OFFICE OF THE
PLANNING BOARD
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Dunstable Planning Board Minutes
Monday, November 2, 2026

Approved: **November 16, 2026**

At 6:30pm, Chair Alan Chaney called the meeting to order.
Members present: Jeff Pallis, Annika Selinger, Joan Simmons and Jim Wilkie

Members absent: None

Meeting held: Dunstable Town Hall, 511 Main Street – lower level, Grange Room.

Covenant Release Request - 26 Robbins Farm Road (Lot 16)

Alan Chaney and Jeff Pallis recused themselves due to their affiliations with the Dunstable Rural Land Trust (DRLT). Vice Chair Jim Wilkie presided over the matter.

The Board reviewed a request for a partial release of the subdivision covenant for Lot 16, 26 Robbins Farm Road, to facilitate acquisition of the parcel by the DRLT. The Administrator explained that the lot was part of a subdivision approved in the 1990s and had never been released because the lot was never developed.

- Annika made a motion to approve the Partial Release of Subdivision Covenant for Lot 16, 26 Robbins Farm Road, Robbins Farm Estate, and to authorize Jim Wilkie, Annika Selinger, and Joan Simmons to execute the release on behalf of the Board. Joan seconded the motion. The motion passed, 3-0-2, with Alan and Jeff recusing.

Joint Meeting with Economic Development Committee – Clean Energy Infrastructure Permitting

The Planning Board and Economic Development Committee met jointly with representatives from Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG), including Meghan Tenhoff and Mike Asciola, to receive a presentation regarding Massachusetts' new Small Clean Energy Infrastructure Facility (SCEIF/SCIF) permitting framework established under the 2024 Climate Act.

APPROVED

The presentation reviewed the Commonwealth's efforts to accelerate clean energy deployment while maintaining a local permitting role through a consolidated review process for qualifying solar, battery energy storage, and certain transmission projects. NMCOG explained that municipalities are now required to provide a consolidated permitting pathway for eligible projects, with a single local decision to be issued within twelve months of determining that an application is complete. The new process includes a mandatory pre-filing phase involving public outreach and consultation with local officials before a formal application may be submitted. It was noted that if a municipality does not render a decision within the prescribed timeline, a project may receive constructive approval under state regulations.

Discussion focused on the responsibilities of the newly created Local Government Representative (LGR), who would be responsible for certifying pre-filing activities, determining application completeness, coordinating reviews among municipal boards and departments, and issuing a consolidated decision. Board and Committee members expressed concern regarding the administrative burden these responsibilities could place on smaller communities such as Dunstable, particularly given limited staff resources and the technical complexity associated with clean energy applications. The possibility of sharing resources or coordinating with neighboring communities was discussed.

The presenters also reviewed the state Site Suitability framework, which utilizes a GIS-based scoring system to evaluate project impacts on climate resiliency, carbon sequestration, agricultural resources, biodiversity, and social and environmental burdens. Members discussed how the suitability scoring process could influence future siting decisions and the extent to which local regulations would continue to guide development review. Questions were raised regarding wetlands jurisdiction, mitigation requirements, consultant review, project appeals, and the relationship between local bylaws and state permitting authority.

NMCOG identified several areas where Dunstable's existing regulations will require review or amendment to align with the new framework. Among the items discussed were updates to the Town's solar energy provisions, the creation of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) bylaw, development of standards for co-located solar and battery storage facilities, decommissioning requirements, review procedures, and revisions to zoning and administrative provisions governing permitting authority and timelines. Examples from other communities, including Westford, were mentioned as potential models for future bylaw development.

Members also discussed Community Benefits Agreements and the types of public benefits that may be negotiated in connection with eligible projects. Questions were raised regarding the authority required to adopt such agreements and whether Town Meeting action would be necessary. NMCOG agreed to provide additional guidance on that issue as well as questions relating to consultant review funding under M.G.L. c. 44, §53G, transformer infrastructure costs, and regional approaches to implementation.

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At the conclusion of the discussion, there was consensus that the Planning Board should brief Town Administrator Jason Silva regarding the new state requirements and seek his recommendation concerning designation of the Local Government Representative and the Town's overall implementation strategy. Members acknowledged that additional regulatory and administrative work will be necessary to ensure Dunstable's bylaws and permitting procedures comply with the new state requirements before future clean energy applications are received.

Land Disturbance Permit Status Updates

Town Engineer David Langlais provided updates regarding active land disturbance permits:

- 775 Main Street: Stormwater infiltration revisions remain necessary. Work is expected to continue in the spring.
- 125 Thorndike Street: The applicant has not provided a recent update. Dave will conduct an additional site visit and follow-up.
- Unkety Brook Way: Construction activity continues for multiple lots. Monitoring activities remain ongoing.

Building Permit Release Request: 453 High Street

The Board reviewed a request for building permit release for 453 High Street. During discussion, it was determined that the previously approved Land Disturbance Permit applies only to the backland lot at 463 High Street and does not cover the proposed development of the two-acre conventional lot at 453 High Street.

Dave Langlais reviewed the permitting history and explained that the Board's prior approvals contemplated separate Tier 1 Land Disturbance Permits for the two lots, with a condition that only one lot be disturbed at a time until fully stabilized. The Board further noted that Land Disturbance Permits are lot-specific and non-transferable. As a result, the applicant must submit and obtain approval of a Tier 1 Land Disturbance Permit for 453 High Street before the Planning Board can sign off on the release the building permit.

Meeting Minutes – October 19, 2026

- Jeff moved to approve the minutes of October 19, 2026. Joan seconded. – Motion passed 4-0-1.

Bills and Payroll

- The Board reviewed and approved three Hoyle Tanner invoices:
  - [#76673] 775 Main Street, T1 Land Disturbance Inspections – $200.00
  - [#76674] 125 Thorndike Street, T1 Land Disturbance Review & Inspections – $1,550.00
  - [#6672] Unkety Brook Way, Land Disturbance Inspections -- $1,266.75
- Motion to approve payment of these three Hoyle Tanner invoices was made by Annika and seconded by Joan. – Motion passed unanimously.

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- Jim moved to approve payroll. Annika seconded the motion. – Motion passed unanimously.

Topics not reasonably anticipated by Chair 48 hours in advance of meeting/Other Business

Zoning Map Review

Administrative Updates and Zoning Map Discussion

The Administrator reported that the historic zoning map had been located and that further consultation with the Town Clerk, regarding procedures for updating the official zoning map, would occur following the election cycle. The Board discussed the relationship between the 1947 zoning map, subsequent zoning amendments, nonconforming uses, grandfathered rights, and the importance of maintaining an accurate zoning history for future zoning determinations.

Jeff moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:10PM. Annika seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 16, 2026, at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Rock
Administrative Coordinator
Dunstable Planning Board

APPROVED