



**Mayor
Erin V. Joyce**

Department of Planning and Community Development

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PLANNING BOARD

Kimberly Kroha, Chair
Thomas M. Kent, Vice Chair
Darryl K. Mikami, Clerk
Jennifer Connolly, Member
Robert M. Kane, Member
Anthony Kinahan, Alternate

Approved February 10, 2026

Braintree Planning Board – Tuesday, January 13, 2026, in Cahill Auditorium, Braintree Town Hall

Present:

Ms. Kim Kroha, Chairperson-arrives at 7:38PM	Peter Matchak, Director
Mr. Thomas Kent, Vice Chair	Anita Guo, Assistant Director
Mr. Darryl Mikami, Clerk	
Ms. Jennifer Connolly, Member	
Mr. Robert M. Kane, Member	

Absent:

Mr. Anthony Kinahan, Alternate Member

Vice Chairperson Thomas Kent calls the meeting to order at 7:00 PM in Cahill Auditorium. He notes that four (4) full members (Vice Chair Kent, Member Mikami, Member Connolly, Member Kane) are here, and Chairwoman Kroha will be arriving later. Alternate Member Kinahan is absent this evening. We will start with the items that are Old/New Business at 7:00 PM, and then we will move onto the Public Hearings at 7:15 PM.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Minor Modification to Approved Site Plan – Planning Board File #23-01, 125 Union Street, Torrington Properties, Applicant

7:01 PM - Four Planning Board Members are present.

Vice Chair Kent asks the Director to begin. Director Peter Matchak advises that the applicant is represented by Attorney Marinelli tonight, but in discussions with this, their Traffic Engineer, Jeff Dirk, was not available to attend tonight. So, the Applicant has asked that this matter is being tabled until the February 10th meeting of the Planning Board. Attorney Marinelli confirms their agreement to continue this matter until February 10th. Director Matchak explains staff has been working with the Applicant on this, and they are hoping to meet again prior to the February meeting with the Applicant, their Traffic Engineer along with the town's Peer Reviewer, Greg Lucas. It is not necessary to have a motion to continue this matter with a vote.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

As-Built Approval / Bond Release – Planning Board File 21-12 – 42 Hayward Street - John Lu, Applicant

7:02 PM – Four Planning Board Members are present.

Vice Chair Kent asks Director Matchak for an update on this matter.

Director Matchak explains that 42 Hayward Street is a project that dates back to 2021. It is a development of a single-family home, and the project is complete. They have submitted an As-Built Plan that is acceptable. The

homeowner is requesting the release of the \$2,000 bond, which in review of the As-Built Plan and the project, Director Matchak would recommend that the board vote to approve the As-Built and release the \$2,000 bond.

Vice Chair Kent asks if there are any comments or questions from the public; there are none. Therefore, he is looking for a motion on this matter.

Member Kane **MOTIONS** to provide As-Built Approval and release the \$2,000 Bond for Planning Board File #21-12, 42 Hayward Street; seconded by Member Connolly; voted 4:0:0.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Administrative Matters – Approval of Meeting Minutes – November 12, 2025 and December 9, 2025

7:03 PM – Four Planning Board Members are present.

Vice Chair Kent states next, we have approval of the meeting minutes for November 12, 2025, and December 9, 2025. Vice Chair Kent asks if everyone had a chance to look at the meeting minutes, and he asks if there are any questions or comments. Seeing no comments, he is looking for a motion to approve November 12, 2025, and December 9, 2025, Meeting Minutes. Member Connolly and Member Mikami explained that they were not in attendance at the December 9th meeting, and therefore, they cannot vote on the approval of those minutes. Vice Chair Kent states that we will approve the November minutes and table the approval of December 9th minutes until Chair Kroha arrives.

Member Connolly **MOTIONS** to approve November 12, 2025, Meeting Minutes; seconded by Member Kane; voted 4:0:0.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Administrative Matters – Application Fees

7:04 PM – Four Planning Board Members are present.

Director Matchak provides an update and explains, when he arrived several months ago, looking at the application fees in comparison to other communities within the area was a conversation that was happening. Staff have looked at the Planning Board fees and those of surrounding communities that include Quincy, Milton, and Randolph as benchmarks. It is healthy that staff and the Planning Board do this from time to time to make sure that our fees are in line with abutting communities and the region. Some of the material that staff have been working on has been submitted to the Mayor's Office, and staff are awaiting comments from the Mayor's Office. Then staff will move forward with the application fee conversation. Therefore, this matter will be tabled to the February 10th meeting. Vice Chair Kent asks for a motion to carry this discussion of application fees to the next meeting.

Member Connolly **MOTIONS** to carry the discussion of application fees to the February 10, 2026, meeting of the Planning Board; seconded by Member Kane; voted 4:0:0.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Administrative Matters – Approval of change to 2026 Meeting Schedule

7:06 PM – Four Planning Board Members are present.

Vice Chair Kent states next, we have approval of a minor change to the 2026 Meeting Schedule. The change is to the meeting date for the September meeting from Tuesday, September 8th, to Thursday, September 10th.

