



Town of Millis Planning Board

Responsibilities and Requirements

Adopted December 14, 2021

Authority and Role of the Planning Board

The Millis Planning Board is established pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 41, Sections 81A-D. The Planning Board serves as the land use and regulatory board for the Town of Millis, to ensure compliance with specific performance standards as identified by M.G.L., the Millis Zoning By-Laws, and the associated Rules & Regulations.

Responsibilities of the Board

The Planning Board's primary responsibilities include:

- Administer the Massachusetts Subdivision Control Laws pursuant to M.G.L. Ch 41, §§81K – GG. A subdivision is a parcel of land that is divided into 2 or more lots and generally requires the construction of a new road.
- Review and Endorsement of plans as Approval Not Required for the division of land that does not fall under the requirements of the Subdivision Control Laws.
- Serve as the Site Plan Review Board for development proposals in the residential, village, commercial, and industrial zones.
- Serve as the Special Permit Granting Authority when indicated by the Town of Millis Zoning By-Laws.
- Administer the Scenic Road Act pursuant to M.G.L. Ch 40, §15C, by recommending the designation of a particular street as a Scenic Road to Town Meeting. The Board may, under certain circumstances, issue permits for the alteration or removal of stone walls along a designated Scenic Roads.
- Draft and propose amendments to the Millis Zoning By-Laws, as well as review zoning amendments submitted by citizen petition or the Select Board, all pursuant to M.G.L. Ch 40A, §5. This includes the responsibility to hold a public hearing and to report its recommendation on all proposed amendments to the Select Board and Town Meeting.
- Establish, maintain, and update the official Zoning Map of the Town of Millis.

- Create, update and present for adoption a Master Plan for the town pursuant to M.G.L. Ch 41, §81D.

All material received by the Planning Board in connection with applications is considered public information and can be seen during posted office hours.

Organization of the Planning Board

The Board shall consist of five elected members, each for a five-year term. Elections shall be on a rotating basis, so that one seat shall be up for election each year.

One Associate Member to the Planning Board shall be appointed by the Select Board for a term of one year, such Associate Members to act on Special Permits.

The Chairman of the Planning Board, when acting as Special Permit Granting Authority, may designate the Associate Member to sit on this Board for the purposes of acting upon a Special Permit application in the case of the absence, inability to act, or conflict of interest on the part of any member of the Planning Board or in the event of a vacancy on this Board.

The Planning Board shall annually elect a Chairman and a Clerk from among its own number. Said election shall generally take place at the first meeting after the annual Town elections.

Planning Board Members Duties and Responsibilities:

All Board members shall familiarize themselves with the following:

- M.G.L. Ch 40A (the Zoning Act);
- M.G.L. Ch 41 §§81K – GG (the Subdivision Control Act);
- The Town of Millis Zoning By-Laws;
- Land Subdivision Rules and Regulations of the Planning Board of the Town of Millis;
- The Massachusetts Open Meeting Law;
- Massachusetts Laws governing ethical responsibilities;
- Statutory, legislative, and policy updates as provided by Town Counsel and the Town Administrator for the Town of Millis.

All Board members shall be responsible for reviewing all applications submitted to the Planning Board by landowners or developers, including but not limited to:

- Site Plan Review;
- Special Permits;
- Approval Not Required (ANR);
- Preliminary Subdivision;
- Definitive Subdivision;
- Scenic Roadway Modifications;

- Public Way Access Permit

The Board shall periodically review, maintain and update the Master Land Use Plan, the Zoning By-Laws, and the Land Subdivision Rules and Regulations as needed.

Planning Board members should be invested in the development and redevelopment of the Town of Millis. Members must consider the public safety, interest, and welfare of the residents of the Town while ensuring proper growth through the employ of best practices in land use policies and zoning ordinances.

Board members will work collaboratively with landowners and business owners on land use proposals and applications while maintaining a balance that provides for the preservation of open space and recreational opportunities.

Standards of Conduct for Board Members:

Every Board member shall strive to:

- recognize that he/she is a member of a team and shall abide by all Board decisions once a vote is taken;
- serve the public interest and conduct him/herself so as to maintain public confidence in the Planning Board;
- recognize that all Board members are elected by the community and each member's viewpoint, opinion and vote is equal to that of every other member;
- recognize that as an elected official he/she has an obligation to make decisions that they believe will best support the entire community;
- accept that being a Planning Board member is a means of unselfish public service, not an avenue for personal or professional benefit;
- abide by all Open Meeting, Ethics and Public Records Laws as they apply to elected municipal officials;
- familiarize him/herself with and understand the Town of Millis Social Media Policy. This will be used to enforce any communication outside of the Board meetings.
- refrain from making statements or promises of how he/she will vote on matters anticipated or before the Board until he/she has had an opportunity to hear all sides of the issue at a Board meeting;

- make decisions only after all facts and information on an issue have been presented and discussed;
- uphold the intent of Executive Session and respect the privileged communication that exists therein; and
- treat each Board member, applicant, resident and presenter with respect and courtesy, despite any potential or perceived differences of opinion.

Conflict of Interest : A Board member shall not participate in an official capacity in matters in which such participation is prohibited by the Conflict of Interest Law. A conflicted Board member may sit in the audience and participate as a private citizen, except as prohibited by the Conflict of Interest Law.

Attendance:

Attendance at ALL meetings is strongly encouraged. If a member misses a meeting, he/she should watch the recording of the meeting on cable access and/or review the meeting minutes prior to the next meeting. In the event of a public hearing, the member may, at their option, certify that he/she has examined all evidence received at the hearing/meeting they were unable to attend. If a member misses 2 public hearings on an application, he/she shall be ineligible to vote on the application.

Members must alert the Administrative Assistant and Chair if they will not be able to attend a meeting as soon as possible, preferably at least 24 hours in advance, to allow the Administrative Assistant the opportunity to confirm that a quorum will be present at the meeting.

Two consecutive or unexcused absences within a year by a member will be noted by the Chair in the minutes. The Chair may contact the member upon the 2nd consecutive or unexcused absence to remind the member of the importance of their presence at the meetings and their responsibility as an elected official.