

CITY OF METHUEN
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Wednesday, January 14, 2026 at 6:30 P.M.
VIA ZOOM WEB CONFERENCE

MINUTES

1. Call to Order of Regular Meeting.

Chairman Stephen DeFeo called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

2. Roll Call.

Members in Attendance

Stephen DeFeo, Chairman	Present
Michael Comei, Vice Chair	Present
Neal Hunter, Secretary	Present
William Forbes, member	Present
Ronald Hatem, member	Present
Shadi Kassis, member	Absent
Heather Plunkett, member	Present

Others in Attendance

Kathleen Colwell, Director of Planning
Petitioners and Representatives of Petitioners

Chairman Stephen DeFeo read the following notice into the record:

Pursuant to Chapter 186 of the General Laws, An Act Relative to Extending Certain State of Emergency Accommodations, this meeting/public hearing will be conducted via remote means. For this meeting, members of the public who wish to watch the meeting may do so on their televisions by turning to Comcast Xfinity Channel 8 or Verizon FiOS Channel 32 or view on a computer or cell phone via LIVE Stream on <https://www.methuentv.org/methuen-government-tv-live-stream/> No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, and public participation in any public hearing conducted during this meeting shall be by remote means only. If the public would like to participate in the public hearing, please email your questions/comments by noon on the meeting day to kbcowell@ci.methuen.ma.us. The questions/comments will be read during the proceedings and responded to accordingly. Members of the public who wish to speak during the public hearing can register here: <https://www.methuentv.org/govmeet/> by noon on the meeting day.

3. Acceptance of Minutes.

- a. July 29, 2025
- b. October 8, 2025
- c. November 12, 2025
- d. December 10, 2025

Chairman Stephen DeFeo entertained a motion to table agenda item 3. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Michael Comei so moved.

SECOND: William Forbes

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Roll Call

Stephen DeFeo, Chairman	Yes
Michael Comei, Vice Chair	Yes
Neal Hunter, Secretary	Yes
William Forbes, member	Yes
Ronald Hatem, member	Yes
Shadi Kassis, member	Absent
Heather Plunkett, member	Yes

4. **Consent Agenda.**

For the record there was nothing on the Consent Agenda.

5. **Zoning Issues.**

For the record there were no Zoning Issues.

6. **Form A Plans.**

For the record there were no Form A Plans.

7. **Public Hearings:**

- a. 143 Pleasant Valley Street (Special Permit for a hotel)

Attorney Anthony Copani, representative of the applicant, gave a brief presentation of the project. The developer is looking to build a 122 room hotel at 143 Pleasant Valley Street, which is located in an IL district. This hotel is designed to serve traditional short term travelers, and also long term guests, which would include traveling nurses, corporate contractors and emergency utility workers.

Attorney Copani stated that this Board's best assurance that this hotel will be a benefit to the City and operated in a first class manor is the background, experience and reputation of the applicant. Park Silver Development, the applicant, has built extended stay hotels across the country under the name Wood Spring Suites. Park Silver is a wholly owned division of White Oak Enterprises. White Oak Enterprises is a 4th generation family business which was founded in 1951 and had a focus on developing homes, apartments, hotels and nursing homes and over the past 70 years they have been associated with some of the best known companies and brands including Choice Hotels International. If approved, Park Silver will operate the Methuen hotel as a franchise of Choice Hotels

Approved by the Community Development Board 08/12/2026
International, which controls the Wood Spring Suites brand. Woods Spring Suites was recently named the number one value extended stay brand in the North America guest satisfaction index study for the 4th year in a row.

The site is an 11 acre parcel bordered by Pleasant Valley Street to the north, Interstate 495 to the south and Route 213 to the southeast. These highways serve as natural dividers and add a degree of uniqueness to this parcel of land. This project meets or exceeds all of the dimensional requirements for this zone. The floor plan shows 122 rooms with 71 queen suites, 40 double queen suites and 11 deluxe queen suites. Seven of these will be handicapped accessible. They are all configured as standard hotel rooms with an added kitchenette but there will not be a separate seating area. The first floor features a fitness room, vending area, guest laundry room and lobby. The hotel will be managed by the Hotel Management Corporation, which manages other properties owned by Park Silver. Hotel Management Corporation enjoys an excellent reputation and will employ 6 full time employees and two part time housekeepers, which will offer weekly maid services for extended guests. Rates will be based on the length of stay, time of booking and local demand.