Director Matchak explains that this is being proposed because Tuesday, September 8th is the day after Labor Day, which is a very busy day for everybody. That day is also the first day of school here in Braintree. With that knowledge, we are asking the Planning Board to meet that Thursday, September 10th. Vice Chair Kent asks if there are any questions from the members. Seeing no questions, he is looking for a motion to approve the revised schedule.

Member Kane **MOTIONS** to approve revised 2026 Meeting Schedule; seconded by Member Connolly; voted 4:0:0.

Director Matchak explains it is now 7:07 PM, and we cannot start the public hearings until 7:15 PM; so, we will take a short break until 7:15 PM.

PUBLIC HEARING

Special Permit (135-601: Use – Two Family Conversion) and Site Plan Review – 101 Arborway Drive - PB File #25-12

Jason Umbro, Applicant

7:15 PM – Four Planning Board Members are present.

Appearing on behalf of the Applicant:

Jason Umbro

Vice Chair Kent asks Planning Staff to read the Legal Notice into record. Director Matchak reads the public hearing notice into record.

Director Matchak introduces the board to the Applicant, Jason Umbro. Director Matchak explains that Mr. Umbro purchased this property about 1 ½ years ago, and he is looking for a two-family conversion.

Vice Chair Kent asks Mr. Umbro what he would like to add. Applicant, Jason Umbro, explains that the structure is not changing at all. They do not have to do anything to this property. It is already set up with two BELD electrical meters, and it has two trash receptacles. The layout on the interior of the house does not have to change at all. It has two separate oil tanks and heating systems. The house was built in the 1920's. Mr. Umbro states that when he purchased the house, there were already tenants in there, and they are still there. There is nothing to do to this property to convert it. They don't have to build it out, and it is not going outside the footprint.

Member Kane asks about existing tenants. He asks if it has been operating as a two-family already. Mr. Umbro describes how the floor plan is set up. Director Matchak explains that it was originally a single-family, but at some point in time, it has been operating as a two-family for a while. This is just legalizing the two-family and the current use of the property. Member Kane asks if the land is zoned for multi-family. Director Matchak states yes – it is Residential B. Member Kane mentions lost tax revenue but realizes that Member Mikami may address that matter.

Member Connolly has no comments currently.

Member Mikami asks when Mr. Umbro purchased this property, if there were any legal issues or title issues. Mr. Umbro states there have been no issues since he purchased this property. Mr. Umbro describes how the resident of the house in the back was not getting along with everyone. Member Mikami confirms that Mr.

Umbro does not reside on the property. Member Mikami asks Mr. Umbro to describe the house again, which he does. Member Mikami's only real question is how did the assessors look at this property? How has it existed in our books all these years. Director Matchak's understanding is that both houses were pre-existing non-conforming structures. From an assessing standpoint, it is one parcel with two structures as a pre-existing non-conforming. This property existed prior to zoning. A former owner had transformed the house in the front to a two-unit building. Director Matchak agrees it is uncommon but thinks there are other examples here in Braintree with similar circumstances. Director Matchak confirms this is a grandfathered pre-existing, non-conforming property. This Special Permit will legitimize the two units in the front building. Director Matchak advises that there are six parking spaces in the lot which are required. Member Mikami states this is not the most straight-forward project. Mr. Umbro states that this property has been set up as a two-family for about 40 years.

Member Connolly asks about fire safety in terms of access. Is it properly set up for exiting in an emergency? Director Matchak explains that there are two access points for each unit. That could be put in the decision, which could require verification. Mr. Umbro confirms this and describes the exits.

Member Kent has no questions.

Member Kent opens the discussion to public comment.

Robert Liston, 118 Beechwood Road, became an abutter in 1984 when he purchased the lot directly behind Mr. Umbro's property. Around 1988, Mr. Liston bought the second lot which directly abuts this property. He bought it from the town for \$200 because it was unbuildable because it has a pipe that runs through it. Mr. Liston explains that around 1980, the previous owners turned the front house into a two-family. There has been a lot of police activity over the years. Mr. Liston asks if a two-family is approved, will there be Section 8 tenants again. Mr. Liston describes the unbuildable lot he purchased and the pipe, and he would like to know where the pipe goes on Mr. Umbro's property. Because if he cannot build on his lot because of the pipe, how were they able to build on Mr. Umbro's property. Mr. Umbro explains that there is a sewage easement in the back of the property that comes out 20 feet from the dividing fence in the back and goes left to right on his property and is not near any of the existing buildings. Mr. Umbro states there is no change on the property; the sewage easement has been there for a long time. Mr. Umbro shows Mr. Liston the sewage easement on the Site Plan. Mr. Liston states this works for him, and he hopes those moving into the units respect both the law and the property.

Vice Chair Kent asks if there are any other questions or comments. There are none.

Director Matchak states we don't have a final decision drafted; so, we would like to close the public hearing with the plan for staff to draft the decision by the February meeting; Director Matchak will also meet with the Applicant prior to the February meeting to investigate the ingress/egress from both units.

