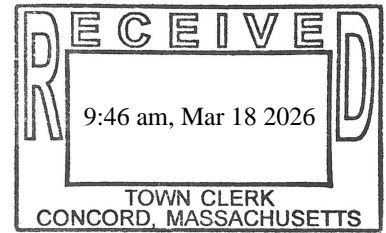




**Town of Concord
Planning Board
Meeting Minutes
January 20, 2026**



Pursuant to a notice and agenda filed with the Town Clerk, the Planning Board met at 7:00 pm on January 20, 2026, in the 1st floor meeting room at 141 Keyes Road and virtually via <https://zoom.us>. The meeting was recorded and will be available on the Minuteman Media Network. At 7:00 pm Mr. Almeida opened the meeting.

Present were Mr. Almeida, Mr. Boardman, Ms. Felshin and Ms. Nelson. Absent were Mr. Bogosian, Mr. Dorothy and Ms. Flanagan. The Town Planner, Ms. Elizabeth Hughes, and Senior Planner, Ms. Christine Zale, were also present.

Definitive Subdivision Public Hearing: In accordance with provisions of M.G.L. Ch. 41, Sect. 81-T and the Town of Concord Subdivision Rules and Regulations to review the Definitive Subdivision Plan application of 874 Barretts Mill Road LLC for improvement of a new roadway and for the creation of 4 new building lots at 874 Barretts Mill Road (Parcel # 1994).

The Board reviewed the draft decision for the definitive subdivision application for 874 Barretts Mill Road, which proposes a new roadway and the creation of four new building lots. The Town Planner walked the Board through a series of minor edits and clarifications. There was brief discussion about language related to environmental impacts, including exterior lighting and its effects on flora and fauna, and confirming consistent use of the term "DarkSky." The Applicant reviewed the draft decision and stated they had no comments or concerns.

Mr. Boardman moved to grant with waivers the Definitive Subdivision Plan application of 874 Barretts Mill Road LLC for improvement of a new roadway and for the creation of 4 new building lots at 874 Barretts Mill Road (Parcel # 1994) pursuant to the Board's decision and conditions as amended and authorize the Chair, Vice-Chair, Clerk or Town Planner to sign on behalf of the Board. Ms. Nelson seconded the motion and the motion passed (4-0).

Public Comment

The Chair opened the meeting for Public Comment and there was none.

Potential 2026 Annual Town Meeting Zoning Bylaw Amendments Discussion

The Board reviewed edits received from Town Counsel on the proposed 2026 Annual Town Meeting zoning amendments. There were no edits received for the Limited Business and Building Commissioner bylaws and only minor edits and questions on the Joint Parking and MBTA Communities Zoning amendments.

The Town Planner introduced a minor revision to the proposed exterior lighting zoning bylaw. The changes largely reflected formatting and wording updates requested by Town Counsel rather than substantive policy changes. There was discussion about the term "DarkSky" and ensuring it is written properly for its specific use before the bylaw is submitted.

The Town Planner reported that the Board had received the final draft of the wireless facilities bylaw and that Town Counsel had not returned any additional edits. Board members discussed a provision requiring wireless towers to be at least 300 feet from certain resources, including wetlands, vernal pools, and historic sites, questioning whether that restriction reflected an actual legal standard or was unnecessarily restrictive. They noted that towers can legally be located closer to wetlands and that the Natural Resources Commission, rather than the Board of Appeals, has jurisdiction over those areas.

Because the provision might be unenforceable and inconsistent with existing approvals in town, the Board discussed removing some of the related clauses. Members generally agreed that the clauses related to wetlands could be deleted, while the provision addressing rare or endangered species habitat should remain because it falls under a different regulatory framework. The Town Planner said she would verify the recommendation from Town Counsel, but the Board expressed support for striking the unnecessary restrictions to make the bylaw clearer and more enforceable.

The Board reviewed edits to the mixed-use zoning bylaw, focusing on clarifying language related to open space requirements and affordable housing provisions. Town Counsel had questioned whether the term “private space” was being used clearly, so the Town Planner recommended replacing it with “residential space” to better specify that certain open space must be reserved for residents of the development. Additional edits tightened wording, removed redundant sentences, corrected references, and clarified residential open space requirements. The discussion also addressed the affordable housing requirement that at least 20 percent of units be affordable. Members worked through how the bylaw should handle fractional units, agreeing that developments must still meet the 20 percent requirement but that a payment in lieu could apply only to a fractional portion of a unit. They revised the language to reference the calculation section below so that the rule would be clearer and avoid unintended interpretations. The Board indicated that final wording adjustments could be confirmed with Town Counsel without changing the intent of the provision. Members also briefly discussed the explanatory text that accompanies the warrant article, agreeing that it would be helpful to include a fuller explanation for the public, particularly linking the amendment to broader planning goals such as Envision Concord, since many residents only review the briefing materials shortly before Town Meeting.

Matt Johnson of 21 Winthrop Street raised concerns about language in the mixed-use zoning proposal that requires projects to “contribute to a vibrant streetscape,” arguing that it is too vague for zoning and would be better suited to design guidelines. He also suggested simplifying the explanation for the warrant article.

The Board discussed how best to present the explanation of the mixed-use zoning article at Town Meeting. The Town Planner noted that many residents only encounter zoning explanations in the Town Meeting briefing materials and may not fully understand what zoning can and cannot do, so including some explanatory context could be helpful. While some feedback suggested simplifying the text, the group discussed keeping the fuller explanation in the written materials while using shorter, clearer summary points in the presentation to the public. They agreed that the presentation could highlight the key goals drawn from the Envision Concord plan in a more concise format while the written explanation would retain the detailed citations and supporting language. The Board confirmed that the article text itself would remain as amended earlier in the meeting and that the remaining discussion was only about how to present and explain it.

Members then discussed moving forward with the seven warrant articles as amended, allowing for minor grammatical edits.

Ms. Felshin moved to submit the seven warrant articles as amended with other minor non-substantial grammatical or sentence syntax edits. Mr. Boardman seconded the motion and the motion passed (4-0).

Staff said they would begin preparing presentations for the upcoming public hearing and Town Meeting, where various Board Members would present different articles.

Planning Board Liaison/Town Planner Updates

The Town Planner reported the following:

- The new owners of the gas station at 166 Commonwealth Avenue presented a redevelopment proposal to the West Concord Advisory Committee to create a gas station with a traditional country store. The concept was well received, and the Planning Board is expected to review the project in March.
- The consulting engineer for the Assabet River Multi-Use Bridge has submitted the 25% design to MassDOT and they have 90 days to review and comment, marking a significant milestone in the project despite its complexity.
- The Town held a kickoff meeting with consultants to begin updating the subdivision rules and regulations. Staff have started reviewing an annotated draft identifying issues, and the consultants will present an initial overview to the Planning Board later in the process.
- The Town is submitting a request for proposals to develop a master plan and zoning for the MCI Concord site with the goal of selecting a consultant by the end of March.

Minutes: 12/9

Ms. Felshin moved to approve the minutes from the December 9, 2025 meeting as submitted. Mr. Almeida seconded the motion. The motion passed (4-0) by roll call vote.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.