



# Town of Ashland , Office of the Planning Board

Planning Board Meeting (Hybrid)

February 26, 2026 at 7:15 PM

Approved by the Planning Board on: March 12, 2026

1 **Members Present:**

2 Tricia Kendall, Chair

3 Anna Tesmenitsky, Vice-Chair

4 Deepa Venkat, Member

5 Scott Pelletier, Member

6 Paul Montesino, Member

7 Angel Khazadian, Associate Member

8

9 **Also Present:**

10 Jasmin Farinacci, Director of Planning & Economic Development

11

12 **Call Meeting to Order**

13 Chair, Tricia Kendall, called the Planning Board meeting to order at 7:18 PM and announced that  
14 the meeting was being recorded.

15

16 **Joint Meeting of the Planning Board and Select Board**

17 Select Board Chair, Joe Magnani, called the Select Board joint meeting with the Planning Board  
18 to order at 7:20 PM.

19

20 Select Board Members in attendance were Joseph Magnani, Brandi Kinsman, Claudia Bennett,  
21 Yolanda Greaves, and Makeda Keegan.

22

23 **Housing Production Plan: Presentation of Draft Goals and Strategies - JM Goldson**

24 Jenn Goldson, Founder and Managing Partner of JM Goldson, presented the draft Town of  
25 Ashland Housing Production Plan, Goals & Strategies; she worked on this project together with  
26 Flavio Vila, Community Planner/Project Assistant, who was also present for tonight's meeting.

27

28 Ms. Goldson reviewed the eight stages of the Housing Production Plan Process: Discovering,  
29 Understanding, Ideating, Proposing, Testing, Deciding, Organizing, and Committing. They are  
30 currently at the Deciding phase. This will need to be approved by both the Planning Board and the  
31 Select Board. Once adopted, it goes to the State. The State has 30-days to determine if it is  
32 complete, and 90-days to consider approval.

33 Ms. Goldson discussed the Housing Production Plan Components: which include:

- 34 • Housing Needs Assessment
- 35 • Development Constraints & Opportunities Analysis
- 36 • Five-Year Goals
- 37 • Menu of Strategies

38  
39 Ms. Goldson discussed where the ideas for the Housing Production Plan originated; which was  
40 from public forums, interviews, the Housing Needs Assessment, the previous Housing Production  
41 Plan, and the Envision Ashland Comprehensive Plan.

42  
43 Five-Year Goals are:

- 44 • Goal 1: Maintaining Safe Harbor
- 45 • Goal 2: Unlocking Diverse Housing Choices
- 46 • Goal 3: Securing Affordability and Stability
- 47 • Goal 4: Growing with Intention and Investment
- 48 • Goal 5: Strengthening Capacity and Coordination

49  
50 Ms. Goldson reviewed the Strategy Roadmap, which are strategies designed to give Ashland  
51 flexibility to adapt and respond as opportunities arise. They include:

- 52 • Planning and Policy Tools
- 53 • Local Action and Housing Programs
- 54 • Community engagement and Capacity Building

55  
56 Ms. Goldson noted that the State will kick back the Housing Production Plan if the Town does not  
57 identify properties that are viable for creating housing opportunities; it must include at least one  
58 public and one private parcel. Ms. Greaves suggested including the parcel on Olive Street.

59  
60 Next Steps include Members of both Boards sending comments to Mr. Vila by March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

61  
62 Both Boards agreed to include this on their next meeting agenda.

63  
64 Ms. Bennett inquired, and Ms. Goldson responded, that there are State-funded programs that help  
65 to subsidize affordable housing development in the private market. There is a State One-Stop  
66 Application where they can be paired with different funds.

67  
68 Ms. Farinacci noted that our Conservation Agent is on the meeting and has confirmed the following  
69 in regard to areas designated on the draft Plan as potential developable sites:

- 70 • Site 1 – Briasco Soccer Field is 100% wetlands.
- 71 • Site 7 – Beaver Dam Brooks is conservation area and is 100% wetlands.
- 72 • Purple Parcel on the map is the Town Forest, part of Article 97.

73  
74 Ms. Goldson stated those will be removed from the map. Board Members thanked Ms. Goldson  
75 and Mr. Vila for the presentation.

