



Planning Board

January 12, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Chair Gregory Rondeau called the above-captioned meeting held in the Municipal Building, 2nd floor, Council Chambers, 355 East Central Street, Franklin, MA, to order this date at 7:00 PM. The public had the option of attending the meeting live at the Town Hall or dialing into the meeting using the provided phone number or participating by copying the provided link. Members in attendance: Gregory Rondeau, Chair; Jay Mello, Vice Chair; Christopher Stickney, Clerk; Mark Mucciarone; Eric Steltzer (via Zoom); William Lee, associate member. Members absent: None. Also present: Amy Love, Town Planner; Michael Maglio, Town Engineer (via Zoom); Steven Lee, BETA Group (via Zoom); Matthew Crowley, BETA Group (via Zoom).

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. 47 Partridge Street (Donovan Estates) – Definitive Subdivision

Ms. Love said the Planning Board had a 90-day decision for this which would expire at the end of the month. She said they gave us an extension until March 31, 2026, and that has been filed with the town clerk. They are requesting continuation. She recommended February 9.

Motion to Continue 47 Partridge Street (Donovan Estates), Definitive Subdivision, to February 9, 2026. Rondeau. Second: Mello. Roll Call Vote: Rondeau-YES; Mello-Yes; Stickney-YES; Mucciarone-YES; Steltzer-YES. Vote: 5-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

2. Symphony Drive (Tanglewood Estates II) - Private Definitive Subdivision - Initial

Motion to Waive the reading. Rondeau. Second: Mello. Roll Call Vote: Rondeau-YES; Mello-Yes; Stickney-YES; Mucciarone-YES; Steltzer-YES. Vote: 5-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

Ms. Love reviewed the applicants submitted a Private Definitive Subdivision Plan to create two buildable lots and a roadway located at the end of Symphony Drive. She commented that the property abuts town-owned land on the north side. The town has access to this land via Charles Drive. There is an existing cul-de-sac at the end of Symphony Drive. Although the applicant has requested a waiver for curbing, it is recommended that they comply with Section 300-10 (H)(4). The fire department has noted that the dead-end street will be longer than normally allowed in subdivisions. She explained that the roadway being proposed is more of a driveway than it is an actual roadway. It will remain private. DPW has provided a review letter and recommends the following condition, if approved, that the new roadway is to remain private in perpetuity and all future maintenance and repairs including snow removal shall be the responsibility of the homeowners. BETA is currently reviewing the project. She noted that they requested nine waivers.

Mr. Bill Buckley of Bay Colony Group, on behalf of the applicant Cypress Real Estate Development, LLC, provided a review of the project. He said this is a seven-acre parcel located at the end of Symphony

Drive in the Rural Residential I zoning district bordered by residential properties to the east, west, and south. To the north is the town-owned land. He reviewed the plan and location. He noted two pieces of wetland on the site; he said they will be before Conservation Commission later this week. The site has an elevation differential of a 90 ft. drop. He said they did soil testing. They petitioned the Town Council to allow connection into the sewer and water municipal systems, and they have granted that. He said the client volunteered as mitigation to fund a rehab of a sewer pump station in the neighborhood for an approximately \$30,000 upgrade. He said they talked to Mr. Maglio about that. He noted that he spoke with Ms. Love who recommended he look at Balsam Estates/Kimberly Avenue as she thought this might be a good project to fit into the criteria of a private subdivision. He noted Rural Residential I is 40,000 sq. ft. He said they are only looking at two sites on the property. He said it is an extension of the roadway at about 420 ft. from Lenox to the end of the layout. It is less than the 600 ft. dead-end maximum in the bylaw. He said they are proposing a 20 ft. wide roadway; that is what the national fire code requires. It would not have sidewalks, curbing, street trees. It would be basically a glorified common driveway shared by both of the lots. He said they are calling the roadway parcel A. They are proposing a homeowner's association who would own parcel A, and the two homeowners would be responsible for paying into that association in order to do maintenance. He said they are showing the houses and roadway on the plans. He showed and explained on the plans the steep topography, how they think the lots would go, the roadway, and the driveways. He discussed the proposed stormwater basins for each lot and pointed out the locations as well as the rate and volume of runoff. He said there are waivers being requested to permit the subdivision so it will remain private. He discussed the reasons that they request to waive the requirements for the following: for a street plan and profile, that the width be 26 ft., that the cul-de-sac be paved, that the dead-end street be no longer than 600 ft., to use reinforced concrete pipe, street lights along the roadway, sidewalks, and shade trees.