Member Connolly **MOTIONS** to close the public hearing; seconded by Member Kane; voted 4:0:0.

Member Kane **MOTIONS** to continue this to the February 10th Meeting of the Planning Board; seconded by Member Connolly; voted 4:0:0.

Chairwoman Kroha arrives.

PUBLIC HEARING

Town Council Order 25-070, submitted by Mayor Erin V. Joyce

Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments to Section 135-711: Site Plan Review (B) Applicability

7:38 PM – Five Planning Board Members are present.

Vice Chair Kent asks Planning Staff to read the Legal Notice into record; Director Matchak reads the Public Hearing Notice.

Director Matchak explains that currently in our bylaw under site plan approval, we only have four items that layout when site plan approval takes place. Since the Director's arrival several months ago, he has noticed that we have nothing that speaks to Mass General Law Section 3, which is also known as the Dover Amendment. This section protects uses, and the uses have been for schools and educational activities. Over the last couple of years, the state has added more and more to Section 3. It includes accessory dwelling units and energy facilities that are less than 25 megawatts. These are all protected uses under Mass General Law Section 3. The Director has been working with the mayor's office and Counselor Carolyn Murray. Carolyn Murray suggested that an edit to the bylaws be drafted and presented to the Town Council that clarifies if an application comes in that is claiming an exempt use, there still is a site plan process that takes place. That is what this bylaw amendment does. It provides guidance to both applicants and the Planning Board that, when an application comes in using an exempt use status, there is a Site Plan Review process, and that is to protect the health and welfare of the community. The baseline of all zoning is to protect the health and welfare of the community and of the people. The Director explains, working with Carolyn Murray and looking at other community bylaws, this zoning ordinance text amendment was put forth, and that is what has been submitted to Town Council. It has made it to the Planning Board's agenda tonight – looking for a recommendation from the Planning Board.

Chairwoman Kroha thanks Planning Staff and the counsel looking at various parts of the zoning bylaw that can be updated, including this one. She asks if any board members have questions or comments. There are no comments from the board. Chairwoman Kroha opens discussion to the public.

Attorney Mike Modestino, who represents Hawthorn Preserve and George Clements, says he is not here to speak against this, but he thinks this is a big jump going to Site Plan Review, particularly where the Dover Amendment allows a town to impose reasonable conditions for a church, daycare, and other protected developments, which are covered by the Dover Amendment. Attorney Modestino suggests we think about it a bit. His client is submitting preliminary plans for a daycare facility, and he is meeting with staff tomorrow. He would like some clarification on how this amendment would impact his application in the future. Mass General Laws 40A, Section 3, exempt land uses include education, religious organizations, and childcare facilities. Attorney Modestino suggests that we do this carefully and think about it before it is passed. Attorney Modestino respects Carolyn Murray as well as Mayor Joyce. Attorney Modestino would ask that the Planning Board consider this carefully before it passes on an opinion – one way or the other.

Chairwoman Kroha asks if there are areas of the language that you object to or is it the concept in total for the Site Plan Review process? Attorney Modestino wants to make sure it is done properly, and it allows daycare facilities to be opened with some reasonable requirements. He feels now they have reasonable requirements, and we don't want to overextend that going forward.

Chairwoman Kroha asks if there is anyone else from the public with comments or questions on the proposal; there are no further comments from the public.

Chairwoman Kroha asks Director Matchak when one of these protected uses comes in now for a Building Permit, would they get feedback on the restrictions? The Director states we are talking about protected use and in some instances, Braintree has said yes come in for a Building Permit. However, under the four items of applicability, number 3 that exists today would also catch anything that comes in. He reads Applicability Item Number 3:

All developments where the area of any new structure or extension of an existing structure is 500 square feet or more excluding single- and two-family homes that are not subject to special permits and related accessory structures.

He explains that we are not looking at the use. The use is exempt. We are looking at when you develop a piece of property, you have to come through a Site Plan Review process. If you are building a project that is greater than 500 square feet, he believes Item 3 catches that; however, working with Carolyn Murray, what is proposed to Council adds clarity that if you do come in under Chapter 40A, Section 3, that you do follow a Site Plan Review process for reasonable regulations. Director Matchak understands Attorney Modestino's point of view; however, the Dover Amendment has a long list of cases, and this is legally allowed that there is a review process for cities and towns to go through in reviewing all items that come in under exempt uses. We are not saying exempt uses cannot come into the Town of Braintree; we are saying you have to come through the Site Plan Review process, which requires a public hearing from a Planning Board standpoint, and it does protect the life safety of the community from a health welfare standpoint. Surrounding communities such as Quincy and Weymouth have bylaws that speak to this item. Director Matchak believes we are catching up with the times to bring our bylaws up to par. This is one step that the Town of Braintree needs to make in this long effort to improve our bylaws. Chairwoman Kroha states part of the challenge with the Dover Amendment is that these uses can go in any zoning classification where the setbacks or roads might be different in a commercial zoning area instead of a residential. She explains this would allow the town to have some mechanism to review the impacts if the infrastructure is different for different locations that are being considered.

