



# Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

## Planning Board Retreat Minutes

Select Board Meeting Room, Town Hall

February 16, 2022, at 5:40PM

1 Present: Tricia Kendall, Chair  
2 Deepa Venkat  
3 Anna Tesmenitsky  
4 Marcelo Arjona  
5 Kevin McClean  
6 Others: Peter Matchak, Town Planner  
7 Emma Snellings, Asst. Town Planner  
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### 10 *Call to Order*

11 Tricia Kendall called the meeting to order at 5:40pm.  
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### 13 *Potential Zoning Forum*

14 Ms. Kendall introduced the request from residents for a forum on the Ashland Downtown District to  
15 educate the public about the District and recent changes to the bylaw. Mr. Arjona expressed an  
16 interest in the forum and in reviewing the zoning of the district. Ms. Venkat noted that the Ashland  
17 Downtown District was recently assessed by MAPC in their work to update the zoning. Ms. Kendall  
18 suggested that the Board should work to understand the district better before a forum. Mr. Matchak  
19 stated that he can prepare a presentation on the district. The Board discussed having a public forum  
20 focused on the Downtown District. Ms. Tesmenitsky noted that changes to the District would  
21 involve the future Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Kendall suggested having a retreat focused on the  
22 Downtown District, and a one hour meeting dedicated to an introduction to Downtown Zoning,  
23 which will serve as a kick off to return to the bigger picture consideration of the Ashland Downtown  
24 District. Mr. Matchak and Ms. Snellings will prepare an informative presentation for after Town  
25 Meeting for the public.  
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### 27 *Planning Board Website Updates*

28 The Board discussed a number of updates to the Planning Board website, including adding Planning  
29 Board member biographies, creating Town emails for Board members, clarifying the Board email  
30 address on the website, and creating a link between the Design Review Committee and the Planning  
31 Board pages. Ms. Snellings will make the discussed changes to the webpages.  
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35 *Comprehensive Plan*

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37 Ms. Tesmenitsky discussed a possible timeline for the creation of a new Comprehensive Plan.  
38 Member Tesmenitsky provided a draft timeline for the project spanning February 2022 to spring of  
39 2025. She explained the draft allows 2022 to build a strong foundation for support about key  
40 Boards, 2023 to be the year of data gathering, and 2024 to be the drafting year. The public would be  
41 involved throughout the process. She further explained that the draft is based upon the CP process  
42 undertaken by the town of Bedford, which has the same town model (Town Meeting/Town  
43 Manager/etc.) The Board discussed the importance of capacity within the Planning office to support  
44 the CP process and how the hiring of a short term contract planner at least for the data gathering year  
45 2023 would allow for more capacity. The Board also discussed the importance of a Consultant  
46 during the public input phase and the important role the Planning Board itself plays pursuant to its  
47 statutory obligations. Planner Peter Matchak commented that the outlined process was consistent  
48 with his experience as far as length of time and key elements. The Board discussed its support of the  
49 proposed process and the development of a draft letter to the Select Board addressing the topic of an  
50 upcoming Comprehensive Plan. The Board discussed the importance of timing the CP in a manner  
51 that would assure proper financial support via a Town Meeting process per prior discussion with  
52 Town Manager

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54 *Connection to Other Boards/Committees*

- 55 – Design Review Committee
- 56 – Sustainability Committee
- 57 – Ashland For All/Housing

58 *Community Outreach: Use of Facebook/Social Media as a Means of Communication*

59 The Planning Board discussed the continued use of social media. Currently, the Planning Boards  
60 posts meeting agendas on there the town Facebook account and places meetings on the town  
61 calendar.

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