

**PLANNING BOARD**  
**TOWN OF WILBRAHAM**  
240 Springfield Street  
Wilbraham, Massachusetts 01095

John McCloskey, Chair  
John H. Luttrell Jr.  
James Moore  
Tracey Plantier  
James Rooney  
Bruce Williams, Associate



Michelle R. Buck, Planning Director  
Heidi Burnham, Admin. Assistant

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**MINUTES OF THE WILBRAHAM PLANNING BOARD**  
**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 16, 2023**

In attendance: John McCloskey, Chair  
John H. Luttrell, Jr.  
James Moore  
Tracey Plantier  
James Rooney  
Bruce Williams, Associate

Staff: Michelle R. Buck, Planning Director  
John J. Walsh Jr, Building Inspector

Board member Tracey Plantier attended via remote participation.

Chair John McCloskey called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM and asked those assembled in the room to proudly join the Planning Board in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

- Citizens Open Forum**  
No citizens took advantage of the open forum opportunity.
- Building Inspector's Report**  
Building Inspector John Walsh shared with the Board that 6 Burt Lane (Center Village) should finish framing this week, mechanical and plumbing have started and electrical and heating will begin soon. Starbucks expects to finish framing next week. The Local is looking to open at the end of September or the beginning of October; the entire inside of the restaurant has been re-done. Work continues at True Storage.
- Public Hearing – Special Permit (SP23-07) - Continued from June 28, 2023**  
**To Exceed the Size Limitations in Sections 3.9.2.2 and 4.4.8 of the Wilbraham Zoning By-Law to Allow the Construction of a 1,500 Square Foot Accessory Building on Property owned by the Applicant, Marcel Verdon – 23 Pine Drive**  
Chair John McCloskey opened the public hearing and stated for the record that the meeting was a continuation of the June 28, 2023 meeting. Mr. McCloskey asked Mr. Verdon to provide the Board with an update since the last meeting. Mr. Verdon shared that Clean Septics Inc. came out to his residence and

located and staked out the septic tank and the leach field; the site plan has been updated with this information.

Mr. McCloskey reviewed the revised Department of Public Works comments dated August 4, 2023 with Mr. Verdon and requested that the proposed location of the accessory building be staked out to ensure that it is a minimum of ten feet from the reserve area and the leach field. Mr. Verdon indicated that the proposed location of the accessory building has not been staked out but he will contact the land surveyor to have it staked out before applying for a building permit.

Building Inspector John Walsh stated that a plot plan showing the location of the accessory building will be required as part of the building permit application process; he will visit the site to confirm that the building is ten feet away from the septic tank and leach field before issuing the permit.

The Board and Mr. Verdon discussed the following items that will be conditions in the special permit: Plant additional arborvitae along the eastern boundary of the property, from the existing arborvitaes to the rear property line, to screen the structure from the abutting property.

All materials, vehicles, and equipment related to the home occupation shall be stored inside the proposed accessory building.

The accessory building is proposed for use related to a home occupation, which requires separate review and approval from the Zoning Board of Appeals. If the home occupation is disapproved, the Planning Board will have to revisit the size of the building and limit it to customary storage accessory to residential use.

**A. MOTION (ROONEY, LUTTRELL): I move that the Board close the public hearing. Approved by roll call vote (5-0).**

**B. MOTION (ROONEY, LUTTRELL): I move that the Board authorize the Planning Director to prepare a draft decision granting approval with conditions for special permit SP23-07 for further consideration at the next meeting. Approved by roll call vote (5-0).**

**4. Public Hearing – Special Permit (SP23-08)**

**To Allow Construction of an Addition to the Existing Residence to be Used as an Accessory Apartment on Property Owned by the Applicants, Francis & Carol Federico - 2 Merrill Road**

Chair McCloskey opened the public hearing and read the legal notice into the record. Francis and Carol Federico appeared before the Board with builder Daniel Gerasimchuk to present the proposal for the construction of an accessory apartment addition. Carol Federico shared that the accessory apartment is for her sister Theresa Bishe.

Mr. Gerasimchuk reviewed the elevations and the floor plan of the addition and answered questions from the Board in regards to the location of the addition on the property and ingress and egress access.

David Ervin of 172 Main Street (an abutter on the south side of the Federico's property) was in attendance and stated he has no issue with the proposed addition. Previously he had a small issue when the Federico's had some excavation work done and 3-4 yards of dirt ended up behind their fence on his property in the wetlands. Mr. Ervin shared that the issue was addressed immediately when brought to their attention and has since been resolved. Mr. Ervin is going to have his property surveyed to find out the exact location of the property lines but came to the meeting to gain some assurance that nothing from the construction will end up on his property. Mr. Gerasimchuk personally assured Mr. Ervin that nothing will end up behind the Federico's fence on his property during the construction.