76  
77 **Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee: Discussion**

78 Ms. Tesmenitsky discussed the multi-year partnership of the Comprehensive Plan Committee,  
79 Town Management, and the Consultant’s team, who worked together to come up with a way to  
80 create the implementation of an Implementation Committee, which is a key component of the  
81 success of a Comprehensive Plan in communities. Ms. Greaves put this into a draft memo which  
82 has been shared with both Boards.  
83

84 Ms. Greaves explained that the language from the memo was taken from the implementation  
85 section of the Comprehensive Plan, which recommends a 7-9 Member Committee, including one  
86 Select Board Member, one Planning Board Member, and 5-7 members of the public-at-large,  
87 ideally coming from the Comprehensive Planning Committee.  
88

89 The first meeting would be held in May; Ms. Greaves suggested appointment terms ending August  
90 31<sup>st</sup>; terms would be two-years. Ms. Tesmenitsky suggested she and Ms. Greaves work on drafting  
91 communications to Comprehensive Plan Committee Members, and members of the public, to find  
92 who is interested.  
93

94 Board Members agreed that the Planning Board will attend the Select Board’s meeting on April  
95 1<sup>st</sup>.  
96

97 **Motion:** Ms. Tesmenitsky motioned to approve the process outlined in the memo to both Boards  
98 that was created by she and Ms. Greaves, including the Next Steps as outlined by Ms. Greaves in  
99 the email, the post to the public, with the goal of delivering names by the April 1<sup>st</sup> date. Ms.  
100 Greaves seconded the motion.

101 **Vote:** 10-0-0. Motion approved by rollcall vote (Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Pelletier-aye,  
102 Montesino-aye, Kendall-aye, Greaves-aye, Bennett-aye, Keegan-aye, Kinsman-aye, Magnani-  
103 aye).  
104

105 **Motion:** Ms. Greaves motioned to adjourn the Select Board meeting at 8:22 PM, which was  
106 seconded by Ms. Keegan.

107 **Vote:** 5-0-0. Motion approved by rollcall vote. (Greaves-aye, Bennett-aye, Keegan-aye,  
108 Kinsman-aye, Magnani-aye).  
109

110 **Chair/Clerk’s Report**

111 Ms. Kendall noted that the only email received was in regards to the precincts being represented.  
112

113 **Public Comment**

114 Joan Gonfrade, resident, expressed concern in regards to the Housing Production Plan pertaining  
115 to water (pages 56 and 57), which states that the Town is operating well-below our threshold; she  
116 stated she ran calculations based on the Haley Ward methodology, including the proposed 40B  
117 developments. She believes the verbiage in the Housing Production Plan is misleading and that all  
118 infrastructure should be looked at, as well as Schools, Police and Fire. Ms. Kendall said they would  
119 make note of the water/sewer issue and ask Jenn Goldson to confirm their numbers.  
120

121 **Public Hearings**

122 **Eversource – Scenic Roads Annual Tree Maintenance**

123 Matthew Mitchell, for Eversource, explained that this year there are two circuits up for  
124 maintenance pruning this year which include sections of six scenic roads: Frankland Road, Myrtle  
125

126 Street, Main Street, Winter Street, High Street and Concord Street. Each circuit gets pruned every  
127 four to five years. Clearance is 10-feet on the bottom, 10-feet to the right and left of the wire, and  
128 15-feet to the top. Timing is flexible; Mr. Mitchell said they are currently planning for the work to  
129 begin in the Fall. They will send out electronic notifications to abutters to let them know that they  
130 will be in Town performing this work.

131 **Motion:** Mr. Pelletier motioned to approve the Eversource Scenic Roads annual tree maintenance.  
132 The motion was seconded by Ms. Venkat.

133 **Vote:** 5-0-0. Motion approved. (Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Pelletier-aye, Montesino-aye,  
134 Kendall-aye).

135

### 136 **Eversource – Scenic Roads Hazardous Tree Removals**

137 Mr. Mitchell explained that he is a Certified Arborist, and Utility Specialist. Mr. Mitchell shared  
138 a slide presentation on the proposed Hazard Tree Removal; the 455H3 Circuit includes Howe  
139 Street and Cross Street. It is an area that has a consistent pattern of unreliability. Becca Solomon,  
140 Ashland Conservation Agent/Tree Warden, clarified that when they are doing pruning, they are  
141 taking unhealthy limbs off of otherwise healthy trees. Extreme weather events stress trees and  
142 many times there is nothing you can do to keep the tree alive. Mr. Mitchell stated that he and Ms.  
143 Solomon did a site walk in February and looked at each of these trees, and that she is in agreement  
144 with all the trees on his list.

