

**HINGHAM PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**  
**FEBRUARY 2, 2026@ 7:00 PM**  
**REMOTE MEETING**

**Planning Board Members Present Remotely:** Tracy Shriver, Gary Tondorf-Dick, Kevin Ellis, and Gordon Carr, Crystal Kelly

**Planning Board Members Absent:** None

**Also Present:** Emily Wentworth, Community Planning Director

At 7:00 PM Chair Shriver called the Planning Board meeting to order and stated the following:

*“This meeting is being held remotely as an alternate means of public access pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025 suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law. You are hereby advised that this meeting and all communications during this meeting may be recorded by the Town of Hingham in accordance with the Open Meeting Law. If any participant wishes to record this meeting, please notify me at the start of the meeting in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, § 20(f) so that I, as Chair, may inform all other participants of said recording.”*

Chair Shriver confirmed no other attendees requested to record the meeting.

Chair Shriver took roll call attendance of other members present including, Gordon Carr, Crystal Kelly, Gary Tondorf-Dick, and Kevin Ellis.

**Hearing(s) & Discussion**

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Chair Shriver began by opening the hearings for Article BBB: Brew Pub, Brewery, Winery, and Distillery Use Update, Article CCC: Site Plan Review Updates and Article DDD: North Fire Station Zoning District. Then Chair Shriver passed the role of presenter to Emily Wentworth, Community Planning Director.

**Article BBB - Brew Pub, Brewery, Winery, or Distillery Use Update**

Ms. Wentworth moved to the first Article for discussion. Article BBB - Brew Pub, Brewery, Winery, or Distillery Use Update. She advised that the intent of the article was to expand where the use would apply and that it is located under section 4.18B of 3A. If adopted at Town Meeting, Article BBB would be added to the use table as a Special Permit allowance added to the Office Park, Waterfront Business, Industrial Park, and Limited Industrial Park Districts. She noted it has already been allowed since 2024 in Business A, Business B, and the Industrial Park Districts. She shared with the Board that to date no applications have been received. She also shared that initially the article was considered an option to expand economic development in other areas of town. In 2024, the Board of Health raised some concern about this use particularly around where liquor would be consumed and how it would affect certain members of the community, especially youth.

Considering the lack of demand and the concerns previously mentioned, Ms. Wentworth recommended the Board consider withdrawing this article until further research was completed or the Board has had more experience with this use.

Member Tondorf-Dick felt there were two areas, Office Park and Waterfront Business that differ in use from Industrial and Industrial Park. He asked how this would work in Waterfront Business or Office Park as distinguished from what is done now. Ms. Wentworth responded that Waterfront Business is a bit more discreet as it affects only three properties that are limited in size, making it difficult to locate both this use and the required parking for this use. Therefore, it may be impractical to locate a brewpub, brewery, winery or distillery on those three properties in particular. She also noted the Office Park District was split into two areas of town, mostly in South Hingham with a small bit in North Hingham, which was developed with the Cove multi-family development (formerly South Hingham Mutual), and it is unlikely to add to or displace that use. She also noted there was a preliminary subdivision application in South Hingham that suggests potential zoning amendments in the future.

Member Tondorf-Dick asked about the area south of 3A along Beal Street and East of Beal Street, where a former shoe warehouse, Talbots, and others were all located and if these properties are in the Office Park District. Ms. Wentworth replied that they are within Limited Industrial and Industrial zones. She went

on to state Talbots and the Lincoln Plaza are Industrial, and the former Hitchcock Shoe is Limited Industrial Park. These were largely built-out and may not be compatible with the new use.

Member Kelly agreed with tabling the article given the concerns and constraints of the locations. Member Carr offered that there have been no applications in the areas currently allowed nor in the areas for consideration to add the use, so this is just speculation, not market response at this point. Ms. Wentworth agreed.

Tracy Shriver made a motion, seconded by Gary Tondorf-Dick, to withdraw the Brew Pub, Brewery, Winery or Distillery Use Update zoning article in the from consideration at Annual Town Meeting 2026.

The motion passed by roll call vote:

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| <b>In Favor:</b> | Crystal Kelly, Gordon Carr, Gary Tondorf-Dick, Kevin Ellis, Tracy Shriver |
| <b>Opposed:</b>  | None                                                                      |

### Article C - Site Plan Review Updates

Ms. Wentworth went on to review Article CCC: Site Plan Review Updates. She displayed a slide showing Article CCC and its four parts. The first would eliminate site plan review with Special Permits A2 and A3. The second would require Minor Site Plan review for projects that disturb 75% of total lot area. The third would require submission of a recorded decision for any project subject to Site Plan Review (not just those subject to a building permit). The fourth would enable the Planning Board to establish an administrative review process for certain minor site plan reviews or minor modifications to approved site plans.