Chairwoman Kroha asks if there are any comments from board members. There are none; therefore, she is looking for a motion to close the public hearing.

Member Kent **MOTIONS** to close the hearing; seconded by Member Kane; voted 5:0:0.

Chairwoman Kroha is looking for a motion on the recommendation sent to Town Council.

Member Kent **MOTIONS** to submit a favorable recommendation to the Town Council on the Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment to Section 135-711 under Town Council Order 25-070; seconded by Member Connolly; voted 5:0:0.

CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING

Site Plan Review – 10 Plain Street - PB File #25-06

Braintree Apartments Venture LLC – d/b/a/ Trammell Crow Residential, Applicant

7:51 PM – Five Planning Board Members are present.

Appearing on behalf of the Applicant:

Attorney Frank Marinelli

Andy Huntoon, Trammell Crow Residential

Emily White, Trammell Crow Residential
Nick Dellacava, Civil Engineer - Allen & Major Associates, Inc.
Bob Michaud, Traffic Engineer -- MDM Transportation Consultants, Inc.

Appearing on behalf of the Town:

Greg Lucas, Traffic Engineer - Tighe & Bond
Eric Dias, Civil Engineer – Strong Point Engineering

Attorney Frank Marinelli begins the presentation and states he is pleased to appear before the Board representing Trammell Crow Residential. He explains that this is an application to develop 752 high-quality apartment homes. They have over 50% open space and substantial amenities, and it is an amazing transformation of the over 30-acre Armstrong Factory site into a \$230Million+ investment in Braintree with significant natural features including the Riverwalk, which is an easement through the site to the fish ladder. The Applicant is also adding a publicly accessible trail along with a public playground at the Plain Street entry to the site.

Attorney Marinelli explains that on August 12 they showed a video of the Riverwalk with the Monaquot River flowing to the fish ladder because of the public dam removal project. It is going to be an amazing place to live. As previously discussed, all existing old factory buildings will be demolished and an additional two acres of impervious surface will be removed, contributing to the over 50% open space that is part of the 30-acre residential development. Attorney Marinelli introduces the development team (listed above). Attorney Marinelli is just going to give a brief chronology. He believes that all the planning submissions have been made to make this a complete project. The Applicant respectfully requests that the Planning Board authorize the staff to draft conditions that can be reviewed by the board. As you know from the November 12th meeting, the development is an over \$230Million investment in housing in Braintree economic development. In November, the peer review report from the fiscal peer reviewer, Karl Seidman, reported that the development will produce approximately \$3Million in building permit fees and another \$1Million in water and sewer connection fees. At full development, it is anticipated, according to the peer review report, that the Residences will produce \$733,000 to over \$1.1Million in net real estate taxes and other taxes each year to the town.

Attorney Marinelli states that TCR is the largest private residential developer in the country, having developed over 300,000 quality residences. As the Planning Board knows, this proposal is a use by right Site Plan Review only under Section 3A, the MBTA Communities Law, and Braintree Ordinance 616, which was adopted by the Town Council in December of 2023. For the past year, TCR and the development team have worked diligently. The Applicant filed the proposal with the Planning Board on June 6, 2025, and they met with all town department representatives on June 10, 2025. The district counselor held a public meeting at the site on June 24, 2025. During July, the Applicant met again with police and fire representatives, and they also had a site walk with Planning representatives. On August 12, 2026, they had the second public hearing before the Planning Board. During September, the Applicant again had meetings with Planning Staff and the traffic peer reviewer and the civil stormwater peer reviewer. There were several rounds of traffic peer reviews, civil peer reviewer comments and traffic peer review comments were addressed by the project team. On September 24th, the Applicant presented to the Braintree Chamber of Commerce, who wrote a letter of support for housing and economic development. On October 14 and November 12, there were further public hearings before the Planning Board, and the Planning Board has received all peer reviews -- independent reviews of the proposal on traffic by Tighe & Bond, on civil and stormwater by Strong Point Engineering, on fiscal analysis by Karl Seidman of MIT, on water capacity by Apex, and on sewer capacity by Weston & Sampson.

Attorney Marinelli explains that all information from the Peer Reviews is publicly posted on the Planning Board website and is useful for the staff in drafting conditions for approval and for any mitigation discussion. Attorney Marinelli reviews the two phases of the project. Phase 1 is 427 quality apartment homes (Buildings 1A, 1B, 2, 3, 4A and 4B); Phase 2 is 325 quality apartment homes (Building 5). All buildings are four-stories with significant amenities. Building 5 has additional amenities with an interior parking garage on four floors. The Registry of Motor Vehicles has vacated the site and relocated in anticipation of demolition and redevelopment. Baystate Gym is expected to vacate the site within the next 30 days. Attorney Marinelli explains they have appeared before the Conservation Commission in December and January and expects that process is also nearing completion. He thanks the board, the staff, the peer reviewers and the public for all the comments to date, and they would respectfully request that the board vote to authorize the Planning Director and staff to proceed with drafting proposed conditions of approval for this by right residential development. Attorney Marinelli states they are happy to answer any questions or have the development team make any additional presentation that may be needed.