Chair Rondeau noted the letter from the fire department.

Mr. Maglio noted some of his comments which were provided in his letter to the Planning Board dated December 30, 2025, which was provided in the meeting packet. He said water and sewer map amendments were approved by the Town Council which will allow the two proposed homes to be connected to town water and sewer. He recommended that the stormwater calculations be based on the more conservative NOAA Atlas 14 rainfall amounts, as has been the current practice over the past several years. He noted this project is similar to the Kimberly Avenue subdivision.

Mr. Lee said he has no comments as of yet. Chair Rondeau confirmed BETA just started looking at this.

Mr. Stickney asked about the connection from the existing cul-de-sac to the private driveway. It appears there will be a portion on the non-privately-owned land. He asked who would be responsible for that. Mr. Buckley said they can make that part of their responsibility to deal with that; it could be a condition of approval.

Mr. Mello said he looked at the surrounding properties. He said there was town property above and below and easements in a zigzag way. He is guessing there was some sort of connectivity. He asked if the applicant would entertain the idea of an easement along the back of the parcel to allow for connection between the two. He understands it is a wet area. Mr. Buckley reviewed the requested easement for accessibility. He said he would talk to his client. Mr. Mello said he only wants a connection point so if people were taking a hike. Mr. Buckley said what if instead of an easement they just conveyed it so it would connect. He said he was out there and in a summer period you would not know it is a wetland, but it is a wetland. Mr. Mello said there is a way around that. Mr. Mucciarone said his questions have been asked.

Mr. Steltzer said he wanted to clarify that the town's right-of-way extends beyond. He is worried about frontage in the easement. Mr. Buckley discussed what he thought Mr. Steltzer was talking about. He pointed out where they are ending it. He said it is not intended for us to have people walking down there accessing the town land. It looks like it is about 56 ft. separation. He said people do not want others walking down their driveways. Mr. Steltzer said regarding the access of the zigzagging line that Mr. Mello referenced, he was not clear if Mr. Mello was going to Lenox Drive because that is where he noticed the 6 ft. footpath and whether there would be some conveyance for that portion of the footpath to the high side.

Mr. Mello said that footpath is out of play. He pointed out on the plan where the footpath is. He noted that what he had discussed is kind of the best way to guarantee future access to that parcel, and he pointed out the access. Mr. Steltzer said he would like to know more from the neighbors as to how they are using the footpath. He said they could come up with some creative ways to get the footpath there. He noted on the Master Plan they were looking at ways to maintain connectivity from residential areas into natural lands that we have. He would like to understand how they can maintain that access if the residents are using it.

Mr. Steltzer noted the drainage basin and asked how visible that is going to be. Mr. Buckley said it will be visible because it is going to be lower than the home on Symphony Drive. Mr. Steltzer asked if any screening could be left there for 25 Symphony Drive. Mr. Buckley said unfortunately most of the natural vegetation has been removed in the past. There is really no way to leave anything along there. Mr. Steltzer questioned in the absence of natural screening would they put in some plantings to provide some screening. Mr. Buckley said they could possibly put in some arborvitaes. Mr. Steltzer asked about fill being brought in and how much soil would be coming off the site. Mr. Buckley discussed that he does not see a lot of fill being brought to the site.

Chair Rondeau asked about the distance from the cul-de-sac to the tail end of the hammerhead. Mr. Buckley said the overall extension of the road was about 420 ft. Chair Rondeau asked if they encountered any ledge. Mr. Buckley said he does not think so. They encountered some very odd soils and really high ground water. Chair Rondeau said on sheet 6 basin 2 which is lot 2 that there is a pretty substantial drop off about 10 ft. to 12 ft. He said he is looking at safety purposes for maybe a fence at the top section just before the drop off. Mr. Buckley said that is fine. Chair Rondeau said once you clear cut these you will have to come up with a pretty good soil erosion control because it will fly down the hill. Mr. Buckley said on sheet 7 they put together a SWPPP which he reviewed.

