

Planning Board Meeting Date: June 4th, 2025

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: In-person/Zoom

Attendees In-person: Dee Daley (Chair) Lou Alvarez (Ex-Officio) Bruce Ruotsala, Craig Smeeth, Aaron Bertram, Robert Fournier, Steven Satterfield

Via Zoom : None

Citizens Arianne Colameta, Becky Doyle

Citizens Via Zoom: None

7:00 P.M. Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call:

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Meeting was called to order by Acting Chair Josh Muhonen.

Quorum: Quorum was established.

- Rob was designated to sit in for Dee.

2. Approval of Minutes

Meeting Minutes Reviewed: May 21, 2025

- Multiple instances of "Rindge Road" were misspelled in the document. References included location descriptions, discussion notes, and a chart (item 11).
- Rob, Lou, and others agreed the corrections were minimal and non-substantive.
- **7:11 P.M. Motion:** To approve the May 21, 2025 minutes as amended.
- **Motion by:** Bruce Ruotsala
- **Seconded by:** Seconded by Josh Muhonen
- **Vote:** Passed unanimously.

3. Public Hearing: Ray Aho Subdivision (S25-1)

Time Scheduled: 7:20 PM

- Dan Barowski submitted a formal request Wednesday afternoon on June 4th to continue the hearing to June 18.
- Reason: CHA's engineering review was received late and they needed time to address the comments.
- Board discussed whether to continue the hearing to June 18 or July 2.
- Chair Daley would be returning from Europe on June 17, making it unlikely she could provide a review in time for the June 18 meeting.
- There was concern over repeating a pattern of rushed reviews and last-minute document submissions.

- Board agreed that a July 2 continuation would allow time for Fieldstone to work with CHA and submit a revised plan with sufficient time for review.
 - **Motion:** To continue the Ray Aho Subdivision hearing (S25-1) to date certain July 2, 2025 at 7:20 PM.
 - **7:18 PM Motion by:** Bruce Ruotsala
 - **Seconded by:** Josh Muhonen
 - **Vote:** Passed unanimously.
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4. Discussion: Application Review and Engineering Timeline

- Board expressed frustration with inefficiencies in submission timelines.
 - Communication gaps were observed between Fieldstone and CHA regarding urgency of deadlines.
 - Discussion included whether to modify deadlines or enforce existing policy.
 - **Proposed Deadline Structure:**
 - All revised materials must be submitted by the Monday prior to a meeting at 11:30 AM.
 - CHA must return their review to the board by that same Monday deadline.
 - If deadlines are not met, the hearing may be automatically continued.
 - Placeholder five-minute time slots may be reserved for continuances.
 - Emphasis placed on the need for consistency, discipline, and transparency in enforcing deadlines.
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5. Conceptual Plan Review Requirement

- Board revisited earlier conversations about the benefits of conceptual plan reviews.
 - Conceptuals allow early identification of potential problems (e.g., inadequate frontage, steep slopes, class VI roads).
 - Conceptuals can prevent wasted expense on engineering for flawed proposals.
 - Proposal: Make conceptual reviews mandatory before any formal application is submitted.
 - Conceptuals would be:
 - Free of charge.
 - Informal, with no obligation for engineering or design documents.
 - Reviewed for policy alignment and procedural guidance.
 - Applications would only proceed to CHA review after formal submission and board review.
 - Board consensus: formalize conceptual as a required step; clarify timeline and escrow expectations for applicants.
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6. 8:00 PM Whitecap Coffee: Hawkers and Peddlers Permit Review

- Applicant: Whitecap Coffee/ Arianne Colameta
 - Requested an extension beyond the 30-day limit set by the town's hawkers and peddlers ordinance.
 - Permit was initially issued by the police department; extension required Planning Board review to determine whether a site plan was necessary.
 - Background:
 - Whitecap operates a mobile trailer on a lot owned by Davis Village Properties.
 - Lot is zoned residential and currently under current use status.
 - Electric service was installed on-site by the property owner for the trailer.
 - Discussion:
 - The Board clarified that its role was solely to determine if a site plan review was required.
 - The Board determined the applicant did not have standing to request a site plan review as they were not the property owner.
 - **8:26 PM Motion:** No site plan review required under Planning Board jurisdiction for Whitecap Coffee application.
 - **Motion by:** Bruce Ruotsala
 - **Seconded by:** Craig Smeeth
 - **Vote:** Passed with one abstention (Lou Alvarez).
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7. Zoning and Enforcement Considerations (Whitecap Continued)

- Concerns were raised about long-term commercial use of a residentially zoned property.
 - No variance or application had been submitted to the ZBA.
 - Because a site plan was not triggered, abutters received no notice or chance to comment.
 - Board discussed whether ZBA action should have preceded the Planning Board discussion.
 - Suggestions:
 - All future fixed-site hawkers should seek zoning clarification first.
 - Site plan review should only occur with landowner participation.
 - Code Enforcement Officer may need to review zoning compliance.
 - Select Board retains control over the ordinance but should consider updating or rescinding it for clarity.
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8. Master Plan Steering Committee Report

- Report provided by Steven.
- One final stakeholder group interview remains: Resource Management Group.
- Consultant (SWRPC) will begin consolidating input and drafting updated master plan.
- **Next Steering Committee Meeting:** July 24, 2025

- **Committee Members:** Steven Satterfield, Dee Daley, Sean Talbot, Nicole Talbot, Corey Ritz, Gretchen Rae, Mary Fish, Lori Rodier
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9. Select Board Updates

- **Old Rindge Road (Ray Aho Subdivision):**
 - Developer (Aho) and Select Board had a conceptual discussion regarding road maintenance.
 - The town will not accept the road for public maintenance.
 - **Timbertop Road Realignment:**
 - Consultation ongoing with utility providers to raise communication and power lines to accommodate school buses.
 - Proposed road realignment at Hubbard Pond would form a T-intersection to improve maneuverability and traffic safety.
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10. Adjournment

- **8:31 PM Motion to Adjourn:**
 - **Motion by:** Bruce Ruotsala
 - **Seconded by:** Craig Smeeth
 - **Vote:** Passed unanimously.
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Respectfully Submitted,
Steven Satterfield