

BROCKTON PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
Tuesday, January 6th, 2026 - 6:00 PM

Chair Toni Goncalves opened up the meeting with a Roll Call...

Members present are

- Toni Goncalves - Planning Board Chair
- Iolando Spinola - Planning Board Vice-Chair
- Marty Crowell - Planning Board Member
- Matthew Gallagher - Planning Board Member
- James Sweeney - Planning Board Member
- Evan Sears - Planner II
- Brendan Weeks - Deputy Fire Chief
- Isaiah Thelwell - Administrative Assistant

Review and Acceptance of Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes of the last Planning Board meeting that took place on **11-05-25**

A motion to accept was properly made by James Sweeney, seconded by Matthew Gallagher. The motion was unanimously approved (5-0).

Surety Release Request

Braemoor Estates

The board reviewed a request related to the Braemoor Estates subdivision, which had originally been approved for 12 lots. Sears explained that work on the subdivision was underway and that the applicant was requesting the release of five of the twelve lots. He noted that letters had been received from the project's engineering firm and from DPW confirming the work completed to date and verifying that the necessary requirements had been satisfied. Based on this information, Sears indicated that he saw no issues with releasing Lots 1 through 5.

A motion was made (Gallagher) and seconded (Sweeney) to approve the release of Lots 1 through 5 of the Braemoore Extension subdivision. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Mia Meadows

The board reviewed a request related to the Mia Meadows subdivision off North Quincy Street. Planner Sears explained that the project was nearing completion and reminded the board that several months earlier the surety had been converted to a cash surety, at which time the remaining lots were released. He noted that the board was currently holding approximately

\$250,000 in surety and that the developer had completed most of the required work, with only some curbing and sidewalk installation remaining. Sears stated that DPW had inspected the site and confirmed that the work completed to date was satisfactory. The applicant requested the release of \$162,550, with the board retaining the remaining \$83,000 to cover the outstanding work, which Sears indicated should be sufficient.

A motion was made (Sweeney) and seconded (Gallagher) to release \$162,550 in surety for the Mia Meadows subdivision and to retain \$83,000 for the remaining work. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Release of Surety

Eldon Keith Field

The Board took up an Approval Not Required (ANR) request related to Eldon Keith Field, a parcel associated with the Boys and Girls Club property. Sears explained that the applicant had submitted the plan as an ANR, asserting that Planning Board approval was not required, but staff review concluded otherwise. Sears stated that the plan, as drafted, depicted the division of one parcel into two lots, with one resulting lot lacking the required 100 feet of frontage in the R-3 zoning district, thereby meeting the legal definition of a subdivision under M.G.L. c. 41. He noted that while the issue could be easily corrected through revised labeling and notes clarifying that the smaller parcel was not a buildable lot and would be combined with the existing Boys and Girls Club property, the applicant had failed to respond to both phone and email communications outlining those deficiencies. Board members discussed concerns about delay, the importance of the Boys and Girls Club project, and the limited discretion available to the board, with Sears emphasizing that the board was required to make a legal determination within statutory timeframes and that a finding of subdivision status was not a denial, but rather a procedural determination.

A motion was made (Crowell) and seconded (Spinola) to determine that the plan constitutes a subdivision and therefore does not qualify as an ANR. The motion passed by a unanimous roll-call vote.

1. Site Plan Review

Property: 985 Belmont Street

Parcel ID#: 009-187

Applicant: Washville Carwash

Representative: J.K Holmgren Engineering

The board reviewed a site plan application for 985 Belmont Street, presented by Scott Faria of J.K Holmgren Engineering, for the redevelopment of the former Avon Auto Brokers site into a tunnel-style car wash. Faria described the proposed layout, including vehicle access from

Coolidge Street, a tunnel wash oriented toward Belmont Street, vacuum areas, and circulation designed to return vehicles to Coolidge Street, with the Belmont Street connection limited to emergency exit only and signed as right-turn only. He noted that the project had undergone two technical review meetings, addressed minor landscaping comments, and complied with previously agreed-upon ZBA conditions, including hours of operation from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., seven days a week, and the installation of gates at site entrances. Faria also confirmed that the existing detention pond would remain, new drainage improvements would be installed, and the project had received an Order of Conditions from the Conservation Commission following peer review.

