



Town of Mount Holly Planning Commission

Town Office & Remote Electronic – Regular Meeting

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

6:30 PM

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

Also present: Faith Tempest, Jason Burt, Ron Unterman, Tim Schaeffer, Steve McDonald (via Zoom), Maria Huyler (via Zoom), Anne Hamilton (via Zoom), Maria Gilbert (via Zoom), Kate Nadler (via Zoom)

1. Chair called the meeting to order at 6.30pm
2. Changes to agenda: None
3. Approval of minutes: January 20th 2026 minutes. Chair noted two errors and asked for deletion of a statement attributed to him and made a motion to approve the minutes with these corrections, seconded by Commissioner Schulz, approved unanimously. Minutes of December 16th public hearing, Chair moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner Seward, approved unanimously.
4. Reports & Announcements
 - a. Administrative Officer

BCR: Longobardo, Sawyer Hill Road, renovation and extension of a garage.

AO also noted that the Kelley mylar is ready for signature. Chair asked AO to clarify if the Decision and Permit had been recorded.
 - b. Planning Commission Chair: Chair noted he will attend a workshop on the Community and Housing Infrastructure Program (CHIP), a State funded program to support housing development through infrastructure investment, and will report back to the Commission.
5. Development review
 - a. Subdivision proposals
 - i. Gilbert: Jason Burt presented the final plat with details on sheet 2 of engineering approaches to wastewater to protect the wetlands. Chair asked for confirmation that the wastewater permit has been issued and recorded; Mr Burt confirmed. A public meeting date was scheduled for 17th March at 5.30pm
 - ii. McDonald/Huyler/Carney sketch plan review: Commissioner Schulz noted that he had no personal or financial stake in this issue, but had assisted the owners to buy the property and so would recuse himself from the discussion, but would continue to participate as a member of the public. Steve McDonald had submitted a sketch plan and presented the proposal. Three current owners of a 1.5 acre parcel wish to divide it. Each of the three owners also own three adjacent parcels, and if divided, this would add 0.5 acres to each of the parcels owned by the three individuals. The three owners bought the land to conserve it and do not intend any additional development. Chair asked if there is an instrument to enforce the conditions of no development eg by the Wilderness Community, or through an easement, or are the applicants asking the Planning Commission to put conditions on a subdivision if approved. Mr McDonald responded that the Wilderness Community stipulates only one dwelling per lot, and since each of the three owners already have a residence on each of their lots the conservation issue would be moot. Chair noted two challenges to this, firstly whether to use a Boundary Line Adjustment as the instrument to determine new boundaries? If a BLA is the instrument, it would be appropriate to hold a public hearing ensure that information should be on the record since, while it would not create any new lots it would remove a lot, and the size of the adjustment is significant. Chair proposed that the applicants submit an application, arrange a survey, and a hearing can be held before the PC issues a decision. Commissioner Michel noted that since there is no clear BLA process, we are falling back on the subdivision process. Chair noted that the hearing



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process has been used in the past, and that the process for extinguishing a building lot, needs to be on the record through a public hearing. Commissioner Michel asked about the covenants of the Wilderness Community. Chair noted that a hearing would allow all parties, including the Wilderness Community, to put their view on the record. Chair asked for the subdivision application to be submitted. AO also noted that a survey would be required. Mr McDonald asked about conditional approval before the survey. AO responded that this was not possible. Mr McDonald asked for clarification of the distinction between the meeting and hearings. Chair outlined the distinction between the process role of the PC and its quasi-judicial role in determining land use changes. Ms Huyler commented that she was in agreement with the proposed way forward.

- iii. Shaeffer BLA: Mr Schaeffer presented details of his application to make a BLA, following construction of a barn on one of his two adjacent parcels. He wants to move the boundary which would place the barn on one lot, and the house on the other. The shift would be approximately 20 feet, leaving 5 acres on Lot 1 and just over 5 acres on Lot 2. Chair proposed that this is an insignificant change and Commissioners concurred. Commissioner Schulz asked why he wanted the house and garage on two separate lots. Mr Schaeffer said if he wanted to sell lot 1, he could keep the garage on lot 2. Chair proposed that the AO can administratively approve this; Commissioners agreed to this unanimous consent resolution. AO and Chair also clarified that a new mylar will be required and must be recorded.
6. New business: none.
 7. Unfinished business
 - a. Adopt VLCT-based Rules of Procedure and Hearing Procedures: Chair had shared an updated draft for each of the procedures based on comments received from Commissioner Michel. Regarding Hearings, Commissioner Michel asked about the wording on conflict of interest. Chair noted that the PC should follow the Town's policy; Commissioner Michel suggested linking the PC rules for hearings to the Town's conflict of interest policy. Chair proposed that it be included by reference in the Rules of Procedure as well, along with confirmation that Commissioners have read it. Commissioners agreed to the proposed revisions to the Rules of Procedure for Hearings. Chair reviewed Commissioner Michel's comments on the Rules of Procedure, including on the Chair's ability to consult with other entities for advice without consulting first with the PC. Commissioner Michel stated that the wording is not specific enough and gives broad authority to the Chair to consult with outside entities. Chair clarified that the wording does not allow the Chair to take any action without the approval of the PC. Commissioner Schulz concurred with this view. Ron Unterman asked why this section was included since it is not in the VLCT draft; he also suggested that the proposed rules may contravene the Open Meeting law. Chair noted that this section makes clear the role of the Chair and its limits. Commissioner Schulz concurred that this makes the Chair role clearer, and limiting the role, or requiring emergency meetings before the Chair could act would prevent the Chair from fulfilling their role. Commissioner Seward noted the difficulty of identifying what constitutes an emergency. Chair reviewed the language as written and noted that it addressed the concerns raised by Commissioner Michel, who in turn accepted that he had no alternative language. On committees, Commissioner Michel stated that the Chair should not be the person to establish a committee without consulting with the PC. Chair noted that this language comes from the VLCT model. There was additional discussion on setting meeting agendas, on the conduct of and participation in hybrid and remote meetings, and posters/signs in the meeting room. Chair proposed, and Commissioners accepted, that when VLCT guidance gives specific language, that language should be used. Commissioner Schulz moved that both sets of rules be approved with the changes noted during the course of the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Michel. Chair opened discussion, Ron Unterman asked to speak. He noted that rules of procedure on the role of the chair are not in the VLCT model and so it is unclear why they are included; he also noted that the requirement to submit email addresses, and check emails set a potentially dangerous precedent; also not in the model is the section on committees so why include it. Mr Unterman stated that if



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there are issues not in the VLCT model the safest thing is to follow the model exactly. Mr Unterman asked why the deliberations for Hearings are closed meetings, and referred to the Chair's comment at the last PC meeting saying decision on whether these should be open is discretionary, and whether the Commission has formed an opinion on that? Chair responded that it is case by case, giving an example of discussion on public land where there may be value in conducting deliberations in public. Commissioner Michel and Commissioner Seward noted that closed sessions allow members to speak frankly. Chair noted that when not in the model, elements are carried forward from previous versions and the Commission is happy with them. Chair thanked Commissioner Michel for his detailed scrutiny of the draft. Chair called a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

- b. Subdivision Regulations revision process: tabled to next month. Chair was not able to consult with RRPC regarding their support but will ask again.
- 8. Public comments: Ron Unterman stated he would send comments by email.
- 9. Upcoming meetings: Public hearing and meeting 17th March. 5.30pm and 6.30pm.
- 10. Adjournment: 8.52pm

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

A video of this meeting is available at: <https://okemovalley.tv/mount-holly-planning-commission-217>