

Montague Planning Board

One Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376 (413) 863-3200 Ext 207 Fax: (413) 863-3222 Email: planner@montague-ma.gov

REPORT ON PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MONTAGUE ZONING BYLAW

SITE PLAN REVIEW

PROPOSED FOR 10/29/2014 SPECIAL TOWN MEETING APPROVAL

I, Ronald Sicard, chairman of the Montague Planning Board do hereby state that at a duly convened meeting of the Planning Board of the Town of Montague which was held September 23, 2014 at 7:00 PM upon motion duly made and seconded it was unanimously voted:

The Montague Planning Board endorse the following amendments to the text of the Montague Zoning Bylaws Sections 5.2(c), 5.2(d), 5.2.6(d), 7.5.2, 7.5.3, 7.7.2, Section 8 in its entirety, 9.7.1(a) together comprising a re-write of the Site Plan Review bylaw as depicted in the draft dated September 23, 2014.

The decision came following a public workshop held July 15, 2014 and a duly posted public hearing held September 2, 2014. The Board offers the following summary in support of the bylaw amendment:

The purpose of the Site Plan Review process is to provide detailed review of certain uses and structures which have a potential for significant impact on the character, infrastructure, and natural resources of the Town of Montague. Site plan review focuses on design aspects such as parking, traffic, drainage, signage, utilities, screening, lighting, and other aspects of the proposal to arrive at the best possible design for the location. Montague currently has a site plan review bylaw. It was created in 1986 and was last amended in 2000. The Planning Board, in practice, finds updates are required in order to align with current planning goals and best practices.

The intent of the proposed Site Plan Review regulations are to:

- Provide a clearly articulated site plan approval process that is easily interpreted by residents, local officials, and project proponents. This should also ensure consistency and enforceability among site plan review procedures followed by the Planning and Zoning Board.
- Allow for municipal review of high impact/small footprint uses that are not otherwise reviewable under current bylaws because they are less than 5000 square feet. In effect, more development projects will be applicable to site plan review. (ex, convenience stores, fast food restaurants, new parking areas)
- Encouraging investment in Montague by making the site plan review process streamlined when a land use is permitted as of right

The proposed zoning amendment will make the following changes:

- Refine applicability thresholds for site plan review based on traffic generation and parking needs in addition to building size and development scale.
- Adds new sections for review guidelines, decision, appeals, and expiration
- Creates a streamlined 60 day site plan review process for projects where a special permit is not required. (i.e. uses that are presumed appropriate for a given zoning district, but exceed a site plan review threshold)
- Combines elements of "Environmental Impact Statement" and "Site Plan Review" into one coherent regulation rather than two linked processes.
- Adjusts Telecommunication facilities and water supply protection special permit uses to apply unique special permit criteria for those uses instead of general site plan review criteria.
- Makes ancillary adjustments and re-organizations throughout the bylaw to ensure a clear and coherent site plan review process and zoning bylaw.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ron Sicard, Chair of the Planning Board

Date

Town of Montague is an Equal Opportunity Provider & Employer

Montague Site Plan Review Applicability Standards	
Current	Proposed
All uses that involve the construction or expansion or change of use of over 5,000 square feet of floor area.	<i>All uses that involve the construction or expansion or change of use of over 3,000 square feet of floor area.</i>
All uses that involve the development of over 3 acres of land.	All uses that involve the development of over 3 acres of land.
Solar Energy Facilities	Solar Energy Facilities
Registered Marijuana Dispensaries	Registered Marijuana Dispensaries
Self-storage Facilities	Self-storage Facilities
Telecommunication facilities	<i>All uses that involve the construction or expansion of a parking area that creates ten (10) or more new parking spaces</i>
	<i>Any new structure, group of new structures, changes of use, or additions which result in an increase of 500 or more vehicle trips per day, as proposed in an applicant's business plan acceptable to the reviewing authority or estimated by a professional engineer.</i>