



TOWN OF
STONEHAM
MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD
781-279-2695

STONEHAM PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

(in accordance with provision of M.G.L. c.30A, §§ 18-25)

Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Town Hall Hearing Room

7:00 PM

Members Present: Chair Frank Vallarelli, Marcia Wengen and Brianna Kelly.

Member Present Remotely: Vice Chair Kevin Dolan

Also present at the meeting: Town Clerk Maria Sagarino acting as Clerk for the Planning Board and Planning & Community Development Director Erin Wortman.

Present Remotely: Housing Production Plan Consultant Austin Smith

The Chair brought the meeting to order at 7:04 PM. He introduced the Board and indicated that there would be no public hearings this evening.

Minutes

Mr. Vallarelli accepted a motion from Ms. Kelly to approve the minutes for October 8, 2025 which was seconded by Ms. Wengen. All four members present voted in favor 4-0.

Approval Not Required Plan (ANR) for 7 Gerald Road

Attorney Houghton explained to the Board that he had recently been to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a variance on the frontage for 7 Gerald Road. The variance is recorded on the ANR plan. He indicated that the house would be coming down and the lot would be split. With everything in order, the members in the room endorsed the plan.

Glendale and Rockville Park Subdivisions

Mr. Houghton explained that there had been some confusion with his clients about the bond amount previously voted on by the Board. They now understand that the amount of \$922,000 includes a substantial amount for the blasting work needed. Mr. Houghton also indicated that his clients for Glendale and Rockville Park have agreed to share the necessary roadway and sewer improvements required. Rockville will pay for the sewer which needs to be dropped in order to service that subdivision. Mr. Houghton indicated that once the bond for Glendale is in place, they

would be in seeking reductions as was done for High Street. Brett Gonsalves will oversee the work and make recommendations on the reductions as necessary.

Housing Production Plan

Mr. Vallarelli invited Erin Wortman the Director of Planning and Community Development to speak on the update to the Housing Production Plan (HPP). She explained that Jennifer Goldson had hoped to attend in person but due to a scheduling conflict, she had to be in another community for a final presentation of their plan. Ms. Wortman introduced Austin Smith of JM Goldson who would lead the discussion.

Mr. Smith explained the eight stages JM Goldson works through to produce a housing production plan. He quickly went over why the update was necessary. The purpose is to help keep the Subsidized Housing Index above 10%, hear from residents about their goals for the community, to help plan and pace the future development based on needs and to identify future policies and initiatives. He explained that they have a 65-page document, rather than go over the entire 65 pages, he would instead focus on some key takeaways. He quickly went over Stoneham's demographics and population. They saw minimal growth happening in Stoneham through 2035. The average household size continues to shrink. He briefly touched on the fact that 65% of households have 1-2 occupants in 3+ bedroom homes. The size is mismatched. This indicated a need for smaller, accessible units. He touched upon housing supply and production. Stoneham lacks the middle of the road housing type 2–4-unit buildings. 95% of the housing stock was built before 2000, creating maintenance and energy cost burdens. The new housing is coming from Weiss Farm and Spot Pond. Both are 40B projects. Next, he spoke about affordability and the need for housing below 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI). He touched upon the 11.2% of subsidized units which exist in Stoneham. Mr. Smith also described the constraints and opportunities. Stoneham is limited by a lack of developable land, restrictive zoning and high costs. These constraints are balanced by strong infrastructure capacity and zoning reforms that will target mixed use areas. Stoneham is made up of mostly low density residential and open space. Most multi-family housing requires Special Permit which creates a burden with time and money.

The working document was shared with the Board prior to the meeting. He was also here to see if the Board had any questions, comments or reflections.

Ms. Kelly stated that she had a chance to quickly read through the document. She asked Mr. Smith if they would be open to comments. There were a few small things. She asked if she could put everything down in a document and email it to them. Mr. Smith indicated that they would appreciate the feedback.

Ms. Wengen asked about one of the slides titled constraints and opportunities. She asked Mr. Smith to define "strong infrastructure capacity". Mr. Smith said they looked at water and sewer capacity and schools accepting students. Ms. Wengen also asked about the term accessible. Is that handicapped accessibility? Mr. Smith stated that it was. It is characteristic of older homes.

Ms. Kelly asked about the housing supply and production. She asked if the vacancy rate bullet information was derived what year it was from. Mr. Smith stated it was from the American Communities Survey from last year which is based on 2023 data.

Mr. Dolan had a few comments. He thanked Mr. Smith. Mr. Dolan was curious about 95% of housing being older and wasn't sure it takes into account Weiss Farm, Maple Street and Spot Pond. He had concerns that with more housing and more affordability, you can only squeeze so many pounds into the size of Stoneham. We want to retain quality of life and avoid bumper to bumper continuous traffic. He asked about the housing mismatch and asked what the solution would be. Mr. Smith said one of the easiest ways is to permit people to change a large single family into a duplex or three units. He spoke about his parents doing that with his house. Mr. Smith indicated that you can also create new buildings with smaller units. Mr. Dolan indicated that the Governor is hoping the Accessory Dwelling Units by right will help. He mentions that Stoneham is in the midst of a zoning recodification which intends on addressing some of the issues and to stream line the approval process. Mr. Dolan also indicated that like Ms. Kelly he would like to send comments.

Ms. Wengen asked what would be needed if a house was too big and congregate living was a possibility. Ms. Wortman explained that would go through the Building Commissioner. She then used the example of the tv show Golden Girls and how several women lived together in one house. Ms. Wortman spoke about the housing needs assessment. She explained that they look at what exists in town, income levels and what people can afford, and what we are providing. Ms. Wengen asked if something could be put into the report on congregate living. Some of the larger houses have enough rooms for non-related people to take advantage of living together. Ms. Wortman explained that its not necessarily stay or move. It's about how to best utilize the space. The Golden Girls is a good example of people living together.

Mr. Smith provided the next steps. They would be inviting 5 Planning Board members, the 5 Select Board members and 2 members of the Affordable Housing Trust to interviews. There will also be a public forum on December 15th at the Senior Center. They hope to have the draft plan on January 14th and a final plan by January 28th. They will present to the Planning Board at the February 11th meeting and the Select Board will be invited.

Ms. Wengen asked if the 65-page document would be shared with the Select Board. Mr. Smith and Ms. Wortman indicated that was the plan after sharing it with Planning Board.

Mr. Vallarelli asked how this update ties in with the recodification. Ms. Wortman indicated that it will show a greater need for inclusionary zoning. They will need to address a lower AMI within the inclusionary zoning. They could possibly recalculate the percentages. For example, maybe with the 12% required half would be 50% AMI and the other half 80% AMI. Mr. Dolan thought that could be done on a project-by-project basis and Ms. Wortman agreed it could be done on project size.

Ms. Wengen made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Ms. Kelly. All members voted to adjourn 4-0.

With the discussion concluded and no public hearings to hear, Ms. Wengen made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Ms. Kelly. All members voted to adjourn 4-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Maria Sagarino
Town Clerk