trees removed.

Mr. Suarez stated that the proposed work is not comprehensive and that there is a need for a comprehensive vision. This is a political decision requiring more extensive involvement by the stakeholders. He will reject the proposed plan. It is premature and it needs more work.

Mr. Shefftz noted that there is an upcoming Conservation Commission hearing on this project.

Mr. Tucker suggested that it is not possible to create a perfectly balanced plan. This is a constrained area. The Board needs to ask itself whether several more design iterations will produce a plan that will reduce damage to trees and still accomplish the tasks. Are there other traffic-calming measures that could mitigate traffic impacts here?

Mr. Skeels stated that this is the second iteration of the proposed plan. The DPW can replant trees near the edge of the roadway. This will give the road a tighter, narrower feeling that will help to calm traffic.

Mr. Snow stated that the Shade Tree Committee voted to recommend to the Tree Warden that he not approve the tree removal. While Mr. Snow expressed respect for the capabilities of the engineers who prepared the plan, he stated that the town needs to do things a little differently. The plan will create a wider road which will still squeeze the pedestrians. The engineers are capable and willing to design a narrower road.

Mr. Howland encouraged the Board to say "no" now so that other options can be pursued.

Mr. Tucker noted that many people had said in careful ways that they would rather have another plan. He asked whether the DPW could try other alternatives and then bring back a revised plan that would reduce the damage to trees and also accomplish the goals of the task.

Mr. Skeels noted that the DPW has already looked at and will continue to look at many alternatives for this roadway.

Ms. Barberet spoke in support of Mr. Howland and Mr. Snow's comments. Safety is important; however, it is a fallacy that these improvements will make the road safer. She will vote against the proposed plan.

Mr. Shefftz asked for a vote on Mr. Howland's motion. The Board voted 3-4-0 (Howland, Barberet and Suarez voting for the motion; Shefftz, O'Keefe, Carson and Schreiber voting against the motion) and the motion was defeated.

As Tree Warden, Mr. Snow noted his approval of Mr. Howland's motion and his disagreement with the proposed plan to remove trees along Sand Hill Road.



Mr. Schreiber MOVED: to approve the plan as presented by the DPW. Mr. Shefftz seconded the motion. Mr. Schreiber suggested an amendment.

Mr. Schreiber MOVED: to approve the plan as presented by the DPW as an extreme measure with the request that the DPW come back with another plan that shows a “kinder, gentler” version with fewer trees lost. Mr. O’Keeffe seconded the motion.

Mr. Shefftz stated that if this is approved by the Planning Board it goes to the Select Board. He summarized the motion as follows: “The Board likes this plan, but wants modifications to it, while still preserving its essential aspects.”

Mr. Snow suggested that if the Board doesn’t like what it sees it should vote against the plan. He stated that if the Board says “no” the DPW will come back with a better plan.

Mr. Tucker stated that there are two ways to handle this situation. The Board can say “no” and then the DPW will come back with a revised plan, or the Board can say that the general direction seems sound but there are aspects about which the Board has concerns, such as tree removal and the effect on traffic of the roadway widening.

Mr. Schreiber commented that the intent of his motion is to enable the DPW to proceed. Mr. Snow stated that the Board and the Tree Warden were here just to talk about trees and that they should activate a process to achieve their goals.

Mr. Tucker explained that the Scenic Roads Act is a way for communities to try to preserve the character of the scenic roads in the state.

Mr. Shefftz asked for a vote on Mr. Schreiber’s motion, which he summarized as expressing approval for the DPW’s proposal with the condition that the Board would like to see modifications, if possible, for preserving some of the trees, while still meeting the project’s main goals.

The Board voted 4-3-0 and the motion passed (Carson, Schreiber, Shefftz and O’Keeffe voting for the motion; Barberet, Howland and Suarez voting against the motion). While Mr. Snow, Tree Warden, did not participate in the Planning Board’s vote, he had previously, during the meeting, indicated his disagreement with the plan to remove trees along Sand Hill Road.

