Shutesbury Planning Board
Minutes – July 13, 2026
Approved – September 14, 2026
Hybrid Meeting

Board Members Present: Nathan Murphy (Chair), Keith Hastie, Jeff Weston, Ashleigh Pyecroft, Steve Bressler, Tom Siefert, Michael DeChiara
Board Members Absent:
Other Staff Present: Matteo Pangallo (Land Use Clerk)
Others Present: Dean Gendron, Jim Plaza, Carl Lounder, Michael Schaefer, Mary Lou Conca

Call to Order: 7:02pm

The meeting is being recorded and Hastie, Pycroft, and DeChiara are participating remotely.

Organization of Board

Murphy notes he has served as chair for three years and invites anyone else who is interested in serving to step forward.

Motion to elect Nathan Murphy as Chair of the Planning Board for the next year: Weston; second: Bressler. Vote: Bressler - aye; DeChiara - aye; Hastie - aye; Pyecroft - aye; Siefert - aye; Weston - aye; Murphy - abstain. *The motion is approved unanimously with one abstention.*

Murphy explains the role of a Vice Chair as filling in when the Chair needs to recuse themself or cannot attend a meeting. Siefert asks what the reason is for having a Vice Chair. DeChiara explains this would be in keeping with what most Planning Board's have and it would formalize the role he already serves on the Board.

Motion to elect Michael DeChiara as Vice Chair of the Planning Board for the next year: Murphy; second: Weston. Vote: Bressler - aye; DeChiara - aye; Hastie - aye; Pyecroft - aye; Siefert - aye; Weston - aye; Murphy - aye. *The motion is approved unanimously.*

Public Comment

Murphy recognizes Mary Lou Conca who indicates she is interested in serving on the Lake Wyola Advisory Committee. Murphy encourages Conca to reach out to the Select Board regarding appointment to the Committee since the Select Board is the appointing authority for it.

Landowner Education and Guidance

There is no request for landowner education and guidance.

Approval Not Required Application for 314 Wendell Road and 282 Wendell Road

Murphy shares that the Board has received a new Approval Not Required (ANR) application for this project and he explains that Town Counsel advised getting separate Form As signed by each applicant for the two different properties. Murphy shares and reviews the Subdivision Regulations relevant to ANRs.

Murphy shares and reviews the submitted ANR Form As and the accompanying plan.

Siefert asks about which Form A applies to which lot. Murphy asks if Siefert would like to recuse himself because one of the applicants is engaged in a lawsuit with Siefert. DeChiara thinks the conflict of interest restrictions would apply if the ANR resolution would benefit Siefert and his opinion is, because there would be no impact to Siefer whether the ANR is endorsed or not then there is no conflict. Siefert asks for clarification from Murphy about the nature of what he perceives to be his conflict of interest. Murphy explains that he believes that because Siefert stands to receive a financial remedy from a ruling against one of the parties in the ANR it could represent a conflict of interest. Siefert states that implying he has a conflict of interest could be viewed as retaliation against him. Murphy invites Siefert to recuse himself or not recuse himself as he determines. He explains which ANR refers to which lot.

Siefert asks how one ANR can be submitted for two separate property owners. DeChiara recalls that the last meeting concluded with questions about setbacks, but he also questions whether two landowners can be on one ANR..

Murphy recognizes Michael Schafer who reviews the history of the ANR applications. shares the original ANR plan, and explains how the applicants corrected their Form As in response to the Board's requests at its previous meeting. He notes that the applicants have no concerns about Siefert voting on the ANR submission.

Murphy asks Pangallo to explain his phone conversation with Town Counsel and Pangallo reports that Town Counsel stated that having one plan was acceptable as long as two Form As were signed and submitted by the two separate property owners–the Plazas and the SAC.

Siefert asks if the properties were surveyed. Schaefer indicates that they were.

Siefert asks for clarifications regarding the redrawn lot lines and Schaefer explains the changes.

