



Town of South Kingstown Planning Board

Work Session Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 9, 2025 at 6:30 PM
South Kingstown Town Hall, Town Council Chambers
180 High Street, Wakefield, RI 02879
www.southkingstownri.gov

Maria H. Mack, Chair
Susan Axelrod, Vice Chair
Elizabeth Karp, Secretary
Joseph Murphy
Robyn Pothier
Kaiper Wilson
Armand Monaco

A. Call to Order & Roll Call:

The following Planning Board members were present, unless marked absent.

Maria Mack, Susan Axelrod, Elizabeth Karp (absent), Joseph Murphy, Robyn Pothier, A. Kaiper Wilson.

Also present: James Rabbitt, Director of Planning; Brian Wagner, Principal Planner; Lynn Smith, Planning Associate; and Andrew Tietz, Special Legal Counsel.

B. Subdivisions and Land Development Projects:

1. South Kingstown Housing Authority (Champagne Heights redevelopment)
Planning Director referral to Planning Board Advisory opinion amendments to a previously approved plan (i.e., number of buildings, types of buildings and layout revisions).

Mr. Rabbitt explained the purpose of having this application before the board for an advisory opinion. Mr. Rabbitt is requesting guidance from the board, to attest that requested changes are “minor” and be able to be approved by the Administrative Officer, which is the Planning Director. If the Planning Board determines the requested changes are “major”, a new application will need to be filed and will come back before the Planning Board for approval. The applicant’s team was in attendance to present their opinion that the changes are “minor”.

James Callaghan, Callaghan & Callaghan, attorney for the applicant, appeared to present the changes and thanked the Board for the last approval received. Mr. Callaghan reviewed the feedback received from RI Housing and Mortgage Financing which has necessitated the proposed changes to the previously approved project; reducing the number of buildings from 34 to 23, proposing to combine units to fewer buildings. Same proposal of 85 new units, 100% LMI, new laundry, etc.

Paul Attemann, Union Studio, architect for the project, appeared to present the changes made to the Preliminary Plan previously approved.

Chris Little, SK Housing Authority Services & Development Corporation/Housing Authority of TSK – combining units at Fournier and Champagne Heights totaling 50+ units.

Molly Titus, DiPrete Engineering, explained the engineering changes.

Jenn Judge, Gravelly Hill Design Group, explained the changes to tree placement.

A brief discussion ensued.

The following motion, made by Mr. Murphy, duly seconded by Ms. Axelrod, passed by unanimous vote.

Motion: “The South Kingstown Planning Board finds that the proposed revision to the development plan for Champagne Heights proposed by the South Kingstown Housing Authority are minor in nature and in the jurisdiction of the Planning Director and can be approved administratively; the Administrative Officer is requested to provide the Planning Board a summary of changes he approves and periodic updates on status for Planning Board information only, this finding is based on the review of the information supplied by the applicant and prepared by Union Studio and Attorney Callaghan”.

C. Land Use:

1. Old Tower Hill Road (Form Based Code)

Discussion ensued between the Planning Department staff, the Planning Board members and Special Legal Counsel Mr. Tietz.

D. Planning Board Liaison Activities:

1. Updates from Planning Board members acting as liaison to various Board, Committees, projects and activities.

Mr. Murphy and Mr. Wagner reported on the Affordable Housing Collaborative Committee's desire to work with the Planning Board on "The Missing Middle" zoning proposed the consultant and writing a letter in support of "Form Based Code".

Ms. Mack reported that the Route 1 Stewardship Plan Development Committee is awaiting a meeting date to finalize the project.

E. Update from Planning Department Staff:

1. General update from the Planning Director regarding Planning Department staffing and activities, including Budget Process and Capital Improvement Program.

Mr. Rabbitt reminded Board members that SNEAPA is coming up on November 6 & 7, 2025. Mr. Rabbitt will be sending out a notice, if interested, please let him know.

Mr. Rabbitt also stated that the Town Council did not act on the Cottage Regulations ordinance at last night's meeting and scheduled it for their next meeting.

2. Project Update

Mr. Wagner reported to the Board that the "Lofts at Fairgrounds" team is holding a Q & A meeting on the project, September 10, 2025, at the old Schnieder Electric parking lot, at 6:00 p.m.

Ms. Mack spoke of the request of DPS for an analysis/capacity briefing of wastewater systems, water supply, and impacts of traffic, and a circulation element which is in the Comprehensive Plan and feels this would be a good time to request a joint, standalone meeting with the Town Council to discuss these issues. Mr. Rabbitt is to forward a link to the State "safe streets" study.

3. Library, Planning resource discussion.

F. Update on Legal Issues:

1. Update from Special Legal Counsel for Planning and Zoning relative to any new or ongoing legal issues.
2. Land Use Legislation - Regulatory implications to local regulations.
3. Proposed changes to local regulations.
4. General update

Mr. Tietz reminded the Board about the In-person training for Planning Board Members on Saturday, November 15, 2025 @ 8:30 a.m., at the Inn at the Crossing in Warwick, RI and the SNEAPA Conference to be held in Newport.

Mr. Tietz discussed the recent decisions of Judge Lamphere on Westerly and Narragansett projects.

G. Adjournment:

Upon a motion made by Mr. Murphy, duly seconded by Ms. Wilson, the meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m., by unanimous vote.