Mr. Shefftz declared a short recess at 9:25 p.m. and the Board returned at 9:32 p.m. Mr. Howland left the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

### **III. PUBLIC HEARING – PLANNING BOARD RULES & REGULATIONS**

#### **PBR-1-09 Planning Board Rules & Regulations, Articles I & III**

*(Continued from April 1 & 29, May 20 2009)*

Mr. Shefftz explained that this was a continued public hearing.

Mr. Tucker described changes to the Planning Board Rules and Regulations, including some that had been suggested by Mr. Howland since the May 20, 2009, Planning Board meeting. The changes suggested by Mr. Howland appeared in bold black italics on a revised copy of the Rules and Regulations dated May 27, 2009.

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Mr. Tucker reviewed each of the proposed changes and the Board discussed the changes to the Board's internal organization (Article I) and its conduct of public hearings (Article III), the latter of which included adding provisions recognizing Town Meeting's recent adoption of the Mullin Rule. The Board discussed the changes.

Mr. O'Keeffe MOVED: to close the public hearing. Mr. Schreiber seconded and the motion passed 6-0.

Mr. O'Keeffe MOVED: to accept the revised Rules and Regulations as presented and amended. Mr. Carson seconded and the motion passed 6-0.

**I. MINUTES – Meeting of May 20, 2009**

Ms. Barberet stated that on page 3 the word "Face's" should be "Faces".

Mr. O'Keeffe MOVED: to adopt the Minutes as corrected and amended by Ms. Barberet. Ms. Barberet seconded and the motion passed 6-0.

**IV. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Open Space and Recreation Plan**

Mr. Suarez stated that he was concerned about some of the delineations on the open space mapping and he was concerned about Mr. Ziomek's absence from the meeting. Mr. Suarez had a list of questions about the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). Mr. Tucker explained that Mr. Ziomek became ill and went home, but that Mr. Tucker was familiar with the Plan and could answer many of the questions. He suggested that questions, changes and recommendations could be sent in to the department and pointed out that Ms. Barberet had sent in an extensive list of suggested edits and recommendations. He encouraged the Board to endorse the Plan this evening. He reminded the Board that this is a plan of the Conservation Commission.

Mr. Suarez expressed concern that the Board was being asked to examine the Plan in a narrow way. The Plan should be looked at in an overall way because it will affect many other areas of concern.

Mr. Tucker made a statement about the generality of the maps and the plan. Part of the purpose of the Plan is to enable access to grant funds and other state funds for specific open space and recreation projects. It is a five-year plan. Circles drawn on the maps are intended to be large and flexible to encompass as many as possible of our public purposes. Over time these will change because the community is evolving.

Mr. Suarez directed the Board's attention to the Fort River area on the map and the area around College Street and South East Street. He noted the riparian corridors that were marked on the plan and noted that Fort River is an important corridor. He mentioned species of fresh water mussels that are found in Fort River.

Mr. Tucker noted that ball fields are often on flat land and those areas are often in riverfront areas. These areas need to be identified and included in a circle on the plan. The issues of the riparian corridors will have to be addressed if anyone tries to develop recreational facilities within these corridors.

Mr. Suarez stated that Hop Brook is not drawn as a riparian corridor on the plan.

Janet McGowan of 706 South East Street stated that she had concerns about the dwarf wedge mussels in Hop Brook and that Hop Brook needed to be put on the plan. She also asked why the rail trail was not included. Ms. Barberet pointed out that the rail trail is on Map #7 of the OSRP. Mr. Tucker stated that the rail trail is owned by the state.

Ms. McGowan stated that she would like to see the relationship between the Map of Rare and Endangered Species and the OSRP map [the Five-Year Action Plan]. She asked if priority habitat was looked at as part of the OSRP.

Ms. Barberet stated that the maps are not all-inclusive but they should not be exclusive either.

