

**NORTHFIELD PLANNING BOARD  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2021  
PUBLIC HEARING  
HYBRID MEETING: SELECTBOARD MEETING ROOM, TOWN HALL, AND ZOOM  
MEETING MINUTES, REVISED 3/3/22; REVISED 3/17/22**

Members Present: Chair Stephen Seredynski (SS), Joe Graveline (JG), Tammy Pelletier (TP), Meg Riordan (MR), Homer Stavely (HS)

Members Absent: none

Members of the Press:

Others in Attendance: Town Clerk Dan Campbell, Town Administrator Andrea Llamas, Board Recorder Wendy M. Levy, Jinx Hastings, Laura J. Kaye, Julia Blyth, Joanne McGee, Sam and Barbara [last name?]

*Please note, because of Zoom's participation structure, attendance is incomplete.*

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

SS called the public hearing to order at 4:06pm.

SS announced quorum has been met.

**II. ADOPT CHANGES TO THE ZONING BYLAW**

The Planning Board presented a public hearing to review a proposed revision of the Northfield Zoning Bylaw to renumber and recaption the Zoning Bylaw of the Town by (a) designating the Zoning Bylaw as Chapter 200 of the Code of the Town of Northfield; (b) renumbering each section and subsection of the bylaw accordingly; (c) inserting article and section titles; and (d) updating internal references to reflect the new numbering system, and adopt the following changes to the Zoning Bylaw

§ 1. Acceptance of renumbering of regulations: The Application Review Fees and Subdivision of Land Rules and Regulations of the Planning Board, as renumbered, revised, and codified as Chapter 304 and Chapter 315, respectively, of the Code of the Town of Northfield. § 3. Changes in previously adopted regulations: The following changes, amendments or revisions are made herewith, to become effective upon the effective date of enactment (Chapter and section number references are to the regulations as they have been renumbered and appear in the Code.)

A. References to the Massachusetts Department of Public Works are amended to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation.

B. References to the Board of Selectmen are amended to "Selectboard."

C. Section 315-3.1B is amended as follows:

Where the physical condition or width of a public way from which the lots shown on the plan have their access is considered by the Board to be inadequate either to provide for emergency services or to carry the traffic which is expected, in the opinion of the Board, to be generated by such lots, the Board shall determine that the plan does ~~not~~ require approval under the Subdivision Control Law.

D. Section 315-3.2A is amended to add the following: "In the case of a nonresidential subdivision, a preliminary plan is required."

E. Section 315-3.5C is amended as follows: "A certification, giving the date the actual survey was made on the ground, and that such was made in accordance with applicable Northfield Subdivision

Regulations, shall be submitted."

As set forth in the Final Draft of the Code of the Town of Northfield dated November 1, 2021 on file with the Town Clerk.

SS reviewed the history of these proposed changes. Highlights included:

- Work on the Subdivision Regulations began about a year ago, with work performed by MR and HS.
- It took longer than expected because the Planning Board had other large projects.
- Peggy Sloan of FRCOG helped with these revisions at no cost to the town.
- The Town Attorney reviewed the proposed changes and made some additional changes.
- At this meeting, the Planning Board will vote to approve them.

MR provided a technical introduction.

SS provided a process introduction. He noted these revisions will not be voted on by Town Meeting; thus, this meeting is more of a public information meeting.

MR presented a slide show, "Subdivision Regulations: Process and Product."

MR gave a history of this process.

MR reviewed the document, "Northfield Planning Board Subdivision Regulations Updates 10/29/21," and explained how changes were made, when they were made, the rationale behind the changes, the attorney's comments, and what changes were made as a result, when, and why.

JG asked a series of questions, and noted his concerns, as follows:

1. Was there any legal counsel?

SS responded: The Town Attorney consulted on this.

2. Is there a difference between "code" and "bylaws"?

Dan Campbell and Andrea Llamas confirmed the terms are the same.

3. [Direct quote from transcription.] "When you posted this meeting, Steve, you erroneously... There was an error, 'in the physical condition of the width of the public way from which the lots shown on the plan have their access is considered by the Board to be inadequate either to provide for emergency services or to carry the traffic which is expected, in the opinion of the Board, to be generated by lots, the Board shall determine that the plan,' and you wrote, or, what is in here, I should say, is it, 'does not require approval under the Subdivision Control Bylaw.' I believe that's an error. Am I correct on that?" Andrea Llamas responded: It is not part of the Subdivision Bylaw, and the Planning Board will discuss this later in the meeting.

4. A concern about the Commonwealth's Section B Subdivision Control Law and the future Planning Board's power and possible misuses of it.

HS responded: The Planning Board does not have the power to overrule the Commonwealth's Subdivision Control Law.

Andrea Llamas pointed out the facts are the opposite of what JG has claimed.

SS noted this regulation does not allow the Planning Board to do anything illegal.

JG stated he wanted all MGL citations printed with the Bylaws. A discussion ensued.

5. What precedents or standards of reference will the Planning Board draw from?

Andrea Llamas asked JG if he was reading this fully in context. She explained that the standards began in 1973, and are basically a "grandfather clause."

6. Confusion about the code changes bylaw.

Andrea Llamas explained: It says the Northfield Planning Board complies with Commonwealth law, including updates.

7. An objection to the time limits.

SS responded: For the last several years, the Planning Board has met less than 30 days on an as-needed basis.

8. He wants historic markers to be considered as major features.

**MOTION BY JG TO INCLUDE HISTORICAL MARKERS CREATED INTO THE DIFFERENT SECTIONS OF THE TOWN SHOULD THEY APPLY FOR A SITE UNDER REVIEW BY THE NORTHFIELD PLANNING BOARD TO FIT IN THE CATEGORY OF THE FIVE SECTIONS.**

**HS SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

9. He wants permanent monuments included in major features.

**MOTION BY JG TO INCLUDE HISTORICAL MONUMENTS. HS SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

10. What is a state monument?

SS responded: These are things posted at state lines with dates on them.

11. Is the environmental impact report complete? It says "plan," not "document."

SS and MR responded: Yes, it is complete.

12. The 45-day timeline is too tight for the Planning Board to comply.

SS opened the hearing to public comments.

Julia Blyth asked about the changes made to Section 5.4 Open Space, and asked if changing "requirement" to "request" would make it optional.

SS said he was not sure.

A discussion ensued.

MR noted the Town Attorney said he does not believe the Planning Board has the ability to require it. MR will confirm with him.

Jinx Hastings asked about roadway length.

SS responded: It is still 800 feet.

**MOTION BY JG TO ACCEPT THE ZONING REGULATIONS. HS SECONDED.**

Discussion ensued.

JG asked how the Planning Board will address Julia Blyth's concerns.