**A. MOTION (ROONEY, MOORE): I move that the Board close the public hearing. Approved by roll call vote (5-0).**

**B. MOTION (ROONEY, LUTTRELL): I move that the Board authorize the Planning Director to prepare a draft decision granting approval with conditions for special permit SP23-08 for further consideration at the next meeting. Approved by roll call vote (5-0).**

5. **Public Hearing – Special Permit (SP23-09)**

**Amendment to Special Permit Granted on March 15, 1988 (as amended through 5/2023). To Allow Modification of the Previously Approved Plan to Modify Parking Lot Lighting - Lia Toyota – 2145 Boston Road**

Chair McCloskey opened the public hearing and read the legal notice into the record.

Dana Steele, Engineer JR Russo Associates, appeared before the Board to present the scope of the proposed lighting modifications at Lia Toyota. Mr. Steele stated for the record that during a previously scheduled informal meeting the Board offered initial feedback on the proposed lighting plan and requested the submittal of a formal request for a special permit with a public hearing. Along with the special permit request Mr. Steele stated that a revised photometric plan was submitted based on feedback from the Board.

Mr. Steele shared now that Lia Toyota is expanding and the parking areas are being repaved and reconfigured, it is time to reconfigure the lighting on the site. The proposal is to remove all 16 light fixtures in the front and east side of the building and install 23 new light fixtures in those areas because LED lighting is more concentrated and they need to be placed closer together. The proposal also includes adding an additional 5 light fixtures on the west side of the building where there is no lighting currently, for a total of 28.

Mr. Steele reported that in response to the Board's concerns about the increase number of light fixtures on the property the light intensity is being reduced by 20% by replacing the 300W LED fixtures with 240W LED fixtures. The photometric plan shows the foot candle levels throughout the site and the limits of those foot candle levels. The Wilbraham town regulations do not set a specific foot candle level for lighting but require applicants to minimize light spillage beyond the site. To comply with this requirement, Lia Toyota proposes to install house shields on all perimeter light fixtures to prevent the lighting from spilling out onto Boston Road and abutting properties.

Mr. McCloskey asked Mr. Steele to review the light comparison from the informal meeting to the revised submittal. Mr. Steele directed the Boards attention to the calculation summary showing the original plan had a max foot candle level of 39.6 to the new proposal of 31.5.

Member James Rooney asked Mr. Steele about the possibility of dimming the lights during non-business hours like their neighboring car dealership currently does on Boston Road. Mr. Steele agreed to a condition to dim the lights 30% after business hours.

Member Tracey Plantier asked Mr. Steele if Lia Toyota is able to comply with the Wilbraham Fire Department (WFD) comments to ensure that the new light poles do not interfere with the Fire Department access and turn radius. Mr. Steele confirmed that Lia Toyota is confident that they can meet the turn radius required by the WFD.

A. **MOTION (ROONEY, LUTTRELL): I move that the Board close the public hearing. Approved by roll call vote. (5-0).**

B. **MOTION (ROONEY, MOORE): I move that the Board authorize the Planning Director to prepare a draft decision granting approval with conditions for special permit SP23-09 for further consideration at the next meeting. Approved by roll call vote. (5-0).**

6. **Public Hearing - Proposed Zoning By-Law Amendments**

**A. Change "Board of Selectmen" to "Select Board" throughout the Zoning By-Law (Sections 1.3, 12.3.2, 12.10.1, 12.10.2, 13.6.2.1, 13.6.6.1.A, 15.1.1, 15.4.2.1 & 15.6**

**B. Corrective Amendments related to Child Care Facilities and the Flood Plain Overlay District (Sections 1.3 & 2.3.2)**

Chair McCloskey opened the public hearing and read the legal notice into the record.

Mr. McCloskey provided an update that the public hearing was posted in anticipation that these items would be on the warrant for the fall Town Meeting [scheduled for 10/23/2023]. Planning Director Michelle Buck shared that there was a request to restrict the fall Town Meeting agenda to crucial items financial in nature.

Mr. McCloskey reviewed the bylaw amendments with the Board and announced that the Board may need to hold another hearing if the amendments are postponed till the spring; the hearing has to be within six months of the Town Meeting.

No one appeared in opposition of the bylaw amendments. Mr. McCloskey asked for a motion to close the hearing.

**MOTION (ROONEY, LUTTRELL): I move that the Board close the public hearing. Approved by roll call vote. (5-0).**

7. **Appt – Zach Wallin, Weston & Sampson**

**Administrative Amendment of SPA16-01 (Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Corporation Bus Facility) - Electric Bus Charging Stations/Parking Modification at 2045 Boston Road**

Zach Wallin and Anna Bishop with Weston & Sampson appeared before the Board to present a proposal for electric bus charging stations at the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Corporation Bus Facility (LPVEC). LPVEC proposes to construct nine electric bus charging stations at their Wilbraham location so that new electric school buses can operate out of the facility. The chargers will be protected from traffic by bollards and the addition of two new light poles, one at either end of the charging stations, for illumination during early morning and evening uses.