Mr. Schreiber MOVED: that the Planning Board endorse the Open Space and Recreation Plan with a request that Mr. Tucker relay to the authors of the plan the concerns that had been expressed in the Planning Board meeting. Mr. O’Keeffe seconded. Mr. Suarez suggested a friendly amendment, that Hop Brook be specifically drawn on the plan and that some of the other observations by the Planning Board and the public be noted. The motion passed 6-0. Mr. Tucker stated that he assumed that this vote empowered the chair to sign a letter of endorsement and the Board agreed by consensus.

**B. Other - None**

## V. NEW BUSINESS

### A. Committee Nominations

- 1) **SOS (Save Our Stop) Committee** – Mr. Tucker explained that this committee was established to deal with the potential loss of the Amtrak station [stop] in Amherst. He further noted that there were ongoing discussions about the potential use of Palmer as a hub for an east-west line between Western Massachusetts and Boston. Mr. Suarez commented that this is a great opportunity for Amherst to look at community rail for our region and to thereby decrease the traffic in the I-91 corridor.

Mr. O’Keeffe MOVED: to nominate Mr. Schreiber as the Planning Board’s representative to the SOS Committee. Mr. Suarez seconded and the motion passed 5-0-1 (Schreiber abstained).

- 2) **Puffers Pond 2020** – Mr. Tucker noted that Puffers Pond is a Conservation Area and not a recreational facility. The town is trying to create a management plan for Puffers Pond. The Board discussed nominating Mr. Webber as the Planning Board’s representative on the Puffers Pond 2020 Committee. The Board members will discuss this nomination further at their next meeting, when Mr. Webber is present.
- 3) **Agricultural Commission** – Ms. Pynchon, the Board’s representative on the Agricultural Commission has resigned from the Planning Board and Agricultural Commission. The Board will discuss a nomination to this commission at a later date.

**B. Other - None**

## VI. FORM A (ANR) SUBDIVISION APPLICATIONS

Mr. Shefftz endorsed the following:

ANR2009-00008, 870 South East Street – Patrick Sullivan

**VII. UPCOMING ZBA APPLICATIONS**

The Board decided not to review the following:

ZBA2009-00038, Sunderland Road – W.D. Cows Inc.

**VIII. UPCOMING SPP/SPR/SUB APPLICATIONS – None**  
**IX. PLANNING BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

**A. Zoning Subcommittee** – There was no report except to note that the Zoning Subcommittee would hold a meeting, starting at 5:00 p.m. on June 10, 2009, at the VFW Hall, to tour the neighborhood of Main/Dickinson/High Streets in preparation for a discussion about the possible rezoning of the area.

**B. Master Plan** – There was no report of the Master Plan Subcommittee.

**X. PLANNING BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**A. Pioneer Valley Planning Commission** – Mr. Shefftz noted that Mr. Howland had given him the following information to report:

- 1) The 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the PVPC would occur on Thursday, June 11<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 in Westfield. The cost is \$20 for wine, hors d'oeuvres and a buffet dinner;
- 2) A letter had been received regarding three energy-related initiatives;
- 3) PVPC expressed concern about the fact that Amherst has not chosen to endorse various initiatives of PVPC.

**B. Community Preservation Act Committee** – No report.

**C. Agricultural Commission** – No report.

**XI. REPORT OF THE CHAIR** – No Report

**XII. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR** – Mr. Tucker noted that there would be a Scottish Festival in Rhode Island, at the Washington County Fairgrounds, on Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup> and another in Northampton at Look Park on July 18<sup>th</sup>.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Shefftz MOVED: to adjourn this meeting at 10:22 PM. Mr. Schreiber seconded, and the Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted:

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Christine M. Brestrup  
Senior Planner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jonathan Shefftz  
Acting Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

**Note:** These Minutes were approved on June 17, 2009, and amended and reapproved on July 15, 2009.