



BILLERICA PLANNING BOARD

Town Hall

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Michael Parker, *Chair*

Blake Robertson, *Vice Chair*
Marlies Henderson
Evens Cimea

Edward Giroux, *Secretary*
Christopher Tribou
Anthony Ventresca

Planning Board Meeting

Minutes

November 10, 2025 @ 7:00 P.M.

Hybrid

Videoed by BATV

Can be Viewed: <https://billerica.cablecast.tv/CablecastPublicSite/?channel=3>

Members	Present
Michael Parker, Chair	Y
Blake Robertson, Vice-Chair	Y
Ed Giroux, Secretary	Y
Marlies Henderson	Y
Chris Tribou	Y
Evens Cimea	Y
Anthony Ventresca	Y

Staff

Katherine Malgieri- Director, Planning & Community Development
Jane Merrill – Interim Senior Planner

Open Mic

10 residents, most from 216 and 218 Rangeway Road, spoke at Open Mic, expressing concerns and questions about the Planning Board discussing Swanson Meadows (Agenda Item 2). Some residents requested that the Town and the Planning Board slow down and investigate more into the technical concerns about construction and environment raised in past meetings. Some residents questioned why the topic was back on the agenda after Article 38 was defeated in Fall Town Meeting. About a third of the way through Open Mic, a Point of Order was called to ask the chair end Open Mic since the topic most speakers were commenting on was second on the agenda; Parker allowed Open Mic to continue. Some speakers expressed concern with the developer's history, both in and out of Billerica. Other uses like schools and athletics were identified as being allowed in the current zoning.

Additional details on the potential contamination of the ground were provided, and the Planning Board was asked to determine the level of contamination before any plan is made. The Planning Board was asked if it was looking at just the golf course property or the adjoining property (Bedford Woods) as well. One resident asked the Planning Board to share their opinions on the land. Another resident asked how Board of Health approvals might factor in.

Chair provided a few answers to questions that came up, such as the agenda item being the starting point to talk about the property and future land uses in five years.... Not about elderly housing and not revisiting the denied warrant article. No plans or applications are filed.

Agenda Item 1 – SPSP – 161 CONCORD ROAD – PARCEL IDS 68-22-1 AND 69-29-2
Jim Dangora (Attorney), Zachary Richards (Project Manager)

Motion: To open the Public Hearing for 161 Concord Road.
Moved: Giroux
Seconded: Ventresca
Vote: Motion passes seven (7) to none (0)

Dangora stated that this project is a modification of a previous project for a GMP Biotech building from 2022. The applicant is seeking to modify the proposed building to better suit the needs of potential tenants for Flex Light Manufacturing. The total size of the proposed building will be reduced from 203,000 to 147,000 sq ft. The access drive will not change from the original approval.

Richards presented a PowerPoint detailing the changes in the plan (https://billerica.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/2025-11-10_BerkeleyBillerica-PBHearing1.pdf)

- 1) The change from biotech to flex light manufacturing allows for a reduction in the overall height of the building but will require the building to be longer than the original plan.
- 2) The change in overall size also reduces the number of parking spaces required from 365 to 264.
- 3) The traffic impact will be reduced from the original plan due to the reduction in square footage.
- 4) The original plan had a Building Green Strip 35%; the new plan increases this to 43%. They will still need relief from the requirement of 50%.
- 5) Seeking a waiver for volume amount of stormwater infiltration from the Board of Health.

The Board was supportive of the new plan. Discussion largely focused on the changes to the stormwater infiltration system, particularly the location for snow storage. Board members also asked if they could extend the bike line further than the original approved site plan. Richards answered that there are some grading issues that may make extending the bike lane further than the original site plans cost prohibitive, but they would discuss with DPW to determine the feasibility of this.

Jennifer Farmer (167 Concord Road) asked how many loading bays there would be. Richards explained that the loading capacity remained the same, but designed less consolidated for more tenant flexibility.

Parker asked staff if they had any comments; Malgieri answered that the Peer Review had not been completed yet and she recommended that the Board continue the hearing until the December meeting.

Parker had to temporarily leave the meeting at 8:12 and handed the gavel to Giroux.

Motion: To continue the Public Hearing for 161 Concord Road.
Moved: Ventresca
Seconded: Henderson

Vote: Motion passes seven (7) to none (0)

(Agenda Item 3 below was heard before Agenda Item 2)

Agenda Item 2 – SWANSON MEADOWS – OPEN DISCUSSION

Parker began this discussion by reading correspondence into the records: An October 28, 2025 email, received from Swanson Meadows Golf Course property owners, requesting to be added to the November agenda to “discuss future development possibilities of Swanson Meadow”. The Chair then noted that a separate email was sent from Swanson Meadows abutting property owners to some Town Meeting representatives, alleging that the discussion was an attempt by the Chair to revive a rejected warrant article and undermine the will of Town Meeting. In light of the growing unrest, the golf course owners sent in a written statement for the meeting, which the Chair read in third. It stated that that the golf course owners respect the outcome of the Town Meeting vote and are looking for clear guidance from the Board, Town leadership, and the community as to what would best support the Town’s needs and priorities; not looking to remove the restriction early, but to begin planning site maps soon, needing clarity now about the town’s goals and preferred path forward.

