

**TOWN OF LUDLOW PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
November 6, 2025**

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS

Raymond Phoenix – Chairman (Present)
Christopher Coelho – Vice Chairman (Present)
Joel Silva (Present)
Kathleen Houle (Present)

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TOWN OF LUDLOW

ALSO PRESENT were members of the Select Board: James Gennette, William Rosenblum, Anthony Alves (remotely)

Mr. Gennette **MOVED** to open the Select Board meeting for November 6th at 6:00 p.m.
SECOND Mr. Alves.
3-0 in Favor.

The meeting began at 6:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Conference Room. This was a joint meeting with the Select Board to conduct interviews and appoint a Planning Board Member and Associate Member.

Planning Board to meet with the Select Board to conduct interviews and appoint for the Planning Board Member open seat.

Mr. Phoenix advised the public that the meeting is being recorded.

Haley Rivers

Haley Rivers appeared before the Planning Board to interview for an open Planning Board member position. Board members noted that Ms. Rivers had previously interviewed for the Town Planner position and welcomed her continued interest and involvement, particularly as a Ludlow resident.

Ms. Rivers stated that she understands the distinction between the role of the Town Planner and that of the Planning Board, noting that Planning Board members are elected officials who act collectively to advise and make recommendations on planning matters. She confirmed familiarity with the Board's regular meeting schedule and indicated that the meeting times generally work for her, acknowledging that occasional special meetings may occur.

Ms. Rivers expressed strong interest in becoming involved in town government and contributing her technical skills. She noted that, while she is interested in serving as a Planning Board member, she may be particularly well-suited for the associate member role due to her professional background and relative lack of political experience. She described the opportunity as a meaningful way to give back to the community and to participate in Ludlow's ongoing development.

In response to a question regarding ethical decision-making, Ms. Rivers described her experience serving on her company's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) committee, where she has facilitated difficult discussions, balanced competing viewpoints, de-escalated conflict, and refocused conversations on organizational goals while ensuring that participants felt heard and respected.

Ms. Rivers was asked whether she would be willing to run for a future term if she was appointed. She stated that she had not yet decided, noting that she is early in her career and would want to assess the role, its impact, and the opportunities available before making a long-term commitment.

When asked about development that encourages healthy growth, Ms. Rivers emphasized improving existing infrastructure and livability rather than focusing solely on economic incentives. She highlighted her experience with programs such as the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program and Complete Streets, explaining that investments in transportation, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and recreational amenities can increase community engagement, appeal to younger residents, and support sustainable development.

Ms. Rivers discussed her professional experience at Tighe & Bond, where she has worked for approximately three and a half years. She reported overseeing MVP Action Grant work for seven to eight municipalities and additional hazard mitigation planning work for a New York county encompassing 23 towns. She stated that she has successfully assisted with four awarded MVP grants for the Towns of Harwich, Kingsborough, Westfield, and Northampton.

In response to a question regarding her most applicable personal or professional trait, Ms. Rivers described herself as enthusiastic, optimistic, and able to remain calm under pressure. She emphasized her willingness to listen, learn, and consider multiple perspectives, particularly in situations involving heightened emotions or public concern.

Board members explained that the current appointment would fill the vacancy until the spring election, at which time the position would appear on the ballot for the remainder of the unexpired term. Ms. Rivers stated that she had not yet considered her intentions beyond the initial appointment and would want to better understand the role and board dynamics before deciding.

Ms. Rivers asked about expectations for board members and was informed that expectations include attending meetings, participating in deliberations, maintaining fairness and impartiality, and following applicable bylaws. Optional training opportunities were also discussed. Board members noted that a fresh perspective, reliability, and engagement are valued qualities.

The Board explained that the appointment process is intended to address quorum and continuity issues until the next election, at which time the voters will determine long-term membership.

Ms. Rivers was thanked for her time, interest, and participation, and the interview was concluded.

Documents: Resume of Haley Rivers

Strategic Planning Committee Bylaw (James Gennette)

Mr. Gennette addressed the Board regarding a previously submitted proposal to create a Strategic Planning Committee, which he had initially requested be placed on the Town Meeting warrant. He explained that, based on concerns raised at an earlier meeting, particularly that the proposal was moving too quickly and lacked clarity, he voluntarily withdrew the article to allow for further discussion and

broader understanding. He emphasized that the intent is to achieve widespread collaboration and community buy-in rather than rushing the process.