145

146 Mr. Mitchell discussed defining a hazard Tree; which can be: Biological Defects, or, Structural  
147 and Mechanical Defects; he summarized the 46 trees slated for removal:

- 148 • Majority are 18” or smaller
- 149 • Eight are Ash trees infected with Emerald Ash Borer
- 150 • Thirteen (total) are dead

151

152 Mr. Mitchell discussed the Hazard Rating:

- 153 • Level 3: 21 Trees
- 154 • Level 2: 21 Trees
- 155 • Level 1: 4 Trees

156

157 Ms. Solomon discussed the number of tree limbs and branches she has encountered while doing  
158 stormwater inspections at Cross Street and Howe Street after almost every storm; if these trees are  
159 not taken down they will likely come down on their own before the next cycle in five years, and  
160 there is a higher chance that they are going to take the wires with them. Ms. Solomon suggested it  
161 is better to take them down in a safe manner, and not risk having residents lose power for many  
162 hours, or days. Mr. Mitchell noted that since May of 2024, 81% of power outages on the (regional)  
163 circuit are tree-related.

164

165 Ms. Tesmenitsky discussed this being a statutorily-protected scenic route; Eversource is mandated  
166 by the State to deliver a quick response to a power outage and will be penalized by the State if  
167 they fail to meet the response time; the increased cost and responsibility to Eversource is not  
168 sufficient reason to remove the scenic road protection for that street. The Statute allows our Tree  
169 Warden, together with the Town, the emergency removal of a tree when they are endangering  
170 public safety. Ms. Tesmenitsky agreed the 13 dead trees should be removed; the others she would  
171 not be comfortable removing without more data.

172

173 Mr. Mitchell responded that the crux of the Regulatory requirement to the State is a certain number  
174 of outages, which is not acceptable for Massachusetts citizens to experience. Mr. Mitchell  
175 suggested a site walk to visually see the trees, and have a meaningful discussion.  
176

177 Ms. Solomon stated that they do everything in their power to avoid being in an emergency  
178 situation; she stated that if those 21 high risk trees on the circuit were not tagged for removal by  
179 Eversource, they would be on the Town's priority list for removal, and the cost for removal would  
180 not be in the Town's budget. Ms. Solomon agreed a site walk would illustrate things better for the  
181 Board.  
182

183 Mr. Pelletier inquired as to next steps after removal, if outages continue; Mr. Mitchell responded,  
184 that they would reassess removing additional trees; burying the lines would eradicate the root  
185 systems of every tree adjacent to the road. Mr. Mitchell noted that of the 52 reported outages on  
186 the circuit, 42 are tree-related; 22 occurred on Howe Street. Mr. Pelletier inquired as to whether  
187 Eversource would agree to plant 46 new trees, possibly in other locations, such as the Arboretum;  
188 Mr. Mitchell stated it is definitely a possibility, they would not want to plant on Howe Street. Ms.  
189 Solomon discussed working to get an Urban Forestry Management Plan for the Town to identify  
190 further planting locations for new trees; there is still additional planting projects planned for the  
191 Arboretum, and other Town properties.  
192

193 Ms. Venkat stated that after hearing the experts, she thinks it is a good balance that they are willing  
194 to plant additional trees.  
195

196 Ms. Kendall noted the site walk would be an educational opportunity for Board Members to  
197 understand what Ms. Solomon and Mr. Mitchell have discussed. In regards to scenic roads, she  
198 thinks this is to look out for the long-term health of the community in general, and maintain our  
199 environment. Ms. Kendall has worked with Ms. Solomon at the Arboretum and trusts her advice.  
200

201 Ms. Kendall stated that Ms. Farinacci will send out the locations of the trees if Board Members  
202 want to visit on their own, or they can reach out with questions to Ms. Solomon. Mr. Mitchell will  
203 send out a potential proposal for tree replanting, and will work on determining planting locations  
204 with Ms. Solomon. Mr. Mitchell noted he is uncertain about Eversource providing replacement  
205 plantings for the dead trees; Mr. Pelletier feels that replacing all the trees being removed would be  
206 the right thing for Eversource to do.  
207

208 **Motion:** Ms. Kendall motioned that Eversource, Scenic Roads hazardous tree removals be  
209 continued until the Planning Board's next meeting on March 12<sup>th</sup>; the motion was seconded by  
210 Ms. Venkat.