Member James Moore asked what happens if there is a power outage. Ms. Bishop responded that this was taken into consideration; there are additional school buses onsite running on gasoline and diesel that would be able to cover the routes in the event of a power outage.

Members Bruce Williams and James Rooney asked if LPVEC has coordinated with the Wilbraham Fire Department (WFD) and if WFD is trained to handle these large batteries. Mr. Wallin responded that the proposal has not been shared with the WFD. Building Inspector John Walsh shared that the WFD would get involved during the electrical permitting portion of the project and would be given a copy of the plan to review.

Mr. McCloskey shared a condition in the 2016 Site Plan Approval (SPA16-01) with Mr. Wallin that stated left turn exits of school vehicles shall be prohibited onto Boston Road. Mr. McCloskey asked Mr. Wallin to share this information as reminder with those involved in the project.

Board members were in agreement that the proposed site plan modifications be handled as an administrative amendment.

**MOTION (MOORE, ROONEY): I move that the Board grant administrative approval to allow modification of the parking lot approved under the SPA16-01 decision to accommodate electric bus charging stations at 2045 Boston Road based on a determination that the proposed site plan modifications do not constitute a major substantive change which would require a special permit amendment. Approved by roll call vote. (5-0).**

8. **Approval of Minutes – June 7, 2023**

Mr. McCloskey called for a motion to approve the minutes of the June 7, 2023 Planning Board meeting and asked if there were any comments or revisions. The Board modified text in agenda item 5A (Cedar Ridge PURD) by replacing “declared” with “conveyed” in the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph and replacing “fall under” with “resemble” in the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph. In addition, language was modified to clarify that the applicant wants to waive sidewalks in both the connecting section and the new Area C and that the residents do not support a connecting sidewalk if they have to pay for the work. On agenda item 6 (Non Sub Plan 23-03), the vote was corrected to indicate that member Rooney voted “present.” Board members also asked Ms. Buck to double-check the vote on agenda item 3 (Draft Decision, SP23-05); [5-0 vote confirmed].

**MOTION (ROONEY, MOORE): I move that the Board approve the minutes of the June 7, 2023 as amended. Approved by roll call vote (5-0).**

9. **Planning Director’s Report & Planning Board Updates**

Ms. Buck shared the following updates with the Board:

**A. Subdivision Regulation Amendment Project**

The first meeting was held on August 7, 2023. Ms. Buck asked the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission representatives to use Wilbraham’s existing regulations as a starting point and incorporate suggestions from the model. Department of Public Works (DPW) members Tonya Capparello and Dena Grochmal had suggestions to include in the revision. The next meeting is scheduled for September 11, 2023. Ms. Buck hopes to receive draft language from PVPC prior to the meeting to review.

**B. Planning Board Regulation Updates**

The Planning Boards Rules and Regulations have not been updated in quite some time. Ms. Buck is working on a more comprehensive update to the Boards regulations, specifically in regards to fees. The updates will require a public hearing for the Board to adopt the regulations.

**C. Potential Zoning Bylaw Re-Codification/Online Access**

The town has a bylaw committee to review Wilbraham’s General Bylaws. The committee is considering contracting with a company called General Code to recodify the town’s General By-Laws. Ms. Buck was approached to see if it made sense for the Zoning By-Laws as well; she is in agreement and sent the committee a favorable memo.

**D. Miscellaneous Project Updates**

The Zoning Board of Appeals has the 23 Pine Drive home occupation hearing tomorrow and a variance for and in-ground pool within the rear setback.

The September 6, 2023, Planning Board meeting will consist of the three decisions from tonight’s hearings, possibly the Golden Nozzle bond release and possibly an accessory apartment for 110 East Longmeadow Road.

10. **Other Business**

**Reserved for Matters the Chair did not Reasonably Anticipate at the Time of Posting Other**

Member James Rooney shared with the Board that Tonya Capparello, DPW Director, is having problems with the town’s public ways and would like to put a policy or procedure in place making it easier for the town to take the private ways or for DPW to maintain the private ways. There are over 30 private ways in town that could be problematic for DPW; this topic was brought up at the last subdivision regulation committee meeting.

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 7:30 PM. The Board will reconvene at its next meeting on **Wednesday, September 6, 2023 at 5:30 PM.**

Submitted:

Heidi Burnham  
Heidi Burnham, Admin. Assistant

Date: 11-1-23

Approved As To Form And Content:

John McCloskey  
John McCloskey, Chair

Date: 11/8/23