A motion was made (Sweeney) and seconded (Gallagher) to approve the site plan with standard conditions and the added requirement of three red maple trees as discussed. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

2. Site Plan Review

Property: 651 Belmont Street

Parcel ID#: 018-161

Applicant: Brikers Family Limited Trust

Representative: J.K Holmgren Engineering

The board reviewed a site plan application for 651 Belmont Street, located within the Shaw's Plaza, presented by Scott Faria of J.K Holmgren Engineering, for the construction of a new Chipotle restaurant with a "ChipotLane" drive-up pickup window for mobile orders. Faria explained that the long-discussed proposal was intended to improve circulation within the existing plaza, which currently lacks defined traffic patterns, by introducing landscaped islands, curbing, and a reconfigured internal drive aisle to better direct vehicles entering from Belmont Street. He noted that the plan would also introduce modern stormwater management infrastructure in an area of the plaza that currently lacks compliant drainage, allowing runoff to be treated and recharged into the groundwater rather than sheet-flowing across the parking lot. In response to prior technical review comments, the applicant proposed extensive landscaping throughout the site and a three-foot wrought-iron fence along the Belmont Street frontage to discourage pedestrians from cutting through landscaped areas and to keep foot traffic on designated sidewalks.

Board members generally expressed support for the project, citing improvements to traffic organization and site aesthetics, though several issues were discussed in detail. Sweeney raised concerns about headlights from vehicles in the pickup lane facing toward Belmont Street traffic and the overall lack of green space in the front portion of the large parking lot. Faria explained that low-lying shrubs and fencing were proposed in that area, but acknowledged that taller screening was limited due to tenant visibility requirements and zoning-mandated parking counts, which required the plaza to retain all existing spaces.

The board also discussed the asymmetry of development along the Belmont Street frontage and the difficulty of adding additional landscaped islands without triggering zoning noncompliance. Spinola raised pedestrian safety concerns, particularly for students traveling between Brockton High School, Chipotle, and Shaw's, and questioned whether sidewalks and crossings adequately accommodated pedestrian movement. Faria explained that sidewalk connections and a new crosswalk had been coordinated with the Planning Department, and further agreed that an additional internal crosswalk within the plaza could be added on private property to improve pedestrian visibility and safety.

A motion was made (Gallagher) and seconded (Crowell) to approve the site plan with standard conditions, including the added condition that an internal crosswalk be installed as discussed to improve pedestrian circulation within the plaza. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

3. ANR Discussion

The board engaged in a detailed discussion regarding the statutory 21-day review period for Approval Not Required plans and the potential risks created by the board's once-a-month meeting schedule. Sears explained that under subdivision rules and regulations, the board may delegate ANR review authority to Planning Department staff, allowing plans to be reviewed and endorsed administratively rather than waiting for a board meeting. He noted that state law requires the board to act on ANR submissions within 21 days of proper filing, or they may be constructively approved, and that the current meeting schedule creates a vulnerability where applicants could submit plans immediately after a meeting and receive automatic approval before the next meeting. Sears emphasized that administrative review could prevent this issue by allowing staff to quickly identify deficiencies and require corrections without delay, while still preserving the board's authority if an applicant disputes a staff determination.

Board members raised concerns about oversight and the separation of roles between the board and staff. Sweeney questioned whether allowing staff to make ANR determinations would diminish the board's role and asked whether the board could impose submission timing requirements tied to the meeting schedule. Sears responded that most submission procedures are governed by state law, limiting the board's ability to impose such restrictions, and explained that proper filing requires formal submission through the City Clerk. Gallagher asked how frequently constructive approvals might occur without board review, and Sears suggested it could happen more often than realized. Chair Goncalves asked how other municipalities handle the 21-day requirement, and Sears noted that many boards meet twice per month, while Brockton had previously relied on waivers, a practice the Law Department has advised against.

Following further discussion, the board expressed a preference to retain direct board review of ANR plans while exploring procedural changes to address the 21-day issue. Chair Goncalves requested that Sears consult with legal counsel and research practices in other municipalities, particularly regarding Sweeney's suggestion about submission timing. Sears agreed to do so and clarified that no vote was required, as the discussion was informational only.

A motion was made (Gallagher) and seconded (Crowell) to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed by unanimous vote.