Director Matchak confirms that we have received all Peer Review comments. The Director confirms that there is work to be done related to water, and he advises that Greg Lucas from Tighe & Bond is here to answer any questions related to traffic (along with the Applicant's Traffic Engineer, Bob Michaud). Director Matchak also advises that the town's peer reviewer for civil, Eric Dias from Strong Point, is here tonight to answer any questions related to civil and stormwater. The Director does want to make a note that the Town of Braintree is working with SLR and continuing to work to close out the grant for the dam removal and the Monitiquot River project. SLR is looking to do an As-Built Plan and then submit a plan to FEMA to do a map correction of that flood way into that flood plain. That is something that is ongoing for Conservation. Eric Dias has been working with both the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission, and he has outlined proposed conditions that would help to protect the town as that work continues to maneuver through levels of bureaucracy which would include FEMA. The Director explains that Eric Dias and Greg Lucas are here tonight to help answer any questions that we may have.

Chairwoman Kroha asks for an update regarding the meeting in December with MBTA and others. Attorney Marinelli advises that Bob Michaud conducted the Diagnostic Team Review (DTR) and orchestrated that meeting. Attorney Marinelli explains that the meeting occurred at town hall, and all the representatives from various agencies then visited the site, walked the whole site and then reconvened back at town hall. Attorney Marinelli will let Bob Michaud talk about the status, but he explains it is a work in progress. Attorney Marinelli states, certainly, when we do draft conditions, it is subject to the approvals of other governmental authorities. The Applicant would expect that kind of a condition.

Robert Michaud, Managing Principal of MDM Transportation Consultants, states, as Attorney Marinelli had mentioned, they conducted the Diagnostic Team Review on December 10th. It was very well attended and prepared in accordance with federal rail guidelines. The intent of a diagnostic review is to identify a series of safety related enhancements/improvements that would be recommended to address pre-existing or anticipated issues at each of the crossings that included Armstrong Crossing (the driveway off of Hancock Street), the Plain Street Crossing (which is the central focus of the review), and the John Mahar Crossing. Each of those crossing locations were reviewed. The diagnostic review was informed by an exhaustive inventory of crashes at each of those locations. The multi-disciplinary team that was participating included representatives of MBTA, Keolis, the development team, the Planning Department, input from Police and Fire, and Public Works. People with different areas of expertise were well represented.

Mr. Michaud advises that the findings and recommendations will be published Thursday of this week in a draft format for distribution to that participating team with about a one-week review period of the draft to ensure they didn't miss anything. At which point, they will close out the formal document, and it would be a matter of public record. The intention is not to point to responsible parties, but rather a series of actions that could be taken over time at the discretion of the controlling agencies (MBTA in particular). There were several recommendations that came out at each of the crossings. There were no surprises. The Plain Street crossing was the subject of a "Quiet Zone" evaluation. The intent of the Diagnostic Team Review was not to determine the viability of a quiet zone. That was a separate study, but they did incorporate some of the suggestions.

Chairwoman Kroha confirms that the Hancock Street exit is closed for now. Mr. Michaud states that crossing is subject to a license agreement with the current landowner. MBTA could pull that license with 30 days' notice. It is not a permanent license. The crossing itself continues to be used for construction access to the property for purposes of the boardwalk construction, the dam removal, and some site work. That is currently gated, but the intent of the developer based on input from MBTA, is that crossing will continue to be used for construction related activities. It is the strong preference of MBTA and Keolis that the crossing is not used as a general vehicular or pedestrian access. The preference is to have a permanent condition that allows emergency vehicle access along that driveway with gate controls that would preclude general vehicular use and pedestrian access. Chairwoman Kroha confirms that Phase 1 would have a sole, single access point. Mr. Michaud confirms that John Mahar would be available for emergency vehicle access purposes, but general vehicular use for Phase 1 would be entirely done through Plain Street. Chairwoman Kroha asks how a resident would know they are not supposed to go that way. The driveway that leads to John Mahar will be gated, and there will be signage that indicates there is no throughway. It will not be in its final form or look or feel like a permanent driveway. Chairwoman Kroha asks what the push back is in allowing cars in and out of John Mahar during Phase 1. Mr. Michaud states he will defer to the agreements the developer has with the current landowner on that issue. Mr. Michaud explains at the full build-out, access to John Mahar will be available. Mr. Michaud states it is not uncommon to have a single access point for this type of development. More importantly, the emergency access provision would meet NFPA1 guidance, which would be provision of a secondary means of access and egress. From a life safety perspective, it is appropriately designed. Mr. Michaud states they are comfortable that what is being proposed on a phased basis will work efficiently and safely and would be compliant with all applicable life and safety requirements.