Ms. Cheryl Hanly, 129 Brandywine Road, said they were immediate abutters. She explained there are walking trails that people use. She said they are not opposed to the project. She explained they are concerned about stormwater runoff and ground disturbance during and after construction. She talked about how as homeowners they have addressed those issues on her property, and her property has been mostly dry. She said their situation remains sensitive. She said changes to existing drainage patterns could potentially result in flooding to her property. She would like assurances that the drainage impacts to downhill abutters do not worsen as a result of the development. She requested consideration for conditions of approval that post-development drainage conditions for abutting properties will not exceed pre-development conditions and that appropriate mitigation measures be required. She said she would appreciate clarification on how the town could monitor drainage impacts during and after construction and what recourse abutters have if problems occur.

Chair Rondeau said that is why the applicant has a SWPPP program and has to go to Conservation Commission. He said there cannot be any more water discharge on the property after the project than there is now.

Mr. Joe Amante, 133 Brandywine Road, said he is also downhill of this project. He said he is not opposed to the project, but as they sit below, he is very worried about stormwater issues and has specific concerns. He noted the road will not be a town road, and there will be no curbing but trenching along the roads. He discussed if there is no maintenance, can those get clogged with dead leaves and silt and over time not function as intended. He asked how does that get maintained. He asked that regarding the infiltration basin and maintenance, are there better ways to capture the water. He noted the basins are very shallow and if debris piles up the water just sheets off to that exit, and it will come straight down the hill. Regarding accountability, since it will be a private structure, can money be put into an escrow fund to maintain this in perpetuity. He noted soil conditions and related drainage. He asked if there is something the town will be looking at to confirm those designs.

Chair Rondeau said the peer reviewer BETA will be looking at the whole thing.

Ms. Jane Garner, 67 Lenox Drive, talked about the nature walkers and said they are prevalent. She said when the homes were built on Berkshire Drive and there was blasting done, it did damage to the foundation of her home which is on the downslope. She asked what protections she has if blasting does occur. She said this is seven acres of land with two houses and questioned if the developers were going to clearcut all of the land. She said in her development there was preservation of vegetation.

Mr. Buckley talked about the drawing and explained the wetlands and the local bylaw regarding the buffer zones. He said most of the activity is outside of the 50 ft. buffer zone and the 100 ft. buffer zone. He noted parcel A is the road and most of that will be cleared except the very end. He noted the limit of work as shown on the plans. He said this plan is not gospel. He said it is not under the subdivision control bylaw to decide where people put their houses as long as it complies with zoning, but he thinks the current plan is a pretty good estimate, and he guessed what would be cleared. Mr. Buckley explained that blasting falls under the fire department, and there is state code that they follow. He noted pre-blast surveys are conducted based on requirements.

Mr. Nick Moelders, 16 Berkshire Drive, had questions about the infrastructure and asked about incoming electricity and water supply. He said some people have low water pressure. He asked about the working schedule. Mr. Buckley said the project will be tied into the municipal water supply according to regulations. He said electric is underground; they do not have those drawings yet. He said the water servicing the homes is not going to affect the pressure. Ms. Love said the working schedule is through the town and is Monday through Saturday, 7 AM to 9 PM, and Sunday follows the Blue Laws. She said this is through the building commissioner; he will be issuing the building permits. She said Mr. Moelders can talk to the building commissioner about hours.

Ms. Jennifer Shaw, 27 Lenox Drive, said she uses the trails and maintaining the access would be good. She said she has a concern about water pressure. She said there is a pump house, and there are currently issues with pressure. She hopes someone will look into that.

Mr. Maglio said he does not have the specifics on the water booster station in the neighborhood. He said when they got the approval from the Town Council to tie into the water system, one of the conditions was the developer is contributing over \$30,000 to improve the pumps at that booster pump station. He would have to check with the water superintendent over the specifics of the water pressure. He said they were planning to make some upgrades which the developer will cover the cost.

