OFFICE OF THE
PLANNING BOARD
TOWN HALL, 511 MAIN STREET
DUNSTABLE, MA 01827-1313
(978) 649-4514 FAX (978) 649-8893
planning@dunstable-ma.gov

Planning Board Minutes
Monday, August 18, 2025

Approved: **September 15, 2025**

Chair Joe Vlcek at 6:33pm, called the meeting to order.
Members present: Alan Chaney, Jeff Pallis, and Joan Simmons
Members absent: Jim Wilkie

Meeting held: At the Dunstable Town Hall, 511 Main Street, lower level

Economic Development Committee (EDC) Proposed Zoning Changes

Jeff Rosen, of the EDC, presented some zoning bylaw amendments for the Board to consider. The two proposed sections to consider for updates include:

1. Section 6.1 g (ii) 5. (page 28/140) - Limitations on the number of commercial vehicles in R-1
   "there is no exterior storage of material or equipment (including the parking of more than one (1) commercial vehicle)"

Jeff shared that based on feedback from the EDC business survey, they have found that this specific section severely limits those who operate businesses out of their homes. He noted that commercial vehicles don't necessarily include heavy duty equipment. They can often be light duty vehicles such as sedans and SUVs. As such, EDC believe this limitation is overly burdensome and may be creating a reduction in potential local receipts by means of vehicle excise tax. He further noted that EDC has not committed to a recommendation to increase this by, although they did feel it should be more than one. The committee had discussed the idea of adding a vehicle weight limitation to prevent heavy duty equipment.

The Board discussed together with Jeff and recommended the review of surrounding towns zoning bylaws, which are like Dunstable, and returning with some specific verbiage for a potential change. Joe suggested that wording for a definition of commercial vehicles could be enhanced, potentially dependent on gross weight and/or vehicle lettering upon which specifies it as a business vehicle.

2. Section 10.1 (page 52/140) - Uses Permitted As of Right in B-3 District.

Jeff shared that the current bylaw only allows solar energy systems "As of Right" in the B-3 District. All other uses are by special permit issued by the Planning Board. Based on an EDC conversation with a Tewksbury official, the special permit requirement is a signal to developers, who like predictability and dependability. As such, the bylaw section 10.2 uses

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permitted by a special permit are a signal by a community to say, "*we are not interested in this*", and potentially turning new businesses away.

The EDC is interested in expanding the As of Right Uses specifically and only in the B-3 district. Jeff noted that this eastern part of Town is adjacent to and could easily utilize Tyngsborough's existing water and sewage infrastructure. While the EDC has not committed to offering a recommendation to a specific type of use to allow by right, they wished to open the dialogue to determine if there is any interest on the Planning Board for a bylaw update.

The Board discussed together with Jeff. As with the prior section 6.1, he will review surrounding towns zoning bylaws, which are like Dunstable, and return to a meeting in the future with some specific verbiage for zoning bylaw change(s) which the Board can consider.

Before leaving the meeting, Jeff offered an additional suggestion for a bylaw update, referencing Dark Sky MA, outdoor-lighting regulation/ordinance. He offered the Board a bit of information on light pollution and inquired if they'd be interested in protecting the night skies of Dunstable with a ordinance. The Board responded positively to the suggestion and Jeff will return in the future with a proposal to be considered.

Meeting Minutes – August 4, 2025

Jeff made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 4th meeting. Alan 2nd the motion. – Motion passed unanimously.

Bills, Task Orders and Payroll

- Alan made a motion to sign off on payrolls. Jeff 2nd the motion. – Motion passed unanimously.

SP Backland Lot House Location Change Request – 178 Westford Street

With email feedback from the Town Engineer, the Board discussed the property owner request to locate the new dwelling in a different location than originally approved by the Special Permit.

- Alan motioned to approve of the new house location proposed for 178 Westford Street. Joan seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Post Labor Day Holiday, September 2nd, PB Meeting Reschedule

Chair Joe noted he is unable to make this rescheduled meeting on Tuesday, September 2nd. The Board discussed and if there are no time-critical topics or needs, the Administrator will decide and notify all by August 27th, to cancel the meeting via notice to the Town Clerk.

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Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Bylaw

The Board are still reviewing the August 4th edition which Chair Joe created that incorporated some of NMCOG's recommendations. Joan mentioned there are two categories of ADUs: "Protected Use ADU's", which is by-right, verses "Local Use ADU's". Joe will add a definitions section. Joan will review a nearby town's current bylaw edition and provide Joe with her edits for incorporation before the next PB meeting. The Board will plan to discuss the draft bylaw further at their next meeting.

Additional Topics Discussed Not Noted on the Agenda

Potential Bylaw Updates

Chair Joe shared that he'd like to propose other changes to both the solar array size definitions and possibly the Town Center District's commercial businesses square footage.

Conservation Commission News: Timber Cuts Planned

Alan shared that the Conservation Commission is working towards a timber harvest this winter season at both the Spaulding Proctor and Farnsworth Reservations. There is a forest cutting plan approved by the state and a community site walk with the forester is scheduled for September 20th at 10am. The forester will offer an overview presentation of the cut planned at the Town Hall before heading to the Spaulding Proctor for the walk.

Jeff moved to close the meeting at 8:18 PM. Alan seconded the motion. – Motion passed unanimously.

The next meeting scheduled is on Tuesday, September 2nd, 2025, at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol A. Rock
Administrative Assistant
Dunstable Planning Board

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