Mr. Gennette presented a draft mission statement to clarify the purpose of the committee, noting that such a description was missing from the original proposal and is necessary for warrant consideration. He addressed concerns about committee composition, explaining that representation from the Select Board and Finance Committee was intentional, as those bodies are the primary drivers of warrant articles and long-term financial planning. He noted that the Finance Committee is appointed by the Moderator and operates independently of the Select Board. Additional representation would include members from the Planning Board, School Committee, and the community at large, ensuring appropriate expertise and public input while avoiding an overly large and ineffective committee structure.

He contrasted the proposed committee with prior efforts, such as the Master Plan Committee, which produced a static plan and no ongoing oversight. The Strategic Planning Committee, by contrast, would be a standing, evolving body intended to promote proactive, long-term planning and interdepartmental collaboration. He cited past projects—including the school administration building, Vets Park, and Primary and Cole—that lacked coordinated planning and resulted in financial or logistical challenges.

Mr. Gennette explained that the committee's role would be advisory to Town Meeting, with recommendations presented at Fall Town Meeting to gauge support for projects, followed by funding consideration at the May budget Town Meeting if approved. He stated that this timing was intentional and aligned with the Town's budgeting cycle.

The committee would be self-directed, setting its own agenda and requesting participation from relevant departments or boards as needed. Community members would be able to bring forward ideas for consideration, and public input tools such as surveys could be used to help establish priorities. A non-paid administrative support role was included in the proposal to allow for meeting coordination and record-keeping, though Mr. Gennette acknowledged that the position may be difficult to fill and could be revisited if necessary.

Mr. Gennette concluded by reiterating that the proposal is intended to break down silos among boards and departments, foster collaboration, and shift the Town from reactive to proactive planning. He stated that the article would not move forward to Town Meeting until there is general understanding, support, and readiness across all boards.

Documents: Strategic Planning Committee Bylaw email from Marc Strange (July 31, 2025)

David R. Ender

Mr. David Ender appeared before the Board to interview for an open Planning Board position. He stated that he has lived in Ludlow for approximately 20 years and thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak. Mr. Ender noted that Board members had received his résumé and summarized his background, including coursework in urban planning at Boston University and a career in sales, sales management, and business ownership. He explained that he has extensive experience leading teams and training adults, having trained over 100,000 individuals over a 25-year period.

Mr. Ender emphasized the importance of community involvement, clear short- and long-term goals, and having a defined mission and vision for municipal planning. He cautioned against excessive bureaucracy and committee stagnation, advocating instead for incremental progress and realistic goal setting within budgetary constraints. He referenced urban planning principles that prioritize community input, noting their effectiveness in achieving public support and sustainable growth.

Mr. Ender stated that he currently works as a substitute teacher in Ludlow and surrounding communities and expressed his desire to contribute positively to the Town. He indicated that he applied for the position as a paid board or per-diem role and clarified that he was not interested in an unpaid associate member position. He was informed that the current vacancy would run until the spring election and that continuation would require running for office. Mr. Ender stated that he would be willing to do so and noted prior experience assisting with successful local political campaigns.

In response to questions from Board members, Mr. Ender confirmed that he has grant-writing experience, including writing and winning multiple grants in excess of \$100,000 for financial institutions. He acknowledged that, while he has not previously held elected office, he understands the distinction between governance and day-to-day administrative functions and the advisory role of a board member.

Mr. Ender asked Board members about their long-term vision for Ludlow and emphasized the importance of proactive planning, consensus-building, and creating a community that is attractive to younger generations. Board members responded by outlining current priorities, including improving accessibility and clarity of zoning bylaws, overhauling subdivision regulations, managing growth along the Center Street corridor, preserving Ludlow's rural and industrial character, expanding the tax base, and supporting affordable housing opportunities.

Board members acknowledged that the Planning Board is currently operating in a largely reactive capacity due to staffing constraints but agreed on the importance of long-term strategic planning and community engagement. The discussion concluded with mutual appreciation for the exchange of ideas.

Mr. Ender was thanked for his time, interest, and participation, and the interview was concluded.

Documents: Resume of David R. Ender

Bud Ellison

Mr. Bud Ellison appeared before the Planning Board to interview for the vacant full member position, as well as to discuss potential interest in the associate member role. The Chair explained that the Board is seeking to fill the full member seat by appointment through the spring election, after which the position would be placed on the ballot to complete the remainder of the unexpired term. It was also explained that the associate member position is unpaid and serves as a voting member only in limited circumstances, primarily for special permit hearings when a quorum is otherwise unavailable. Mr. Ellison stated that he had not previously been familiar with the associate member role but indicated openness to serving in that capacity if not selected for the full member appointment.