Motion to Continue Symphony Drive (Tanglewood Estates II) - Private Definitive Subdivision to February 9, 2026. Rondeau. Second: Mello. Roll Call Vote: Rondeau-YES; Mello-Yes; Stickney-YES; Mucciarone-YES; Steltzer-YES. Vote: 5-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Endorsement: Lot 2 Forge Parkway

Ms. Love said the Planning Board approved a site plan modification for Lot 2 Forge Parkway on November 3, 2025. The certificate of vote is located on the front page. The site plans have been submitted for endorsement.

Motion to Endorse Lot 2 Forge Parkway. Rondeau. Second: Mello. Roll Call Vote: Rondeau-YES; Mello-Yes; Stickney-YES; Mucciarone-YES; Steltzer-YES. Vote: 5-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

B. Partial Form H: Uncas Ave Extension

Ms. Love reviewed the Planning Board approved a site plan modification and special permit for Uncas Avenue Extension on April 22, 2024, to increase the total number of units from 18 to 27. She said the applicant has submitted a Partial Form H for occupancy for all of the units. There is a \$335,102.00 bond in place for all outstanding roadway improvements. BETA reviewed the site and submitted a comment letter.

Mr. Maglio said the binder course was put in years ago and sat dormant. There is going to be some work needing to be done to the existing pavement. BETA is doing the construction inspections. We will look at everything before they do the final paving. He said if it is just a matter of the lot release for the first three buildings they have done, he does not see an issue with that. He said it is up to the Planning Board if they want to see sidewalks before they do the lot releases.

Mr. Crowley said we were out there last week to perform an overall conformance observation on the state of construction. He said they were previously out there in 2023. He said since then, the applicant made progress mostly on the residential lots. It looks like substantial completion on lots 1 through 4. He said not much additional work has been done on the roadway itself. He reviewed some of the outstanding work items. He noted some repairs will be needed to the binder course before they do the top course pavement. He said the bond estimate was last done in 2022. Considering how prices have gone up, the bond would not have come down.

Mr. Mello said the road does not look good and will need a lot done to it. He said even the binder material does not look good. Mr. Stickney said he agrees with not releasing the entire development, just the ones that have been constructed. Mr. Mucciarone noted he has to abstain. Mr. Steltzer confirmed there are no sidewalks. He said regarding the bond, is it sufficient as prices have gone up since 2022. He agreed to release only the lots that have been constructed.

Chair Rondeau said he would like to see an updated bond established to today's standards to see where we are. He said he will recommend releasing the first three buildings on the right with the foundation and the cul-de-sac. He would like to see the road cleaned up, silt sacks in the catch basins. He said he does not know if the whole system is functioning properly. He would like to see a completion schedule with dates. He said there is no curbing, sidewalks, and street lights. He requested BETA and Mr. Maglio going out and reporting back within a month with good numbers and some estimates.

Motion ON THOSE COMMENTS for the Partial Form H for Uncas Avenue Extension. Rondeau. Second: Stickney. Roll Call Vote: Rondeau-YES; Mello-Yes; Stickney-YES; Mucciarone-ABSTAIN; Steltzer-YES. Vote: 4-0-1 (4-Yes; 0-No; 1-Abstain).

OTHER GENERAL BUSINESS/COMMENTS

Mr. Stickney said for the self-storage facility approved on 151 Grove Street, they have started site clearing and all of that which is fine; however, he noted on several occasions vehicles parked in the trail

head and trail access even further down which in looking at some plans it is not on their site, so they should not be there. Ms. Love said she would bring that to the building commissioner's attention. She noted Mr. Stickney should email her the pictures he has.

Motion to Adjourn the Planning Board Meeting. Rondeau. Second: Mello. Roll Call Vote: Rondeau-YES; Mello-Yes; Stickney-YES; Mucciarone-YES; Steltzer-YES. Vote: 5-0 (5-Yes; 0-No).

Meeting adjourned at 8:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi,
Recording Secretary

--Planning Board Approved Minutes at the February 9, 2026 meeting