

Planning Board
May 13, 2026
Meeting Minutes – Draft

Attendees: Chairman Paul Ziarnowski, Elizabeth Schutt, Gary Stisser, James Liegl, Jessica Yuhas, David Stringfellow

Absent: Jay Jackson

Also in attendance were Sarah Desjardins, Town Planning Consultant, Planning Board Liaison Robert Penders and Margaret Derk, Board Clerk.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM.

Planning Board to discuss requested changes to the Boston Town Code regarding minimum residential lot sizes

Chairman Ziarnowski reminded Board members that drainage was not something to be discussed because it is a separate issue from what has been proposed and what the Board has been asked to comment on.

Chairman Ziarnowski also reminded Board members that the use of cluster is not a given, but rather an option particular to the individual site. He noted that when a cluster subdivision is proposed, a conventional subdivision plan must also be submitted and the number of proposed homes is the same in both scenarios. He stated that he does not support eliminating the use of cluster in the Town of Boston because it is just an option the Planning Board can consider.

Board members expressed their individual thoughts regarding the proposal to increase the minimum lot size for residential subdivisions as follows:

- Mr. Liegl stated that Chapter 103 of the Boston Town Code addresses storm water and a protection plan. He stated that this chapter gives the Planning Board power regarding storm water and drainage concerns and he does not think that the Town has to increase residential lot sizes because of this power the Planning Board possesses. He noted that rather than changing the Town Code, the Planning Board should exercise the power it has been given by the Town Code. He stated that the Town Code indicates that the use of cluster does not have to be approved by the Planning Board. He stated that he does not feel that changing the Town Code to increase lot sizes is necessary and that the Town Code does give the Planning Board latitude when reviewing a proposed cluster subdivision. He noted that the Town Code indicates that the subdivision regulations may be altered or amended by the Planning Board in such a manner as the Planning Board may deem necessary for its consideration and approval of plats.

- Ms. Schutt stated that Boston's lot sizes are in line with Eden and Hamburg's, which she thinks is a good thing. She stated that she understands people's desire to increase residential lot sizes, but she feels that increasing lot sizes will make housing that much less affordable in a time when affordability is a large concern for many. She stated that she would rather not increase lots sizes now, especially because the State is pushing for more affordable housing, and would rather deal with the State later if and when it requires small towns to put some sort of concentrated housing developments in. She noted that she does not think the Town should increase minimum residential lot sizes.
- Mr. Stisser stated that he does not like restricting what builders can propose to the Planning Board.
- Ms. Yuhas read the following statement: "After reviewing the discussion and considering the town's comprehensive plan, I understand the reasoning behind the proposal to increase the minimum lot size requirement for new subdivisions from 15,000 square feet to 20,000 square feet in an effort to preserve the rural character of the town. However, at this time, I do not believe a code change is necessary. The current code already provides the town with planning oversight and flexibility, while allowing each subdivision proposal to be reviewed on its own merits. I believe there are existing tools within the current framework to address concerns related to layout, density, drainage, and compatibility with surrounding areas without necessarily increasing minimum lot sizes across the board. I also do not believe cluster development should be eliminated entirely from the code. Cluster developments are not mandatory and are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Keeping that option available allows the town to retain flexibility in future planning decisions while still maintaining oversight of individual projects. While I understand and respect the goal of preserving the town's rural character, I believe the town should also remain cautious of potential tradeoffs associated with larger lot requirements, including reduced housing availability, increased housing costs, and less flexibility in long-term planning."
- Mr. Stringfellow stated that he believes that cluster is being utilized by developers to increase their profits. He stated that he does not like leaving it up to the developer to decide how small a lot he is going to provide. He stated that all land not developed in a cluster subdivision should be used as developed and maintained park areas.
- Chairman Ziarnowski read the following statement: "Cluster housing is not a given for developers, but an option. A conventional site plan must be submitted and an evaluation by the community and board of merits of each are considered. Getting rid of this option may present a less than favorable choice on a particular parcel. The number of houses does not change, just the layout. Evaluations of subdivisions should be on a case by case basis and keep the cluster options. This town does not live in a vacuum, and at present, with affordable housing being an oxymoron, and housing availability being limited, AND the recent completion of the Comprehensive Plan and zoning code, timing of this proposal would have been better served 30 years ago. State and County oversight has an impact in what goes on in municipalities. We on the Planning Board are not privy to the pocket books of the town, and the needs and

development necessary for a sustainable community rest in the decisions of the Town Board. Zoning codes arbitrarily changed that have been on the books for years sets a bad precedent if the only reason is, it's now in my backyard and I don't like it. It can have a domino effect on community stability, income and controlled growth. Would it be great to slam the door on all future housing development, as this proposal would be a step in that direction, many might say yes. Would it be sustainable and fiscally responsible to do so, I believe that ship has sailed. I am recommending to the Town Board that at this time the proposal to change the zoning code for subdivisions should not be considered."

Mr. Liegl made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stisser, to approve the March 2026 minutes. All members voted in favor of the motion.

Mr. Liegl made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stisser, to approve the April 2026 minutes. All members voted in favor of the motion.

Mr. Stringfellow made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stisser, to adjourn the meeting. All members voted in favor of the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 P.M.