Member Mikami asks if the MBTA has ultimate decision-making power over everything on this project. Mr. Michaud explains that the only thing they have any say over would be the licensing related to the crossings near this project. The developer made the case that the Plain Street crossing, under the first phase of the development, will sustain a reduction in traffic intensity relative to the very recent use of the site by the registry and the gym. The change of use from a commercial entity for the registry to a residential use will result in fewer rail crossings at Plain Street. John Mahar will sustain a very modest change under Phase 1 (less than 50 crossings per hour during weekday morning peak hours and a reduction in the evening). At full build-out, the Plain Street crossing will sustain a neutral impact, and there will be about 100 additional crossings per hour at the John Mahar location. The only control that the MBTA has is over the Armstrong Crossing (Hancock Street) and the provisions of use of that crossing, which would be subject to a license agreement. Member Mikami confirms that the rest of the jurisdiction lies with the Planning Board, the Conservation Commission and MassDOT (as it relates to the driveway on Plain Street and any pedestrian features).

Member Kane thinks that it is wise not to have vehicular and pedestrian access at the Armstrong Crossing (Hancock Street). Member Kane continues to have concerns about the volume coming out onto the Plain Street/Hancock Street intersection. Member Kane states there is a chance that second phase doesn't happen.

His concern is protecting the community for the future – even if the second phase doesn't happen. He would like to see a provision that both access points are open at the conclusion of Phase 1. It is prudent to treat this as a community neighborhood so that we protect everybody that is around it regardless of whether that second phase goes in.

Chairwoman Kroha asks Mr. Greg Lucas, Tighe & Bond, for some details related to traffic. Greg Lucas, Traffic Peer Review for the project, states they went through four rounds of comments and responses. There were comments that they had on the study as well as on the site layout, access, circulation, and parking. Mr. Lucas had some of the same concerns that the Planning Board is asking about, such as whether the Mahar driveway could be opened in Phase 1. We all understand that there is a benefit to that access, but the study confirms that the single driveway will be functional and will operate satisfactorily to serve the Phase 1 portion of the development. Mr. Lucas discusses the ownership issue with the Mahar driveway. Member Kane asks what the ownership issue is and he suggests it is because the developer isn't purchasing both portions of land at the same time. Andy Huntoon, Trammell Crow, advises that they will purchase the first portion for Phase 1, and twelve months later they will purchase the second parcel. They will be halfway through construction on Phase 1 when they start construction on the second phase. At that time, they would not have any residents moved in yet. They start renting about 15-16 months after breaking ground on the first phase. Member Kane expresses concern because there is no protection in place to ensure the John Mahar access if something goes sideways. Mr. Huntoon states the Messina folks will own it, but they will give us an easement for vehicular access. They don't want to give an easement for anything and everything until the developer buys it. Mr. Huntoon states that is why they studied the driveway on Plain Street to make sure it was sufficient to meet the demand and the service requirements placed upon it.

Member Kent suggests building Phase 2 first. That would alleviate some of the traffic concerns. Then, he asks what the sequencing is for the buildings within Phase 1. Mr. Huntoon explains they are going to work counter-clockwise. They are going to work from the front on Plain Street to the back and then across the river. The bridge will take a little time to build. It is about 24-25 months to get all of it built. The first building will be ready for Certificate of Occupancy to come online and be occupied 15-16 months after groundbreaking on the project. The remaining buildings will be ready 24-5 months after groundbreaking. The intent is to close on the Phase 2 property and begin construction about 12 months after we close on the Phase 1 property. Due to the structure type with the garage, the Phase 2 building will take longer to get done. Occupancy might occur 18 months or so after they close on the property. It will take time to get all units occupied. There will be an overlap with Phase 1 and Phase 2 construction. Phase 2 will be under construction for the second half of the Phase 1 construction. Member Kent asks under what other scenarios Phase 2 might be delayed or not built. Mr. Huntoon states they have an investor, a Massachusetts-based firm, that is going to do the project with them. They will get a construction loan from a lender. There will probably be different banks for the two phases. Short of a banking collapse, Mr. Huntoon doesn't foresee anything. Everything is going in the right direction, and they expect that it will persist for the foreseeable future.

Chairwoman Kroha asks Greg Lucas about the across the river buildings and access to and from those with the emergency only on Hancock and the bridge. There were some conversations internally with the Fire Department between the last meeting and now. She asks Mr. Lucas for an update on that. Mr. Lucas explains that his understanding is that the Hancock entrance is expected to be emergency access only. It would be gated from the property. MBTA and Keolis don't want pedestrians crossing there. There would have to be significant infrastructure installed to allow pedestrian access via that crossing. It sounds like something the MBTA is not going to allow.