Ms. Wentworth reviewed the history of Site Plan Review and the processes and thresholds that have been in place in Hingham over time. First adopted in 1965, the focus of Site Plan Review was on special permits and a cost threshold of \$5,000 triggering review. In 1978 (not shown on the slide), the Town adopted categories of specially permitted uses, with A1 and A2 distinguishing projects. Projects that were reviewed by Zoning Board were A1 and projects that were reviewed by the Zoning Board with recommendations by the Planning Board were A2. In 2003, the site plan review threshold was amended to increase cost threshold to \$20K, and to add a new threshold of 20,000 SF of land disturbance. In 2006, the Planning Board began administering the Site Plan Review process. In 2020, the land disturbance trigger was reduced to 5,000 SF (with 20,000 SF for Major Site Plan Review) and Minor vs. Major categories were distinguished. Then in 2022, there was an overall update including Site Plan Review becoming its own permit and elimination of the cost threshold. She went on to explain the chart showing the number of applications for various types of site plan reviews.

Member Tondorf-Dick commented that the slope information was also added in 2020 because of issues with water runoff. Member Carr asked about the spike in number of applications around 2021. Ms. Wentworth said the addition of SF applications and reduction of dollar driven ones offset each other in total number of applications.

Ms. Wentworth went on to explain the first part of the article, which eliminates site plan review in connection with a special permit, A2, issued by the Zoning Board of Appeals, or a Special Permit A3. She emphasized that the timeline was intended to show the progress of refinements made since 1965 and the triggers for site plan review, and this just a part of the evolution. She offered the examples of Nona's Ice Cream that moved from 19 Main Street to 25 Main Street, a dentist expanding their space from 7 to 9 Central Street, and Su Escuela expanding within their space.

Ms. Wentworth moved on to part two, another fine-tuning measure, which is an expansion of site plan review, supported by the Residential Compatibility Standards Subcommittee. This change adds a Site Plan Review threshold of disturbing 75% or more of the lot. This would account for impacts in denser neighborhood and would only affect projects on lots that are less than approximately 6,700 SF in size, because larger sites were already captured under the 5,000 SF threshold. She showed a map to illustrate some examples. Member Tondorf-Dick asked about the slope requirement and Ms. Wentworth replied that this would not touch the current slope information.

Member Tondorf-Dick felt that this fills a gap they have seen in their site reviews. Member Kelly agreed that it would capture smaller lots in places such as Crowe Point. A discussion followed among members about how this would affect raze and rebuilds and regarding the previous triggers that were set. Ms. Wentworth assured the Board that with the 5,000 SF, the projects that require review are being captured. Member Ellis agreed that this would help denser neighborhoods where a project could have greater impact.

Ms. Wentworth went on to share a slide illustrating several corrective Items included in part two.

Ms. Wentworth then moved on to the third part of the update, a substantive item, traditionally called a cleanup article. This would require submission of a recorded decision for any project subject to site plan review, not just those subject to a building permit. Sometimes the Board reviews site plan applications based on land disturbance, and they do not require a building permit, such as major landscaping or wharfs. This would ensure that those decisions also are recorded, and the recording is filed with the Planning office. Included with this third part of the amendment were some text changes. She shared how the text would be changed as well as some additional redline edits to be completed.

Ms. Wentworth reviewed the intent of the fourth amendment. This would enable the planning board to establish an administrative review process for certain *Minor Site Plan reviews or Minor Modifications* of approved site plans. She referred to the current section presently. Section ‘a’ allows the Board to waive certain requirements of Site Plan Review, such as a public hearing or waiving the approval of a minor modification to an approved Site Plan. Conversely, subsection ‘c’ reiterates language from pre 2022 and states that Board can establish an administrative process for Minor Site Plans. Ms. Wentworth stated the current criteria for Minor Site Plan review. She went on to explain that the Board could delegate Minor Site Plan review to staff, a peer reviewer, or one Board Member.