Board members noted Mr. Ellison's prior involvement with town processes, including service on the Open Space Planning Committee. Mr. Ellison described his background as a fourth-generation town resident, current town employee, small business owner, and longtime farmer operating approximately 150 acres in town. He outlined extensive professional experience, including more than 23 years in industrial management and engineering roles, overseeing multimillion-dollar budgets, managing personnel, and working with regulatory and permitting bodies throughout the Northeast. He also cited numerous technical certifications and experience in facility construction, municipal water treatment, and hazardous materials.

Mr. Ellison highlighted his civic involvement, including being a charter member of the Agricultural Commission, service as a precinct member, nearly four decades as a firefighter and paramedic in town, and long-term youth coaching at both the football and hockey levels. He stated that these roles have given him a broad understanding of the town's history, demographics, infrastructure, and public safety needs.

In discussing grant experience, Mr. Ellison stated that he has successfully written and administered grants totaling over one million dollars for a private corporation, as well as recurring agricultural grants for his farm and grant assistance for the Fire Department. He expressed interest in assisting the Town Planner and the Planning Board in identifying and pursuing grant opportunities.

When asked about development that encourages healthy growth, Mr. Ellison emphasized the importance of balancing industry and agriculture, noting that both are central to the town's identity. He expressed support for incentive-based approaches to attract appropriate businesses, streamline permitting where possible, and encourage collaboration among boards rather than adversarial processes. He stated that the Planning Board serves as a key gatekeeper in shaping development and protecting community character.

In response to a question regarding managing public opposition or heated meetings, Mr. Ellison cited his management experience in both industrial and emergency services settings. He stated that he is confident in his ability to remain professional, de-escalate conflict, and guide discussions productively.

Questions were also raised regarding eligibility to serve simultaneously as a Planning Board member and a precinct member. Board members explained that appointed positions differ from elected roles and that the Planning Board is designated as special municipal employees, allowing town employees to serve. It was noted that further clarification could be obtained if necessary.

Mr. Ellison thanked the Board for the opportunity to interview and expressed appreciation for the discussion. The Chair thanked Mr. Ellison for his interest and stated that the Board would deliberate and follow up regarding the appointment.

Documents: Email from William Ellison to Planning re: Open seat on PB (August 15, 2025)

Leonard J. Allen III

Mr. Allen did not show up for the interview.

The Chair opened discussion on how the Board wished to proceed with filling the vacant Planning Board positions, noting that the Board could either begin with general discussion or proceed directly to motions.

During deliberation, Board members discussed the qualifications and interview impressions of the candidates. Members expressed appreciation for Haley Rivers' enthusiasm, fresh perspective, and professional background, particularly her work with Tighe & Bond. It was noted that Ms. Rivers indicated interest in gaining experience and learning more about town government and may not yet be ready to pursue a campaign for an elected position. Several members felt that the associate member role would be a good fit for her at this time and would allow her to become more familiar with Planning Board operations.

Board members also discussed Bud Ellison's long-standing involvement in the community, prior service on the Open Space Planning Committee, deep local knowledge, and extensive professional and municipal experience. Members stated that Mr. Ellison's background, community ties, and leadership experience made him well suited to step immediately into the full member role.

It was noted that all candidates were strong and that the Board was fortunate to have multiple-qualified applicants. Members emphasized the need to move forward promptly due to the Board having operated with multiple vacancies.

Mr. Coelho **MOVED** to appoint Bud Ellison to the full member position. **SECONDED Ms. Houle.** The motion passed **unanimously**.

A **MOTION** was then made by Mr. Coelho and **SECONDED** by Ms. Houle to appoint **Haley Rivers** as the **Associate member**. The motion passed **unanimously**.

The Chair thanked the applicants and Board members for their participation and discussion.

Mr. Gennette commented that he wanted to add that his view for Strategic Planning is not necessarily the view of the Select Board. He said that they talked during the Select Board meeting, but that he's not speaking for the other Select Board members in this.

Mr. Gennette **MOVED** to close the Select Board meeting at 7:16 p.m. **SECONDED** by Mr. Alves. **3-0 in Favor.**

Mr. Carpenter will notify the candidates of the appointments to the Planning Board.

CONSENT AGENDA:

The Board approved the Consent Agenda under unanimous consent.

