



Planning Board: Seven Members (3 years)

Planning Board webpage: <https://www.amherstma.gov/197/Planning-Board>

Planning Board Rules and Regulations: <https://www.amherstma.gov/501/Planning-Board-Rules-Regulations>

Planning Board in the Zoning Bylaw, Appointments:
<https://www.amherstma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/46399/13-ART10-Updated-May-2014-ATM?bidId=>

Zoning Primer:
<https://www.amherstma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/24058/TMCC-Zoning-Primer?bidId=>

Most decisions of the Planning Board, no matter how many members are present at the meeting, are by a simple majority. Decisions on special permits are by 2/3 vote with a minimum of 5 members needed to pass a motion to approve. Site Plan Review also requires a 2/3 vote with a minimum of 5 members voting in the affirmative to pass a motion to approve.

Meets two Wednesdays per month, from 7:00 pm – 10:00 pm, in the Town Room, plus one annual workshop on administrative practices. The Zoning Subcommittee of the Planning Board also meets the same night as the Planning Board, from 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm.

Meetings are live broadcast, and are also taped for later viewing on Channel 17 and AmherstMedia.org

Work between meetings is limited to site visits, reading materials provided by Town staff, and to sending questions to Town staff. Members cannot email each other about pending applications, decisions, bylaws, or issues as all deliberations must be held at a posted meeting to comply with the Open Meeting Law.

Operating under various sections of MGL Ch. 41 beginning at Sec. 70, the Planning Board studies the resources and needs of the community and prepares plans that involve land use, including development, cluster developments, housing, transportation, and zoning.

Under Ch. 40A Sec. 5, the Planning Board reviews the Town Zoning Bylaw and can propose amendments to improve it. The Planning Board is required to hold public hearings and make a report to Town Council on all proposed zoning changes.

Under Ch. 41 Sec. 81K-81GG, the Planning Board approves subdivisions and promulgates rules and regulations for subdivision construction, including the construction of roads, sidewalks, as well as water and sewer lines in subdivisions.

The Planning Board approves site plan review applications for cluster developments and other types of development. It conducts site plan reviews for commercial, office, and other non-residential uses of land. The Board approves special permits for open space community developments and other selected uses, and makes recommendations to the Zoning Board of Appeals on special permits, variances, and appeals.

Under Ch. 41 Sec. 81D, the Planning Board developed the Master Plan which was adopted February 3, 2010.

The Planning Board advises the Town Council on the release for general use of property taxed as forest, farm, or recreation land (See MGL Ch. 61). It also advises the Town Council on the granting of special tax status for qualifying developments (See MGL Ch. 121A). The Planning Board must approve proposed changes in all town ways designated locally as scenic roads (See MGL Ch. 40 Sec. 15C).

Revised 08-06-19