Chairwoman Kroha's question was more safety specific for people getting out of those buildings in an emergency. She asks if Mr. Lucas was looking more at the external traffic impacts or the internal site circulation. Mr. Lucas states they looked at the internal site circulation, and generally in those areas they defer to the Fire Department. Mr. Lucas expects that the Fire Department is going to be more knowledgeable than he is about how to make sure that this is safe for the residents. Mr. Lucas states that in a situation where people might need to use that access for emergency exit it is something that emergency personnel need to manage. Director Matchak fully expects approval of emergency access via Hancock Street. This was always a demand by our Fire Department and heard loud and clear by the MBTA officials. Chairwoman Kroha asks about the safety of individuals (whether pedestrian or car traffic) coming over the bridge if they don't have another way out. Has the Fire Chief weighed in on that aspect of the plan. The Director explains in an emergency the Fire Department will be onsite, and they will be calling the MBTA to shut that line down. The Director can follow up with Chief Viola, but Director Matchak's understanding is that side of the site has been taken very seriously. The bridge is going to be built to a standard where it can hold the heaviest vehicle, which the Director believes is the ladder truck. If there was a situation with Building 4, the Fire Department would be onsite. If MBTA did not grant that accessibility over that site, then Building 4 would have to be built to a higher fire safety level standard and would be built with brick and mortar.

Member Connolly asks if a second river crossing was ever discussed – Mr. Lucas doesn't believe so. There are no further questions for Mr. Lucas.

Chairwoman Kroha asks Mr. Dias to provide an update.

Eric Dias, Civil Engineer - Strong Point Engineering, oversaw the stormwater peer review on the project. The last time he was before the Planning Board in November, he had issued his second review letter. There were just a small handful of items that needed to be addressed by the Applicant team (five items). The Applicant responded and asked to make those things conditions of approval. Mr. Dias looked at them and issued a letter last week stating they don't take exception to that. The first three of them can fall under the same condition of providing a stormwater pollution prevention plan prior to construction. That is something that can be done under the NPDES Construction General Permit, and it is something that is usually done right before construction because it has contact information for the site work contractors, which isn't known at this time usually. Mr. Dias believes that is something that this board has typically conditioned in the past. This condition gives the town and the board an opportunity to review the stormwater pollution prevention plan, comment on it, approve it, and move forward. The fourth item is to provide a signed elicited discharge statement. The Applicant has requested a condition to allow them to provide that as they get closer to construction. Mr. Dias has provided some proposed condition language for each of those. The last item is regarding the floodplain elevation, the study for which is still underway. This is something the board should get eyes on before shovels go in the ground. The board should be safe to condition that if they so choose. Mr. Dias has provided some language for a condition that keeps both sides of this protected. The language suggested states: **Prior to the start of construction the Applicant shall submit a complete study to confirm the floodplain elevation that currently exists on the site. The Applicant shall also submit a summary of any modifications to the site design necessary to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations related to the established floodplain elevation. Any site design modifications required shall be presented to the Planning Board and the Planning Board shall make a determination regarding whether or not the modifications constitute a minor or major modification.** That first section makes sure that they see it and whatever the changes may or may not be, the board gets to get eyes on it. So, it's not necessarily at a staff level – it comes back before this body.

To continue: **No work shall commence on the site until the floodplain study is reviewed and approved by the town or its designee. If site design revisions are required, no work shall commence on site until a modification is approved by the Planning Board as deemed appropriate. In the event that the town and Applicant team are in disagreement on whether any modification is required, the Planning Board shall make the final determination after hearing appropriate testimony.** Mr. Dias states they make sure the Planning Board sees it, approves it, and if there is disagreement the Planning Board is the tie breaker.

Other than that, Mr. Dias feels the Applicant has addressed everything from a stormwater perspective, and he thinks the Applicant has done a very good job with it.

Chairwoman Kroha confirms there are no further comments from Planning Board members. Chair Kroha mentions to Attorney Marinelli that she doesn't think the board ever saw the change related to the playground area, and she asks for something in more detail regarding the playground. Attorney Marinelli states we certainly can address that with a condition stating there will be a public playground in the vicinity of the Riverwalk. Attorney Marinelli advises that they did identify in one of the prior slides various other areas that were public amenities. Chairwoman Kroha asks about public bathrooms. Mr. Huntoon states they could not get a restroom down the street. He suggests the leasing office (in Building 1A) is a publicly accessible space and could be accessed during business hours. Chairwoman Kroha asks if there is a utility question regarding the public bathrooms or a cost question – Mr. Huntoon putting it at Plain Street would be challenging because of the utility lines that would need to be run, and that would be prohibitive. Mr. Huntoon states doing something in Building 1A would not be prohibitive, and if it is important, they could figure out how to do it.

Member Kent asks a question about the financing for Phase 1 and Phase 2. Is Phase 2 financing being arranged? Mr. Huntoon states the expectation is there will be an investor that does both phases of development. They will need a different bank loan for the debt portion of each of the projects. It is too early to go out and start looking for a bank loan for the second phase. They have talked to a number of really large institutional lenders about this project, and they have significant interest from some Boston based firms and some New York based firms. Investors like the location. There is a lot of demand for this product at this location. Mr. Huntoon states they feel really confident that the debt portions will come together relatively quickly.

There are no further comments from Board Members.

Chairwoman Kroha one thing we can think about as a board is that we can give direction to staff to start drafting a decision but also think about what concerns are out there. It is an as of right development, but we have the ability to condition to make sure that it is safe and meets a different criteria. She asks if there are any comments from the public.