- ◆ FILE Mail Item 69. - Legal Notices from surrounding communities

- ◆ APPROVE/SIGN Minutes of July 24, 2025, September 25, 2025, October 9, 2025
 - ◆ SIGN Special Permit/Plans:
 - Mary & Andrew Nocrasz – 0 Lyon Street (estate lot)
 - Marcella McAneany – 107 Stivens Terrace (independent contractor of physical therapy)
-

**Endorse ANR for James P. Wlodyka, 786 Poole Street (Assessors' Map 41, Parcel 52)
(divide off a 2-acre parcel from existing 7-acre parcel)**

The Board ran through the ANR checklist and found that the plan did not meet the criteria.

Mr. Coelho **MOVED** to find that the plan for the ANR for James P. Wlodyka at 786 Poole Street fails to meet the criteria for endorsement to be for, as an ANR, specifically, that it fails the following reasons, items 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 10. Furthermore, how do I say it, without prejudice part again?

Mr. Phoenix: That we will allow for resubmittal without prejudice.

Mr. Coelho: Furthermore, that we will allow for resubmittal without prejudice.

SECOND Ms. Houle.

4-0 in Favor.

Documents: Master application; Plan of Land - Poole Street Ludlow, Mass. owned by James P. Wlodyka (Oct. 10, 2025)

Review/approve Site Sketch for Colvest/Wilbraham, LLC (Jersey Mike's) 450-456 (456A) Center Street (Assessors' Map 15B, Parcel 135) (restaurant tenant to occupy former phone store space)

Mr. Phoenix said that the information on the chart needed updating when last discussed.

When reviewing the seating chart, the Board agreed that instead of N/A, the total seating should be 80. Mr. LaPointe made the change on the plans and initialed it.

Mr. Phoenix: I would entertain a MOTION to approve the site sketch with the amendment that Peter's making on the fly.

Ms. Houle: **SO MOVED.**

SECOND Mr. Coelho.

4-0 in Favor.

Documents: Master application; Comments from Town Departments; Site Plan – Change of Use Jersey Mikes 456A Center Street Ludlow, MA (2025-10-14)

Attorney General's partial approval of Article 28 (Accessory Dwelling Units)

The Board discussed the status of the Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) bylaw following receipt of a ruling from the Attorney General's Office. It was noted that the Attorney General issued a determination identifying multiple issues requiring correction. Town Counsel has reviewed the revised draft bylaw, which includes tracked changes, and believes the current version is likely to satisfy the Attorney General's concerns.

The Board was asked to review the revised draft and provide feedback. It was noted that an additional issue was identified regarding the treatment of existing accessory apartments. Under the Town's bylaws, accessory apartments are now defined as ADUs, creating uncertainty for properties with existing accessory apartment special permits—particularly in cases of permit renewals and changes in ownership.

The Board discussed a current situation involving a recently purchased property with an expiring accessory apartment permit. It was noted that permits do not transfer upon sale and that the expiration would require a new submission, either under the accessory apartment framework (if applicable) or as an ADU. The Board acknowledged that determining the correct process is complicated by the partial approval status of the bylaw and recent changes in state guidance issued in early February.

Members expressed concern about the legal and procedural uncertainty created by partial approvals from the Attorney General's Office, which place the Town in a "limbo" position between old and new regulations. It was noted that a full denial would have provided clearer direction, allowing the Town to continue operating under existing bylaws until final approval.

The Board discussed recent state guidance related to parking requirements, particularly provisions tied to proximity to transit stations. It was noted that many municipalities have struggled to comply with these requirements, especially communities without realistic prospects for expanded public transit. Counsel advised that parking language has been expanded in the revised draft to address this concern and align with Attorney General expectations.

Members acknowledged that the ADU legislation was implemented rapidly at the state level, leaving municipalities without sufficient time, model bylaws, or vetted guidance. The Board expressed frustration that towns were required to act quickly without clear standards, resulting in repeated revisions and legal uncertainty.

The Board emphasized the importance of relying on Town Counsel for guidance to avoid providing incorrect advice to residents, which could result in delays, violations, or liability. Counsel has indicated a willingness to confer directly with the Attorney General's Office once the revised draft is finalized to confirm acceptability prior to placement on the Town Meeting Warrant.

It was noted that sufficient time remains to address the issue before warrant deadlines. The Board expressed hope that the bylaw could be placed on the warrant for a future meeting but acknowledged that further developments may dictate next steps.

Documents: Letter from Office of the Attorney General re: Ludlow Annual Town Meeting of May 12, 2025 – Case #11777 (October 10, 2025); Article 28 – 6.6 Accessory Dwelling Units

Board to discuss and possibly sign Release of Covenant and Development Agreement Extension for Santina Drive

Mr. Carpenter stated that the Board had previously discussed and agreed to the Development Agreement Extension. He added that the Department of Public Works had reviewed and agreed with the associated

figures. He further explained that the Release of Covenant required review and coordination with Town Counsel.