Parker reiterated that the purpose of tonight’s agenda item was to bring the community together in a transparent manner to discuss the long-term plan for this property, similar to how the MBTA Communities process was developed. He attempted to address misinformation in the resident email, which led to public outbursts from audience and a need to regain order.

Board members discussed that the Select Board could meet to discuss the right of first refusal, even if it seemed unlikely due to the size of the land bank account and other capital facilities projects. No vote was taken to ask them, as the intent of the agenda was to start discussion, not to make any votes. They discussed the various roles between Select Board and Planning Board, and if a joint meeting might be viable. They also discussed that a lot of the comments at meetings are about what people don’t want, and the hope of the item was to talk about what we do want, perhaps by conducting a charrette with all stakeholders to dispel misinformation and determine a community vision for this property.

Motion: To table this discussion until a later date

Moved: Giroux

Seconded: Robertson

Vote: Motion passes seven (7) to none (0)

Agenda Item 3 – SITE PLAN REVIEW UPDATE - NMCOG

Kelly Lynema (NMCOG), Isabel Emmet (NMCOG)

Lynema thanked the Board for their comments on the previous draft of the Site Plan Review update and presented some of the adjustments made in response. She reminded the Board that the administrative review would allow planning input on small, by-right projects that the Board is otherwise not reviewing. She stated that who is empowered to conduct administrative reviews of projects should be included in the Board’s Rules and Regulations, not in the bylaws, to make it easier for the Board to adjust the process as necessary. There was some discussion about whether proposed “4.7.A – Purpose” should describe the review process as “equitable” or “proper and appropriate”. Lynema also stated that solar facilities are covered by the Dover Amendment. She also noted that there were some comments about the timeline for each review tier; the timelines they included were based on best practices in other communities.

Agenda Item 4 – REPORT FROM MASTER PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

Ventresca presented the progress of the review of the Master Plan. The committee found that close to 85% of the items listed in the Master Plan were completed. The committee believes that the Town should begin work on a new Master Plan as soon as outside funding becomes available. When this happens, the committee will make recommendations for areas of focus. Henderson, who was a member (Secretary) of the 2015-2018 Master Plan Committee remembers that the VHB consultants intended the plan to be a “living document” with a committee to monitor implementation.

Agenda Item 5 – REPORT FROM RULES AND REGULATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

Robertson presented the progress on the Planning Board Rules and Regulations document. He lead the Board through his findings for various responsibilities that the Planning Board has according to the Town Charter and General Bylaws that there is not clarity on how the Board accomplishes. He specifically called out the Planning Board’s annual report, subdivision control, CPC consultation of the Planning Board for annual Public Hearing, the Street Acceptance process, construction employment, stormwater waivers, and marijuana dispensaries. He requested that the Planning Board contribute comments to these items. Robertson also underscored that the Board has not kept up with the mandate to create comprehensive annual assessments of the needs, possibilities, and resources of the town. Henderson gave feedback about how the document limits the chair’s duties and powers and recommended referring to the AGO’s guidance documentation. Tribou wondered what managing a dispute between Board members where one member needed to be removed from the meeting would look like.

Other Business

2026 Planning Board Calendar

Motion: To accept the proposed 2026 Planning Board calendar
Moved: Ventresca
Seconded: Henderson
Vote: Motion passes seven (7) to none (0)

September 9, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To accept the September 9, 2025, Planning Board minutes as amended.
Moved: Giroux
Seconded: Henderson
Vote: Motion passes seven (7) to none (0)

Committee Updates

CPC – No updates.

NMCOG – They held an annual meeting they discussed long term planning objectives for the region.

OSRPC – Committee is thankful for the support for transferring town-owned parcels into Article 97 protection and plan on submitting another warrant article in the spring to give more parcels Art. 97 protections.

LORAX Committee – Have not been able to schedule a formal meeting due to lack of quorum, but Tribou has reached out to the Tree Warden to loop them into the discussions.

Staff Updates:

- New town website – Billerica.gov – shared-screen and gave a short walkthrough of main features (see meeting recording to watch the walkthrough.)
- CHAPA is offering a “Housing Leadership Academy” for elected officials who interact with housing policy.
- CPTC offering new webinars
- 1 & 2 Federal Street filed and will be on a future agenda.
- Building permits were filed by Avalon Bay for the residential portion of the Mall development.
- Chase Bank received a Certificate of Occupancy before the residential portion of the development was completed in accordance with the conditions of the decision.
- DPW facility estimated to be completed by summer 2026.
- Rec Center estimated to be completed early fall 2026.
- Ditson Park – the playground and basketball courts are completed, walking paths and parking are paved, the pavilion is still in progress. Will be open in the winter.
- Fire station is out to bid, estimated start time is January 2026 with a completion date of Spring 2027.

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting
Moved: Giroux
Seconded: Tribou
Vote: Motion passes seven (7) to none (0).

