

# Montague Planning Board

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November 25, 2014, 2014 7:00 PM  
Town Hall Upstairs Conference Room

## MEETING MINUTES

**Members Present:** Ron Sicard – Chair, Fred Bowman, Bob Obear, Bruce Young and George Cooke  
**Staff Present:** Walter Ramsey, AICP- Town Planner

Ron Sicard opened the meeting and announced that MCTV was filming the meeting.

### Approval of Minutes:

**Motion** by, *George Cooke to accept the October 28, 2014 Planning Board minutes. Seconded by Bob Obear. Motion passed.*

### Montague 2015 Housing Plan Public Information Session:

**Guest:** Alyssa Larose, Land Use Planner for FRCOG

Walter R: There has been a Housing Plan advisory group working on this for the past 3 months. The advisory group consisted of Executive Director of FCHA, Fred Bowman – Planning Board Representative, Brick House, Montague Catholic Ministries, Building Inspector for Montague and Michael Nelson – Select board Representative. The group has made changes and updates to the 2004 Housing Plan and is now ready to receive feedback from the public.

Alyssa Larose presented a PowerPoint (attached as an appendix)  
FRCOG provided technical assistance in the development of the plan through DLTAA (Direct Local Technical Assistance) grant from Dept of Housing and Community Development.

The major difference from the 2014 housing plan is this document incorporates a “housing production plan” This plan then is good for 5 years and gives the town more control through the 40B process.

#### Key Findings

- Challenge of older homes and substandard housing
- 16% of population is below poverty, 23% of that is in Turners Falls and 8% in the rest of Montague
- 55% of households are low income, 89% 25 and younger, 68% 65 and older in the low income bracket
- High percentage of subsidized housing (9.9%)
- Strong need for accessible, affordable senior housing in town as the population ages. A majority of these new senior housing units should be affordable to low, very low and extremely low income housing households

#### Housing Goals:

- To maintain and enhance quality of life in the town’s residential neighborhoods
- To encourage a mix of housing types, densities, prices and ownership patterns that serve diverse Montague households while maintain the community’s character
- Support redevelopment & adaptive reuse of buildings

- Provide housing for diverse populations

Comments:

Betty Teagle:

- In the 2004 plan there was representation from various departments, boards and community persons. Who is the resident of who can represent the special housing needs of the young, old, low income and disable population in town? This refers to the strategy/recommendation to revitalize the Montague Housing Partnership which is different than the committee that put the chapter. This recommendation is to put a committee together including that representation to move the plan forward. Has there been a person who represents this population? Ms. Teagle volunteered herself to represent the special housing needs of the young, old, low income and disabled populations in town.

WR response: The directors from the Montague Catholic Ministries, Brick House Community Resource Center and The Council on Aging were all involved in the Advisory Committee. These stakeholders were specifically included to represent the populations mentioned by Ms. Teagle. She was encouraged to review the plan and provide feedback.

- Ms. Teagle was glad to know there is a movement to address some affordable senior housing. She noted that there is a need for young disable individuals, veterans, families and children to have affordable and accessible housing (specifically ranch style). There also are amenities that are needed such as washing facilities within the housing space and transportation needs as well in the town of Montague.

Bruce Young

- Confirmed that this will require adoption by both the Planning Board & Selectboard. How can the Planning Board assist in this process? He recognized several zoning recommendations have been discussed previously by the Board. Are there incentives that can be used to entice developers?

WR response: The Planning Board can help proactively identify locations for 40B projects and assist the town in identifying which town-owned parcels could be subject to an RFP. Regulations can be refined and 40B policies can be developed. Municipal land provided at a low cost to a developer is likely the best incentive the town can offer, but regulatory incentives are encouraged in the plan as well. There are no known financial incentives at this time.

Discussion about potential sites for (friendly) 40B developments on public and private land

- A parcel (90 acres) that would be suitable for 40B development and future residential development located near Randalwood Drive located between Turners Falls Road and Greenfield Road. This is currently privately owned land and is not critical prime habitat or forest or farm land. The area is designated for “residential” use in the Town’s future land use plan. Nearby Randallwood Drive is “model” for good affordable development in Montague.
- There are a couple of parcels on Millers Falls Road including one across from the Turners Falls Water District Land and the former Steward nursery location which may be appropriate for senior/ multi-family housing development.
- Millers Falls Newton Street has a parcel permitted for 8 townhouse units.
- Turners Falls Mill District has potential for limited residential use
- Ridge of Park Street and High Street – potential infield development close to the center
- 28-34 East Main Street in Millers Falls for mix-used development – in process

- Montague City – the former Rod Shop location could support a 40B development

*Ron Sicard closed the session at 7:58. 2015. He directed the Planner to post the plan online for public comment. There will be an open comment period through December 22. The Planning Board will review written comments and vote to endorse the plan at the next meeting.*

**Planner Updates:**

- Distribute proposed editorial amendments to Planning Board’s Rules and Regulations  
Walter prepared several administrative amendments to the rules and regulations to better align the 2011 regulations with current bylaws, policies, and state law.
  - i. Article II s. 6- Quorum – 4 out of 5 members (not 3 out of 5) need to vote affirmative to award a special permit according to state law.
  - ii. Article III s. 2- Site Visit –Provides Chair with the discretion to waive a site visit.
  - iii. Article III s. 3- Hearing Procedure – Number 2 added “mullen rule” provision which was adopted in since the rules and regs.
  - iv. Article IV s.3- Voting Requirements – to have 4 members of the PB to vote for a special permit. Section B revised the site plan review regulations which are in process now and awaiting approval in the next month.
  - v. Article 5 consultant fee regulation. This regulation was previously adopted by the Board. It should be incorporated into this one clearinghouse for PB rules and regs.

The Board will review these changes before the next meeting.

**Topics Not Anticipated in the 48 Hours of Posting:**

- The Selectman voted on the 2015 Community Development Strategy last night. The Planning Board needs to endorse the CDS as it was presented at the October Planning Board meeting and approved last night.

***Motion** by, Bruce Young to endorse the Community Development Strategy as presented at the October Planning Board meeting and the Selectboard. Seconded by George Cooke. **Motion passed.***

- Next meeting: The Board agreed to meet on December 23, 2014 at 7PM

***Motion** by, Bob Obear at 8:04 PM to adjourn the November 25, 2014 Planning Board meeting. Seconded by Bruce Young. **Motion passed.***

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_