

# MINUTES OF TOWN OF BERKLEY SELECTMEN'S MEETING OF 08/07/2025

SELECTMEN IN ATTENDANCE: Tabitha K. McCrohan, Clerk, Jennifer Vincent, Chair

TOPIC		ACTION
	Meeting Called to Order at 5:30PM in the Council on Aging Room via ZOOM	
<b>Personnel:</b>	<p>Board to interview Sandra Cameron as a finalist for the Principal Assessor position. The meeting began with formalities, including the Pledge of Allegiance, and proceeded to a structured interview where Sandra discussed her background, experience, and approach to assessment work. She highlighted her certification, collaborative projects, and her interest in working for the town. The board asked about her research on Berkley, her problem-solving skills, and her motivation for applying. Sandra expressed enthusiasm for the role and described her comprehensive experience in assessment offices, including handling exemptions, abatements, and preparing board meeting materials.</p> <p>Following the interview, the board discussed the process for selecting and appointing the preferred candidate. There was debate about whether deliberations and the final decision should occur publicly or in executive session, referencing past practices for similar appointments. The board considered authorizing the Town Administrator to negotiate with the chosen candidate and scheduling a public meeting for the formal appointment. Action items were established: the Board of Selectmen will decide on the preferred candidate and authorize negotiations, while the Town Manager will schedule the appointment meeting and prepare an employment agreement.</p> <p>Board voted to go into recess at 5:50 pm. returning 6:30 pm.</p>	<p><b>Information only,</b> no votes taken</p> <p><b>Motion to recess:</b> JV moved: TM second. Motion approved</p>
<b>New Business:</b>	<p>Board to hold a joint meeting with the Berkley Planning Board and representatives from Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) to review and discuss potential site selections regarding compliance with the MBTA Communities Law. Discussion will include suitability analysis, next steps for zoning, and preparation for upcoming Town Meeting consideration; review of matter; votes may be taken.</p> <p>The Board of Selectmen and Planning Board reconvened to review the preliminary parcel analysis conducted by SRPEDD (Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District). Five separate properties were evaluated for compliance with the MBTA Communities Act requirements, with most parcels being familiar to attendees from previous meetings. The evaluation utilized a comprehensive siting tool that incorporates six data groups: natural spaces, climate resilience, water resources, key infrastructure, quality of life and amenities.</p> <p>The siting tool employs a zero to 100 scoring scale to assess parcel suitability, with areas scoring 0-20 classified as "most unsuitable," 20-40 as "unsuitable," and 80-100 as "most suitable." The methodology examines factors such as proximity to protected open space, BioMap core habitats, endangered species priority areas, aquifer protection zones, wetlands, key infrastructure including highway interchanges, and existing municipal facilities. Each data category can be analyzed individually through the town analysis page, allowing for targeted evaluation of specific suitability factors.</p> <p>Two sites emerged as acceptable for MBTA Communities Act zoning compliance: 76 County Street and the North Main Street parcels (commonly referred to as the "cranberry box" or "quadplexes"). The compliance evaluation required specific zoning assumptions including allowance for three, four, and five-plus family dwellings, a 40,000 square foot</p>	

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minimum lot size, two-story maximum building height, 60% maximum lot coverage, 25% open space requirements, and standard setback provisions of 15 feet front yard and 20 feet side and rear yards.

The 76 County Street site, comprising 10.08 acres, demonstrated strong compliance potential with a calculated gross density of 22.2 units per acre and unit capacity of 161 units, exceeding both the required 15 units per acre minimum and Berkeley's 118-unit capacity requirement. The North Main Street parcels also showed viability but required careful consideration of existing structures and potential expansion possibilities. Three additional sites—Bryant Street, Grove and Mill Street—came close to meeting requirements but fell short of the 15 units per acre threshold, though they satisfied unit capacity requirements and could potentially be made viable through density adjustments or parcel expansion.

A significant discussion emerged regarding the overlap between the proposed MBTA Communities zoning and the existing Special Business Overlay District, which serves as Berkeley's designated adult entertainment zone. The 76 County Street site falls within this overlay district, prompting concerns about maintaining compliance with state requirements for adult entertainment zoning. Staff clarified that the town retains additional parcels within the Special Business district across the street, ensuring continued compliance with adult entertainment zoning requirements even if one parcel is developed for housing.

Following thorough discussion of site merits and constraints, the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen reached consensus on the 76 County Street location. Board members cited its strategic positioning away from residential neighborhoods, adequate size for compliance, and minimal traffic impact as key factors in the decision. A formal motion was made to recommend 76 County Street to the Select Board as the designated site for the MBTA Communities Act zoning district. The **motion was seconded and approved unanimously**, setting the stage for SRPEDD to proceed with drafting the necessary zoning bylaw language and dimensional standards for the selected parcel.

**Mike Leger moved; Greg Unger 2<sup>nd</sup>; motion to recommend approved**

Following the MBTA Communities Act site selection, the Planning Board transitioned to discussing a proposed expansion of the General Business District. The conversation focused on a multi-parcel area that would involve rezoning several lots from residential to commercial use. Board members presented a conceptual plan showing how the expansion would create a buffer between existing residential neighborhoods and potential commercial development.

The discussion centered on a strategic approach to rezone multiple parcels, with three lots designated for residential use and one lot designated for commercial development. This configuration was designed to protect existing residential properties from direct commercial adjacency while providing commercial access from the main roadway. The proposed commercial parcel would serve as the primary entry point for business development, with residential parcels providing a transitional buffer to the established neighborhood.

Board members clarified that the proposed General Business zoning would not permit heavy industrial uses, chemical processing, or asphalt mixing operations. The zoning would focus on lighter commercial uses such as retail, office space, and service businesses. Staff noted that many potentially problematic uses would require special permits rather than being allowed by right, providing additional oversight opportunities.

The Board recognized the need for continued community outreach and education about the proposed zoning changes. Members discussed developing informational materials and having multiple speakers present the proposal at future town meetings to address community concerns and misconceptions. The discussion concluded with plans to refine the zoning boundaries and work with town counsel to ensure precise legal descriptions of the affected parcels.

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<b>Adjournment</b>	Board adjourned at 7:30PM  *Next Scheduled Meeting is Monday, August 11th, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.*	<b>Motion to adjourn:</b> JV moved: TM second. Motion approved
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Tabitha K. McCrohan, Clerk  
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Jennifer Vincent, Chairwoman  
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Matthew Chabot, Town Administrator