Mr. Carpenter noted that a second covenant has now been prepared, which will serve as the official covenant once the original covenant is released. He explained that the Town is not permitted to unilaterally substitute lots. As advised by Town Counsel, the original covenant applied to Lots 1 and 2, and because the applicant requested that the covenant instead apply to Lots 5 and 6, a release of Lots 1 and 2 and reapplication for Lots 5 and 6 was required. The applicant has since submitted the request for Lots 5 and 6.

Mr. Phoenix: I will entertain a MOTION to sign the Extension Development Agreement for Sodi Inc., to extend to October 9th, 2027.

Ms. Houle: **SO MOVED.**

SECOND Mr. Silva.

4-0 in Favor.

The Board Members signed the Development Agreement Extension and the Release of Covenant.

Documents: Development Agreement Extension; Release of Covenant

Review/approve/sign Town Planner job description

Mr. Carpenter clarified that the only thing that changed was the block at the top of form.

Ms. Houle: I make a MOTION to have the Chairman sign off on the job description for Town Planner.

SECOND Mr. Coelho.

4-0 in Favor.

Documents: Town of Ludlow Town Planner Position Description (effective date April 10, 2025)

Schedule Housing Production Plan Community Housing Forum

Mr. Carpenter will contact Ken Comia of PVPC to schedule a time and place for the forum.

Outstanding items

The Chair asked whether there had been any movement or new information regarding the matter under discussion. It was reported that a review of the Town Hall files had been conducted and that the "site plan" on record was, in fact, only a sketch. It was noted that the sketch dates back approximately 28 years and does not reflect current site conditions.

Board members discussed the history of the site sketch, including prior parking re-striping that resulted in changes to the number and designation of parking spaces, including an increase in handicapped spaces and a reduction in reserved spaces for public use. It was noted that subsequent changes, including

the addition of sheds and further re-striping, were based on the same outdated sketch and were not reflected in any formally approved, current site plan.

The Board discussed the informal use of a “20-year rule of thumb” for requiring updated site plans, noting that this standard is not codified in the zoning bylaw. Members acknowledged that the guideline has been used to address gradual site changes and uncertainty over time but agreed that clearer standards are needed in the bylaw to define when a full site plan, site sketch, or other approvals are required.

Members expressed concern that site conditions, including parking counts, traffic flow, signage, access points, and structures, no longer match the approved documentation. It was noted that field observations confirm that the number of parking spaces and physical layout differ from what is shown on record. The Board emphasized that changes made after approval—whether intentional or incremental—can undermine the planning process if they alter elements that were subject to public review and Board decision-making.

The discussion highlighted the importance of ensuring that material changes to approved plans return to the Board for review, particularly when such changes may affect traffic circulation, safety, parking availability, or neighborhood impacts. Members agreed that cumulative changes, even if minor individually, can create significant issues if not properly reviewed.

The Board discussed the need for clearer zoning bylaw language to address these issues and expressed a desire to work with Town Counsel and planning staff to identify and correct weaknesses in the current regulations. Members agreed that the Town should strive to exceed minimum standards and set clear, transparent expectations for applicants and municipal projects alike.

It was noted that funding had previously been allocated for preparation of a site plan, but no completed plan appears to have been produced. The Board requested that staff determine where those funds are located, who is responsible for administering them, and how they can be used to obtain updated site plans for Town Hall and related properties.

Members stated that viable paths forward could include preparing updated site plans for the affected properties or bringing existing conditions into compliance with previously approved plans. The Board agreed that ignoring discrepancies between approved plans and existing conditions is not an acceptable solution and that the matter should be addressed proactively.

The Board concluded that additional information is needed and that follow-up actions will be taken to obtain clarity and resolve the discrepancies.

Mr. Phoenix made one final thank you to all of the people that came in tonight. Both the select board for giving up some of their time to come in and help us fill our, our spot here as well as for the applicants that showed up and, and the one that was able to put in an application but not show up this evening.

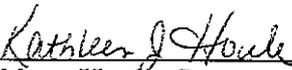
Mr. Coelho **MOVED** to adjourn.

SECOND Ms. Houle.

4-0 in Favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

APPROVED:



Kathleen Houle, Secretary

su

(All related documents can be viewed at the Planning Board Office during regular business hours.)