

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON VILLAGE CENTER PROPOSAL  
April 23, 2018 at 7 pm in Ramsdell Room at library

The Planning Board is hosting a final public hearing to share the final draft proposal for the West Pelham Village Center proposal that will be brought to town meeting on May 12, 2018.

PLEASE TRY TO COME TO HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ANSWERED BEFORE TOWN MEETING.

Below is a summary of the proposal:

**Intent.** The intent of the Village Center Districts is to foster well-planned business and residential development in a compact section of West Pelham. The area designated for the Village Center will include three Districts in order to create a town center that is in keeping with the character of traditional New England villages and the stated objectives of Pelham residents to maintain the town's rural character while providing opportunities for development to expand the town's economic and residential diversity and boost its vitality.

The Planning Board envisions development within the Village Center Districts that will provide multiple commercial, civic, residential uses and public open space within easy, safe walking distance of each other. Some uses will be by right, but most changes will require site plan review by the Planning Board with public input to ensure that streets are safe for traffic and pedestrians, the visual impacts of cars is minimized, and that the architecture and landscaping is well designed. The hope is to create public spaces and greater integration of mixed uses including home occupations, other businesses such as cafes and restaurants and affordable housing in a walkable distance from each other.

Commercial and institutional development in Pelham is directed to these Village Center districts so that environmental and natural resources are protected and preserved elsewhere in the Town. The Village Center will be a place where residents can gather, work, shop, entertain, and live.

The proposed plan for the West Pelham Village Center divides the area into three neighborhoods.

**Village Center Mixed Use.** The heart of the village center, this neighborhood includes parcels that are a short walk from the Library and the Elementary School in an area with existing sewer capacity. In this neighborhood, small businesses and a greater diversity of housing would be allowed with standards to ensure high quality design consistent with the character of a traditional New England village. Small village lots (*1/4acre, 80 ft of frontage*) will enable limited infill development.

**Village Center Neighborhood.** This district includes parcels on Amherst Road, South Valley Road, Jones Road and Cadwell Street within walking distance of the

Library and School. Sewer does not currently serve all of them. Proposed lot size is *3/4 acre with 125' of frontage*. This lot size requires innovative septic design or a sewer extension. Home occupations, some commercial development and greater diversity of housing would be allowed in this area with detailed standards to ensure high quality design.

**Village Center Rural Edge.** These parcels on the south side of Jones Road and north side of Amherst Road are either adjacent to large forested areas or areas regulated by the Endangered Species Program. Some are served by sewer; some are not. The proposed default lot size in this area is *2 acres with 125' of frontage*. However, Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) (clustering) is the preferred development approach for this area.

**Other changes to the town's zoning by law will:**

- Renumber and better organize the entire zoning document
- Allow Open Space Design in the Village Center area for cluster housing
- Allow unattached and detached accessory apartments and multi-family houses in the Village Center area with Special Permit review.
- Allow two family (but not multi-family) units in the rest of town with Special Permit review
- Provide detailed criteria for site plan review in the Village Center and additional standards for some uses to ensure that all elements of the design meet aesthetic and community goals for maintaining town character and that neighbors and citizens have the opportunity to be heard when proposals are submitted.
- Strengthen requirements for drainage impacts in the existing Water Supply Protection District and for common driveways.

**Next Steps**

Following adoption of Village Center Zoning, the Planning Board will take up Storm water management, which is particularly important in the Village Center, but which is also needed in the rest of the town to meet environmental quality standards (maintaining clean water, erosion control, flooding prevention, etc.)

The Board has also obtained a grant for assistance from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission in developing a Village Center Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan which will include suggestions for traffic calming and create a vision for build-out of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and trails in the area. It will identify opportunities for implementation of the plan via private development and public investment, including possible funding sources.

The town will explore funding for sewer extension into the designated area. USDA Rural Town grants, MassWorks and other options. Work with the Town of Amherst re: the extension and costs.