Siefert asks if the fees were received. Murphy indicates that a payment of $140 was received, which covers the $70 per new buildable lot required by the regulations.

Murphy recognizes Mary Lou Conca who asks what the plans are for. Murphy explains that with an ANR request the only decision before the Board is whether the plan represents a subdivision.

Motion to endorse the Approval Not Required applications as submitted to the Planning Board for 314 Wendell Road and 282 Wendell Road: DeChiara; second: Siefert. Vote: Bressler - aye; DeChiara - aye; Hastie - aye; Pyecroft - aye; Siefert - aye; Weston - aye; Murphy - aye. *The motion is approved unanimously.*

Consider and decide Planning Board representation on the Community Preservation Committee

Motion to nominate Siefert as the Planning Board's representative on the Community Preservation Committee (CPC): Murphy; second: Weston. DeChiara explains that the Board's previous designee on the CPC, Clif Read, is still on the Committee as the Parks Commissioner designee. Vote: Bressler - aye; DeChiara - aye; Hastie - aye; Pyecroft - aye; Siefert - aye; Weston - aye; Murphy - aye. *The motion is approved unanimously.*

Consider and decide Planning Board representation on the new Lake Wyola Advisory Committee

DeChiara explains that the Lake Wyola Advisory Committee (LWAC) does not currently exist and is being reconstituted by the Select Board and so recommends the Board wait on naming a representative. Siefert notes that the Conservation Commission and Board of Health have already named representatives. Murphy entertains a motion for a recommendation to the Select Board for a representation for LWAC's new version should the Select Board give it a charge.

Motion to nominate Siefert as the Planning Board's representative on the Lake Wyola Advisory Committee: DeChiara; second: Bressler. Murphy will let the Select Board know the Planning Board can vote again on this if needed. Vote: Bressler - aye; DeChiara - aye; Hastie - aye; Pyecroft - aye; Siefert - aye; Weston - aye; Murphy - aye. *The motion is approved unanimously.*

Review associate member candidate statement of interest

Murphy explains that there are two candidates for Associate Member. He recognizes Carl Lounder and Dean Gendron who introduce themselves and describe their backgrounds and qualifications for the role.

DeChiara notes there are two open Associate Member positions so the Board can appoint both Lounder and Gendron. Weston describes the importance of having Associate Members and thanks both applicants. DeChiara lauds the two different kinds of professional experience backgrounds the two applicants would bring to the Board.

Pyecroft asks the applicants' thoughts about how to balance the rural character of Shutesbury and the need for economic development. Lounder would like to see commercial development appropriate to the town to shift cost burdens off residents, including dining, a bed and breakfast, a bait shop, and similar fitting forms of business. Gendron thinks it is important to allow property owners to exercise their rights fully and to find equitable partnerships between residents, the Town, and the state, particularly in regard to the Quabbin watershed. He is also interested in regulations and opportunities in regard to energy production, distribution, and storage.

Siefert points out that there may be a situation where only one of the two Associate Members is activated to be a voting member. Pyecroft suggests they could take turns. Siefert notes that three current full members began as Associate Members. Siefert asks if they have reviewed the Zoning Bylaw. Gendron states he reviewed it when the solar development projects were proposed. He indicates he wants to improve online accessibility of information for residents and building transparency about the Board, its work, and its responsibilities.

Murphy explains that the Board will discuss and act on the applications at its August meeting. He explains that Associate Members are appointed in a joint session of the Select Board and Planning Board. DeChiara suggests the Board votes on the applicants tonight. Seeing no opposition, Murphy agrees to the suggestion.

