



# Town of Mount Holly

## Planning Commission

## Planning Commission

### Town Office & Remote Electronic – Regular Meeting

Thursday, December 18, 2025  
6:30 PM

Commission members present: Jon McCann, Jim Seward, Andy Schulz (via zoom), Andrew Seward, Stephen Michel

Also present: Faith Tempest, Jason Burt, Ron Unterman, (via Zoom) Michael Gilbert, Maria Gilbert, Kate Nadler, Alison Nadler.

1. Call to order: Chair called the meeting to order at 6pm.
2. Changes to agenda: Chair asked to add an announcement after item 3.
3. Approval of minutes: Andrew Seward moved to approve November 18<sup>th</sup> public hearing and regular minutes, seconded by Stephen Michel approved unanimously.
4. Chair announced the death of David Johnson, Town Treasurer, former Planning Commissioner, lister. His encyclopedic knowledge of the Town and his support for the Town will be missed.
5. Reports & Announcements
  - a. Administrative Officer: AO will follow up with Tyler Siegordner regarding a BCR for construction on Sawyer Hill Road.
  - b. Planning Commission Chair: The Commission has received an environmental notice of a stream alteration and river corridor construction on the Bowlsville Road – this is related to the work to move the bridge from Rte 103 to Bowlsville Road. The Chair noted discussion regarding the Planning Commission at the last Select Board meeting and recited the contents of a letter sent by the Chair to the Select Board in response to comments made by Ron Unterman.
6. Correspondence
  - a. Subdivision proposals
    - i. Gilbert sketch plan review: AO introduced the application for a minor subdivision at 180 Straight Road; she thanked Mr Burt for including the wetlands on the plan, and for submitting the Permit Navigator results with the application. Chair invited Mr Burt to add any other relevant details. Mr Burt stated that there is a ww permit in place for Lot 1, design works are underway for a waste water system for the proposed Lot 2 but the permit has not yet been issued. Each parcel will have a residence constructed on it. Chair noted that without the second ww permit, procedurally this may be complicated given the Town's subdivision regulations, requiring a second application to the Planning Commission once construction is to begin, so procedurally it would be simpler to wait for the ww permit to be issued. Mr Burt responded that the landowners want to be sure the subdivision will progress before they move ahead with further expenditure. Chair acknowledged the limitations in the Town's regulations, but also noted that if all of the checklist criteria are met, then the Commission can potentially make a finding on the application moving forward. The checklist was reviewed, with all criteria met except for the requirement for a wastewater permit. Chair asked if the parcel was part of an earlier subdivision; Mr Burt confirmed that there was a previous subdivision but it was not recorded. Mr Burt has the survey, provided by the property owners. Chair asked Mr Burt to submit this earlier survey to the Commission. Commissioner Schulz asked about the wetlands and the 50 buffer, but there is a proposed underground service through the wetlands and asked if this may be a problem and if so, is there an alternative location? Mr Burt noted that this could be done by boring to avoid disturbing the wetlands. Commissioner Schulz also noted his appreciation of the concerns of the owners about investments before the sub-division is approved, but also noted that the public hearing may raise issues which the Commission has not considered. Chair responded that the



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Commission can only provide advice at the moment but confirmed that the proposed subdivision does not suggest any problems, and suggested the owners go ahead with the ww application, streamlining the process to one hearing. Once the ww permit is available the application can be considered complete and the Commission can move to setting the hearing date. Mr Burt and the landowners agreed with this process.