Ms. Wentworth explained the benefits of this fourth amendment. She explained how this would reduce the Board’s reviews by about 25%, with small changes on approved plans being approved at the Planning Office. It would save residents and builders time and streamline the process. It would also save time at Board hearings. Member Carr felt the Board would lose sight of projects post decision with this proposed change. Ms. Wentworth stated that these are small changes for example a tree being placed 5 feet from where it was drawn into the approved site plan. She went on to confirm major modifications such as a missing rain garden would still be brought back to the Board for review. The Planning staff would track and document the changes. She explained that the article gives the Board the ability to create this process and the details around its use could be discussed ongoing. Chair Shriver agreed that the Planning Board is the only Town Board that does not have this ability. He went on to say that a Board member could be designated to review an application outside of meeting time. Member Tondorf-Dick asked how abutters would be notified, and would the change apply to previously approved projects. Ms. Wentworth explained the Board’s current abilities and how this change would add to their options. Member Tondorf-Dick asked for measures be to put in place to honor the needs of the residents and what would be at risk with this additional layer of business efficiency. Ms. Wentworth responded that staff is already making recommendations to the Board with regard to changes requested by the applicant, whether they are waived or not, and the Board does not usually overrule staff’s recommendation. Member Tondorf-Dick asked further questions on requirements regarding public hearings vs. meetings, to which Ms. Wentworth answered and supplied examples. Member Kelly offered that there was an administrative review process when she was on the Conservation Commission, and it worked very well. She added that this would not be a requirement, but gives the ability to the Board and it could be administered in a way that makes everyone comfortable. Member Tondorf-Dick reviewed additional concerns, but acknowledged it would allow the Board to have more time for planning instead of just permitting.

Tracy Shriver made a motion, seconded by Gary Tondorf-Dick, to recommend the adoption of Article CCC: Site Plan Review Updates zoning article in the form submitted by the Select Board and presented during the public hearing.

The motion passed by roll call vote:

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| <b>In Favor:</b> | Crystal Kelly, Gordon Carr, Gary Tondorf-Dick, Kevin Ellis, Tracy Shriver |
| <b>Opposed:</b>  | None                                                                      |

**Article DDD – North Fire Station Zoning District**

Ms. Wentworth moved to the last Article for discussion, Article DDD – North Fire Station Zoning District update. She shared a map and explained that this was the first time the Board was seeing this proposal to rezone a single parcel of land located at 230 North Street from the “Official and Open Space” district to the “Business A” district. After reviewing the neighborhood and adjacent zones, Ms. Wentworth offered that this property was originally located in a business district up to 1977, so this amendment would allow it to be zoned back to what it was. Now that the fire station has been relocated, this amendment would expand the types of uses that could happen in this location and listed some possibilities, such as stores, restaurants, offices, and banks. The dimensions and setbacks also would be fully conforming to the Business A standards, where it is not currently conforming.

This article was initiated by the Select Board, along with a separate article to dispose (sell or long-term lease) the property. Member Tondorf-Dick confirmed that this was in the Historic District and that this fire station is one of three in Hingham designed by Eugene Bickford. He went on to say as a civic landmark, this building should be saved and asked if the rezoning is intended for the Town to sell it. Ms. Wentworth said this would encourage adaptive reuse. There was a short discussion on whether there was anything hazardous to the building or site, as there were some studies done previously, and new users would need to investigate before entering into an agreement with the Town.

Chair Shriver opened to public comment and there was none.

Tracy Shriver made a motion, seconded by Gordon Carr, to recommend the adoption of Article DDD – North Fire Station Zoning District Zoning article in the form submitted by the Select Board and presented during the public hearing.

The motion passed by roll call vote:

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| <b>In Favor:</b> | Gordon Carr, Kevin Ellis, Crystal Kelly, Gary Tondorf-Dick, Tracy Shriver |
| <b>Opposed:</b>  | None                                                                      |

Members of the Board and Ms. Wentworth engaged in an informal discussion regarding projects up for review at future meetings, interviews scheduled for hiring new staff, and the state's regulations and permitting of small cell battery storage.

Tracy Shriver made a motion, seconded by Crystal Kelly, to adjourn the Planning Board Meeting at approximately 8:30 PM.

The motion passed by roll call vote.

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| <b>In favor:</b> | Gordon Carr, Gary Tondorf-Dick, Kevin Ellis, Tracy Shriver |
| <b>Opposed:</b>  | None                                                       |

Meeting Materials:

*Agenda Summary, dated February 2, 2026*

Article B - Brew Pub, Brewery, Winery, or Distillery Use Update

Full text of proposed amendment

Article C - Site Plan Review Updates

Full text of proposed amendment

Article D – North Fire Station Zoning District

Full text of proposed amendment