211 **Vote:** 5-0-0. Motion approved. (Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Pelletier-aye, Montesino-aye,  
212 Kendall-aye).  
213

#### 214 **55 Tilton Ave – Special Permit & Site Plan Review**

215 **Motion:** Ms. Kendall motioned to continue 55 Tilton Ave-Special Permit & Site Plan Review to  
216 March 12; the motion was seconded by Ms. Venkat.

217 **Vote:** 5-0-0. Motion approved. (Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Pelletier-aye, Montesino-aye,  
218 Kendall-aye).  
219

220 **30 Memorial Drive – YMCA**

221 **Motion:** Ms. Kendall motioned to continue 30 Memorial Drive - YMCA to March 12<sup>th</sup>; the motion  
222 was seconded by Ms. Venkat.

223 **Vote:** 5-0-0. Motion approved. (Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Pelletier-aye, Montesino-aye,  
224 Kendall-aye).

225

226 **240-260 Pleasant Street – Site Plan Review, Design Plan Review & Site Alteration SP**

227 **Motion:** Ms. Kendall motioned to continue 240-260 Pleasant Street, Site Plan Review, Design  
228 Plan Review & Site Alteration SP to March 26<sup>th</sup>; the motion was seconded by Ms. Venkat.

229 **Vote:** 5-0-0. Motion approved. (Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Pelletier-aye, Montesino-aye,  
230 Kendall-aye).

231

232 **Other**

- 233 • Planning Board Task List: Discussion and Comment
- 234 • Design Review Committee discussion – Ms. Farinacci will be meeting with Town Counsel  
235 Lisa Mead next Wednesday to discuss.

236

237 **Reports**

- 238 • Community Preservation Committee - Mr. Pelletier reported attending the CPC meeting  
239 and discussed the Committee voting on the second round of attempting to purchase a piece  
240 of property that is adjacent to the Town Forest, this will be an Article at the Town Meeting.
- 241 • MetroWest Regional Collaborative – Ms. Venkat reported attending the MetroWest  
242 Regional Collaborative meeting yesterday, Economic Development was discussed, it was  
243 an interesting topic, Ms. Venkat stated she learned a lot about how Economic Development  
244 works.
- 245 • Comprehensive Plan – Discussed earlier.

246

247 **Administrative Matters**

- 248 • Planning Updates – Ms. Farinacci noted that an email was received tonight and was sent to  
249 the Planning Board from Susan Thorne in regards to 0 Cross Street, she states that she will  
250 be attending a Hopkinton Planning Board Meeting on March 9<sup>th</sup> if any Planning Board  
251 Members want to attend.
- 252 • Ongoing & New Projects
- 253 • Housing Production Plan
- 254 • Update on 40Bs and SHI
- 255 • Minutes Review: February 12

256 **Motion:** Ms. Kendall motioned to approve the meeting minutes of February 12<sup>th</sup>, with the  
257 checking of one line (Line 100/101). Ms. Venkat seconded the motion.

258 **Vote:** 5-0-0. Motion approved. (Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Pelletier-aye, Montesino-aye,  
259 Kendall-aye).

260

261 **Upcoming Meetings:** March 12, 2026

262

263 **Adjournment**

264 **Motion:** Ms. Kendall motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:49 PM; Mr. Montesino seconded the  
265 motion.

266 **Vote:** 6-0-0. Motion approved. (Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Pelletier-aye, Montesino-aye,  
267 Khazadian-aye, Kendall-aye).

268 Documents Referenced during the 02/26/2026

- 269 • Draft Housing Production Plan, JM Goldson
- 270 • Draft Memo re: Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee
- 271 • Eversource Presentation: Scenic Roads, Hazardous Trees Removals
- 272 • Draft Meeting Minutes, February 12, 2026