Motion to recommend Carl Lounder as Associate Member of the Planning Board: DeChiara; second: Weston. Vote: Bressler - aye; DeChiara - aye; Hastie - aye; Pyecroft - aye; Siefert - aye; Weston - aye; Murphy - aye. *The motion is approved unanimously.*

Motion to recommend Dean Gendron as Associate Member of the Planning Board: DeChiara; second: Weston. Vote: Bressler - aye; DeChiara - aye; Hastie - aye; Pyecroft - aye; Siefert - aye; Weston - aye; Murphy - aye. *The motion is approved unanimously.*

Review and approve minutes from 06/01/2026 meeting

Motion to approve the minutes of June 1, 2026: DeChiara; second: Siefert second. Vote: DeChiara - aye; Bressler - aye; Siefert - aye; Weston - aye; Pyecroft - abstain; Hastie - abstain; Murphy - abstain. *The motion is approved unanimously with three abstentions.*

Review approach to updating zoning districts/economic development

DeChiara recapitulates the discussion from the previous meeting regarding the sections of the Bylaw he thinks the Board could revisit to better encourage appropriate economic development. Murphy shares DeChiara's notes on the possible changes. Bressler asks if the discussion should start with how to start discussing these changes. DeChiara agrees and thinks the Board should also have a conversation about whether it even wants to proceed with such a discussion.

DeChiara reviews his suggestions on the different possible changes to the Zoning Bylaw and the different districts based on their purposes, boundaries, definition, use regulations, and dimensional parameters.

Bressler agrees that taking this district by district makes sense in some ways, but some changes might cut across districts. He encourages the Board to approach the public presentation of these changes in pieces rather than all at once and he recalls that the 2008 attempt to revise the whole Zoning Bylaw took two years and generated a great deal of public confusion. He suggests doing it in sections at Town Meeting rather than all at once.

DeChiara agrees that whatever the Board presents to the public should be made as clear as possible. He is wary of taking four years to do this and notes that many of these changes are connected, so dividing them up over multiple Town Meetings might be challenging.

Murphy encourages the Board members to write down their thoughts and ideas and share them with him and DeChiara.

State clean energy regulation updates

DeChiara reviews the history of the State's clean energy law over the past two years. He reports that, through his advocacy, the State's regulations were amended in the new energy legislation before the Senate to allow the role of the Local Government Representative to be served by an applicant-funded professional consultant. That change was not in the House's version of the bill, so whether that change remains in the final bill depends on the decision by the conference committee but he is confident it will be included because the Department of Energy Resources endorses the proposal. He notes that there is still confusion regarding whether Shutesbury will need to amend its Zoning Bylaw to make it align with the new model bylaws that the State has yet to issue because it is not yet clear whether model bylaws have the weight of law. He adds that, should the consultant proposal not pass, some municipalities are discussing the idea of increasing solar application fees to allow them to hire consultants regardless.

Member Updates

Pyecroft reports that Wheelock is able to do a site visit at 10am on August 13 but is reluctant to allow external visitors and has asked why the Board wants to visit. Murphy notes that it is in the Conditions of the Special Permit that the Board can conduct site visits and Bressler adds that it is allowed so the Board can observe whether any changes have been made on the site. Pyecroft reviews the list of specific questions the Board had at its previous meeting and Murphy explains the concerns that the Board has expressed about the condition of the site presently and what they would like to check on. DeChiara suggests that the Board invites the Conservation Commission to accompany them again on the site visit. Weston asks that the Fire Chief also be invited.

Murphy notes that the Board needs to start approving minutes from its Executive Sessions and will plan to start doing so in August.

Unanticipated Business

There is no unanticipated business.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Bressler; second: DeChiara. Vote: Bressler - aye; Siefert - aye; Pyecroft - aye; DeChiara - aye; Weston - aye; Murphy - aye. *The motion is approved unanimously.*

Adjourned: 9:04pm

List of Documents Used:

- Approval Not Required Form As and Plan for 314 Wendell Road and 282 Wendell Road
- Associate Member application statement from Dean Gendron
- Associate Member application statement from Carl Lounder
- DeChiara's notes on possible revisions to the Zoning Bylaw regarding encouraging appropriate economic development