

Planning Board – Purposes and Duties

The general purpose of the Planning Board is to provide for and guide the orderly growth and development of the community. This is accomplished primarily through development of a Master Plan for the Town, the Zoning Bylaw, and the Planning Board's Rules and Regulations Governing Subdivision of Land. The purpose of these administrative duties is to ensure the public safety, interest and welfare of the residents of the Town within the Planning Board's functional areas as mandated by statutes and local bylaws and regulations.

The Planning Board is responsible for the administration of the Subdivision Control Law pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 41 and its Rules and Regulations, to provide ways that are safe and adequate for pedestrian and vehicular access. The Board conducts meetings and public hearings in compliance with Massachusetts General Laws to review and consider subdivision plans and Approval Not Required (also called Form A or 81P) plans. The Planning Board also makes recommendations on the laying out and acceptance of public ways.

Another important function of the Planning Board is to consider and prepare amendments to the Town's Zoning Bylaw. The Board conducts public hearings on amendments drafted by the Board and on amendments that are submitted to the Board by way of citizen petition or by landowners or other town boards through the proper procedures for submitting Town Meeting articles.

The Planning Board also issues certain special permits and site plan approval under the sections of the Zoning Bylaw noted below:

- Special Permit Granting Authority:
 - Uses Within the Central Business District (Section 5-B, Table 5-B.1)
 - Residential Care Continuum (Section 10-A)
 - Independent and Assisted Living (Section 10-B)
 - Age Qualified Village (Section 10-C)
 - Open Space Residential Development (Section 10-D)
 - Common Driveways (Section 10-E)
 - Special Permits Within the Water Resources Protection Overlay District (Section 12)
- Site Plan Review (Section 13)

The Planning Board is responsible for developing and updating the town's Master Plan, an ongoing process.

The Planning Board also holds public hearings on proposals on designated scenic ways to remove public shade trees for construction purposes or to alter stone walls.