

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 7:32PM on March 10, 2026 in the Select Board Room, 3rd Floor, Town Offices, 36 Bartlet Street. Present was Vice Chair Zachary Bergeron; Members Morgan von Prella Pecelli, Rocky Leavitt (Virtual), Vincent Chiozzi, Jr., and Associate Lelani Foster. Also present was Paul Materazzo, Director of Planning & Land Use, Lisa Schwarz, Assistant Planning Director, Ann Ormond, Director of Business, Arts and Cultural Development, Monica Gregoire, Planner, and Joanna Reck, Ballardvale Historic District Commission Chair. A recording of this meeting is available at: https://andovervt.org/planning_board_meetings.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:**Town Meeting Warrant Article P22 – Bylaw Amendment – Ballardvale Historic District Commission:**

The Planning Board heard a presentation from Ms. Schwarz and Ms. Reck on proposed amendments to the Ballardvale Historic District Bylaw. The Commission, which has seen four new members appointed in the past year, undertook a comprehensive review of the 1995 Bylaw following resident feedback at the 2025 Annual Town Meeting. Since August, the Commission has held five public meetings, conducted a survey with 206 responses, and hosted a public forum. The proposed Bylaw revisions streamline the document from twelve to eight sections, align it with M.G.L. Chapter 40C and the Central Street Historic District Bylaw format, update membership provisions, remove redundant language, and explicitly state an intent to balance preservation with property-owner needs in a pragmatic and collaborative manner. Board members raised concerns about process, predictability, and prior delays. Ms. Schwarz and Ms. Reck explained the role of the Building Inspector in confirming application completeness, the statutory 60-day decision requirement, the availability of extensions with applicant consent, and ideas such as application liaisons and pre-filing consultations to reduce confusion and repeat hearings. Public feedback to date has focused on transparency of process and broader Town investment in Ballardvale infrastructure.

On a motion by Ms. von Prella Pecelli, seconded by Mr. Leavitt, the Planning Board voted to recommend Town Meeting approval of Article P22 – Bylaw Amendment – Ballardvale Historic District Commission.

Vote: (5-0)

CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING:**100 River Road – Site Plan Review – Multifamily Overlay District (SPR26-01) and a Special Permit for a Mixed-Use Structure (SP26-01):**

During the continued public hearing for 100 River Road, architect Hans Strauch (HDS Architecture) briefly presented the overall building design and massing and noted that the project had undergone multiple reviews with the Design Review Board (DRB), which supported the revised architectural proposal. Landscape architect Jay Emperor (Bohler) summarized the landscape and lighting plans, including preservation of existing trees, internal courtyards, and a dark-sky-compliant lighting approach. Board members asked that the team coordinate with the Town's Tree Warden and staff to ensure native, context-appropriate plantings, consider connections, wayfinding, or signage that better tie the project to the nearby trail network along the Merrimack River, and to work on solutions to shield glare and limit light spillover toward residents across the street. Retail strategist Ann Ehrhart (Everstreet) presented the mixed-use/retail analysis supporting the 2,950 square feet of ground-floor commercial space at the corner of River Road/Old River Road to serve residents, nearby offices, hotels, and commuters.

Planning Board discussion focused primarily on whether the proposed retail component is sufficient to satisfy the mixed-use intent of the Multifamily Overlay District, which allows roughly 100 additional residential units in exchange for including meaningful non-residential space. Several members expressed that 2,950 square feet (less than 1% of building area) feels too small and risks being perceived as “checking a box” rather than delivering a true mixed-use project, while also acknowledging the applicant’s concern about oversupplying retail and creating long-term vacancies in an emerging corridor. Members emphasized that square footage alone may not capture the value of the retail component, noting a preference for high-quality, locally owned businesses over national chains and an interest in whether the corridor—and potentially other flexible areas of the building—could support a greater number of smaller tenants over time as a seeding strategy for future mixed-use growth. Board questions centered on: (1) how many and what types of tenants the space can realistically support; (2) how this retail size compares to other suburban mixed-use projects and local examples; and (3) whether any resident amenities (e.g., fitness/yoga/co-working) could be structured to function as publicly accessible or membership-based “mixed-use” space.

Planning staff and two Board members will meet with the applicant between hearings to further review the retail strategy, square footage, and configuration, and to explore options for expanding or supplementing the non-residential component (including possible shared amenity uses). Staff will also gather comparable suburban mixed-use examples and explore retaining an outside retail/market-demand peer review consultant if needed. The applicant will continue working with Horsley Witten Group and the Conservation Commission to close out remaining stormwater and site design comments and will coordinate with staff on landscape and lighting refinements and on future hearings focused on traffic and circulation. The Board discussed scheduling a site walk which will be coordinated offline prior to the next meeting.

On a motion by Ms. von Prella Pecelli, seconded by Mr. Leavitt, the Planning Board voted to continue the public hearing to March 31, 2026 at 7:30PM. **Vote: (5-0)**

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Town Meeting Warrant Article P10 – Bylaw Amendment – Registry of Deeds E-Recording Revolving Fund:

The Planning Board briefly discussed Article P10, a proposed bylaw amendment to modernize the Town’s ability to record planning-related documents at the Registry of Deeds. Staff explained that the article would formalize the use of a revolving fund so applicant-paid recording fees can be deposited and then used directly by the Town to record decisions, plans, and other instruments, improving efficiency and administrative control. Board members sought clarification that this was primarily an administrative/housekeeping change and would not alter substantive review standards or create new fees.

On a motion by Ms. von Prella Pecelli, seconded by Mr. Chiozzi, the Planning Board voted to recommend Town Meeting approval of Article P10 – Bylaw Amendment – Registry of Deeds E-Recording Revolving Fund. **Vote: (5-0)**

Minutes:

On a motion by Ms. von Prella Pecelli, seconded by Mr. Leavitt, the Planning Board voted to approve the minutes for the February 24, 2026 meeting. **Vote: (5-0)**

Other Planning Related Topics:

Planning staff announced that the Town had received approximately \$500,000 in Complete Streets funding for priority pedestrian and roadway improvements, and that a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grant application has been submitted to support climate-resilience and infrastructure planning efforts.

Adjournment:

On a motion by Ms. von Prelle Pecelli, seconded by Mr. Leavitt, the Planning Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:26PM. **Vote: (5-0)**

Documents:**Town Meeting**

- P22 Ballardvale Historic District Bylaw Revision – 1.13.26
- Memorandum from Town Counsel to the Planning Board RE: Warrant Articles P10, P13, P16, P17, and P30 – 2.7.26
- 2026 Preliminary Annual Town Meeting Warrant – 2.10.26
- Memorandum from Lisa Schwarz to the Planning Board RE: Article P22 Summary & Recommendation – 3.5.26
- Ballardvale Bylaw Update to the Planning Board PowerPoint Presentation – 3.10.26

100 River Road

- Civil and Landscape Permit Set – 1.9.25
- Retail Analysis & Proposed Programming Report 1.7.26
- Project Narrative – 1.12.26
- Revised Architectural Permit Set – 2.11.26
- Memorandum from the Design Review Board to the Planning Board RE: Project Support – 2.12.26
- Memorandum from Paul Materazzo to the Planning Board RE: Project Summary & Recommendation – 3.4.26

Minutes

- February 24, 2026 Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Miscellaneous

- March 10, 2026 Planning Board Meeting Agenda