- b. Email / Other: none.
- 7. New Business
  - a. Act 250 Tier 3 mapping: Chair noted two changes to Act 250, the road rule which has already been agreed and tier three mapping of important and significant natural resources for which there is a draft map. The proposed maps are based on certain geographic features, but there is an opportunity for comments. The method has generated maps which show natural resources, but have not identified key resources (eg headwaters, habitat connectors) which are noted in the Mount Holly Town Plan. The deadline for comments is not clear. Chair suggests further discussion, but also could ask for clarification of why some things are not on the maps, and asking for the Town Plan maps to be considered. Chair proposed coming back to this after the holidays.
  - b. Comment period on updated Wetland Rules: This is the Governor's executive order relaxing wetland rules to facilitate more residential housing, and DEC is revising the rules. Most of the relaxation occurs in village centers or built-up areas and reduces buffers around wetlands. Chair suggested there is little to comment for Mount Holly given there are no wetlands in village areas, and very little development pressure on wetlands. Commissioners agreed that this is no need for comments.
  - c. Comment period for Okemo LRMP public scoping: Chair attended a public scoping, but there is no draft plan yet and this will take several years to develop. There was limited opportunity for public comment, though there will probably be an opportunity for further discussion once there are specific plans to consider.
- 8. Unfinished business
  - a. Subdivision Regulations revision process: Chair has been in touch with Cavendish, spoke to the PC chair, and participated in the public hearing for subdivision regulations. Cavendish have sent their RRPC version and their final version. This is the first time the Cavendish PC have prepared subdivision regulations, so the Mount Holly PC may have a different view, but we can use these documents to help move the process forward. Commissioner Andrew Seward asked if there is any update on potential RRPC support, but Chair noted this is still not forthcoming.
  - b. Commissioner Michel raised follow up on the Belmont General Store JO, but had forgotten his notes. He gave a synopsis from memory, including the information provided vs information not provided. There is also confusion in the opinion and documentation over Commissioner Schulz' email to the coordinator and on whose behalf it was sent. Communication about the historical designation of the building are unclear, though the Coordinator asked the store owners to speak to the Vermont Historic Preservation Society but it is not clear if they did. Questions around the familial relationship between different LLCs to create more than one acre were not considered by the Coordinator, who only looked at legal entities. There was no consideration of the contracts between the various LLCs involved in the running of the store. Commissioner Jim Seward noted that the number of seats in the store stated in the ww system only refers to seats inside the store, not on the porch or deck. Chair stated that Commissioner Michel could bring this issue back to the Commission at the next meeting if he wished to, but it appears there is no cause to appeal the JO. Commissioners agreed. The Chair also asked that going forward there should be a reset and greater transparency on all sides.
- 9. Public comments: Ron Unterman asked to comment on the JO discussion, noting that it should have been on the agenda, so that interested persons could attend. Chair responded that it will be on the next meeting's agenda. Chair and Ron Unterman held a vigorous discussion on the mechanisms for handling meetings and agenda items. Commissioner Andrew Seward



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noted that the Commission asked Commissioner Michel to report back on the details of the JO. Mr Unterman asked for a copy of letter Chair read out, asked if it would be in the minutes of the PC. Chair responded that it is the Select Boards decision since the letter was submitted to the Select Board. Mr Unterman asked if the PC members agree with the letter and Commissioners Andrew Seward, Jim Seward and Schulz confirmed they did; Commissioner Michel responded that he did not completely agree with its contents. Mr Unterman stated that his comments at the Select Board questioned the actions of a public body but the Chair's letter to the Select Board impugned Mr Unterman's character, honesty and motivation as a private citizen who is trying to do something good for the Town, and as such he will respond, but will also consult his lawyer. Commissioner Andrew Seward asked Mr Unterman what was being done for the good of the Town? Mr Unterman referred to his statements that the PC has become adversarial, in particular Commissioner Schulz's email to the Act 250 Coordinator. Commissioner Schulz reiterated that his email was a legitimate action in the JO process, that there was no violation of any laws or rules, that he acted to provide information since the Tilly's were not forthcoming in their interactions with the Act 250 Coordinator, and that it is appropriate for both private citizens and Planning Commissioners to provide information to the State. Commissioner Schulz asked that a line be drawn under the discussion. Chair noted that the question of information being sought by the Act 250 Coordinator from the PC were a result of the Store owners' unwillingness to provide information despite several requests. Mr Unterman reiterated that the Planning Commission has become adversarial and does not support business, and the specific contents of Commissioner Schulz's email to the coordinator. Commissioner Andrew Seward noted that everyone should follow the same rules and standards, as others who have had Act 250 applications have done, and that there is nothing wrong in asking for the JO and providing information which relates to it. Mr Unterman stated that his only interest is in keeping the Store open.

10. Adjournment: Commissioner Michel adjourned the meeting at 8.07pm.

These minutes are in draft form until approved by the Planning Commission at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

A video of this meeting is available at: <https://okemovalley.tv/mount-holly-planning-commission-1218-11>