Matthew Sisk, 9 Canavan Drive, is a big supporter of this project. He is one of the town's Herring Wardens, and he is happy to have some eyes on the site on a regular basis. His question is about the bridge. Do the bridge abutments or supports enter the river at any point and how close are they to the riverbank.

Nick Dellacava with Allen & Majors, the site's civil engineer, states the abutments do not encroach on the river itself or the riverbank. The flood study will determine where the new floodway exists. Once the flood study is concluded, they will need to review that. Chairwoman Kroha clarifies that there may be a chance that they will have to move depending on the outcome of the flood study. Mr. Dellacava states potentially and maybe just a little bit wider, but they don't expect the horizontal location of the bridge to move.

Chairwoman Kroha asks when the flood study is coming back. Mr. Dellacava is anticipating it in 4-6 weeks. Director Matchak advises that there were rocks that needed to be cleared out, which occurred in December. After that a survey was done about two weeks ago. From that point on, it is 4-6 weeks. The survey was done, which leads to the study, which is being conducted by TCR with SLR to do the floodway study. Emily White with TCR explains that TCR was onsite on December 22nd to gather the data. The survey was finalized last Tuesday (January 6, 2026). They have finished some of their preliminary modeling, but they have to match the FEMA flood panel for this area with the other panels adjacent to it. They are running into some issues because those panels are from the 1970's. They asked for five more days before they come up with the final base flood elevation and four more weeks to complete their final report. We are looking at the end of February for a fully complete report that has been reviewed.

Chairwoman Kroha asks if there is any other public comment.

Robert Toma, 105 Central Avenue, states the board has asked a lot of good questions and has every right to be skeptical. There are too many moving parts right now, and it is too early in the project. He asks that the Planning Board reserve the right to hold back anything that can't be protected by the MBTA Act. Mr. Toma states they are using that as a shield for everything they are doing. He feels that is convenient for the developer – they are a huge company with unlimited money. He states the board brought up an excellent point about fire concerns -- those buildings are landlocked and everything is contingent on the economy. Mr. Toma states the Planning Board members are asking the right questions. All their opinions are just their opinions. Mr. Toma asks the Planning Board to please be diligent. They are talking about one-time payments and then a black hole of unknown. Mr. Toma feels this has a long way to go. Mr. Toma is a concerned citizen, and he will be here every step of the way to make certain that the developer does everything you ask them to do. He states, "please be vigilant". Mr. Toma thanks the board.

Chairwoman Kroha asks if there is any further public comment – there are none.

Chairwoman is not opposed to drafting conditions, but she is not sure we would be in a position to vote on conditions at the next meeting. She also thinks we could continue to March, but she thinks we are at the point of having conditions and looking at what those conditions are. Member Kent would like to see draft conditions in February and have time to make adjustments for the March meeting. Member Connolly would like to see the conditions in February to give the board time to make any adjustments that they need. Director Matchak states staff is working diligently with the applicant to draft conditions. A full decision doesn't come together overnight. Staff are happy to continue working with town departments regarding mitigation. Director Matchak feels confident that at the next meeting staff can work together to have a draft decision with conditions that can be discussed. Director Matchak states we want to get this right, and he states the applicant has been a great partner. Chairwoman Kroha asks Attorney Marinelli if that seems like a reasonable plan. We can have discussions in February, and we are likely to go to March. Attorney Marinelli states absolutely -- all the comments from board members and staff have been reasonable. Attorney Marinelli states all of this has been data driven. We have never had a project in town that has had five peer reviews. Trammell Crow is number one in quality. Attorney Marinelli states timing is important, and we need to move forward. He knows the board will do the right thing with reasonable conditions that are allowed under Site Plan Review. TCR is the largest private developer in the country. This proposal is a Use by Right. This zoning was adopted by Town Council in December 2023. The Proposal was filed on June 6th. Attorney Marinelli thinks now it's time to close the public hearing and move to draft conditions.

Chairwoman Kroha is not ready to close the public hearing with additional information coming in over the next couple of weeks, but she is in a position to ask staff to draft conditions that we can talk about in February, but to keep the hearing open so we can get additional information to come in.

Chairwoman Kroha is looking for a Motion to continue the public hearing.

Member Kane **MOTIONS** to continue this hearing until February 10, 2026, with draft conditions; seconded by Member Kent; voted 5:0:0.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Administrative Matters – Approval of Meeting Minutes – December 9, 2025

8:56 PM – Four Planning Board Members are present.

Director Matchak mentions that we did not approve the meeting minutes from December 9, 2025, because neither Member Mikami nor Member Connolly were present at that meeting. Now that Chairwoman Kroha is present, there are enough members here to vote on the approval of the meeting minutes from the December 9th meeting.

Member Kent **MOTIONS** to approve December 9, 2025, Meeting Minutes; seconded by Member Kane; voted 3:0:2 (Members Mikami and Connolly abstain as they were not present at the December 9th meeting).

Member Connolly **MOTIONS to adjourn** the meeting; seconded by Member Kane; voted 5:0:0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:57 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Louise Quinlan,
Planning/Community Development