Attorney Copani explained how this project meets the Special Permit criterion. The supplemental response for the application for a Special Permit is attached to the minutes of record.

- a. Right now, Methuen doesn't have lodging options that meet the needs of travelers. Those guests end up staying in neighboring towns. This hotel would keep that activity and revenue in Methuen.
- b. A comprehensive traffic study has been submitted to address trip generation, access and safety. He noted that generally, hotels generate less traffic than many of the businesses which are allowed by right in this zoning district. The site's proximity to several highways allows the traffic to move efficiently without burdening local roads.
- c. The site is already serviced by all public utilities that have sufficient capacity to support this hotel. Parking complies with the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. Storm water will be handled in full compliance with Mass DEP storm water standards. Police, Fire and EMS impacts are modest, with no significant impact.
- d. The site is in the IL district and is surrounded in part by commercial, industrial and retail uses. A hotel is consistent with this setting, especially with its proximity to The Loop, and it will improve the aesthetics of this underutilized site.
- e. Environmental impacts are minimal and will be addressed with the Landscaping Plan, Lighting Plan and storm water design.
- f. This project will have a net positive fiscal impact. It will increase property tax revenues, and add room occupancy tax revenue, as well as create some permanent jobs and some temporary construction jobs and support existing retail and restaurant businesses
- g. This project will help to balance the commercial and residential tax mix by strengthening economic development, leveraging Methuen's demographics and regional accessibility, and complementing existing commercial activity, while providing high quality accommodations for visitors and travelers.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The site is a triangular site that is bounded by Pleasant Valley Street to the north, Route 495 to the southeast and Route 213 to the southwest. It is in the Industrial Limited (IL) zoning district. Across the street is the Summit Place apartment buildings, Old Ferry Road and various contractors' yards to the north as well. The site is encumbered by some wetlands on the site. Baremeadow Brook runs through the site as well as the accompanying bordering vegetated wetlands and flood plains. Some site work was done in 2016 through 2017 including rough grading of the site, installation of various utilities and stormwater catch basins, an infiltration system and retaining walls throughout the site, contemplating a larger commercial project that never came to fruition.

PROPOSED PROJECT

The site is an 11 acres site with 2 ½ - 2 ¾ acres that is developable with the wetland setbacks. The building will be located in the northwest corner of the site. The building is a 122 unit hotel with access off Pleasant Valley Street and a large retaining wall running along Pleasant Valley Street. The access off of Pleasant Valley Street will have 24' wide drive aisles with two way access around the site. There are 129 parking spaces including six handicapped accessible parking spaces located nearest the entrance. There is a dumpster pad, a loading area and 3 areas reserved for snow storage. The Auto Turn Swept simulation was provided to show a Fire truck coming from east or west and navigating around the site and exiting the site in both directions.

GRADING AND DRAINAGE

To the extent possible, they will be utilizing the drainage structures that were previously installed. The catch basins, the detention ponds and the retaining walls will all be maintained and used as part of their design. The stormwater basin was constructed in 2016 or 2017. It was designed in conformance with the latest Mass Stormwater Standards, and it was designed for a much larger development with more pavement, a larger building, and much more impervious area, and for much more capacity than they will be sending to it.

LANDSCAPING

The landscaping plan includes a robust plan of 19 new trees and 386 new shrubs located throughout the site.

UTILITIES

Public water and gas will be brought into the site from Pleasant Valley Street. Public sewer will be gravity fed and brought into the site and will exit the building and then gravity fed into a sewer manhole. There will not be any pump stations.

Mr. Forbes asked why, if there are 7 ADA accessible rooms, that there aren't 7 ADA accessible parking spaces.

Mr. Griecci responded that the number of ADA parking spaces is dictated by the Accessibility Code and that was met but Silver Park may have a different internal requirement than that.

Ms. Plunkett asked what the criteria was used to determine that this would be a successful location for this hotel, that it would be utilized and it would bring revenue to the city.

Greg Hefflin, VP with Park Silver Development explained that they select sites on multiple areas of criteria but they hone in on an market using three nationally based companies that furnish reports that identify demographic, highway traffic, businesses, local and outside the area that combined with the Highland Group study, which is rate and occupancy based, among other things, competitive hotels and the strength of the background market. They are confident that this hotel will be very successful. It has great market numbers and great infrastructure with The Loop, the highway network and background corporations.

She asked if the profits from this hotel would be going to a business in Maryland and not coming back into this Methuen.

Mr. Hefflin responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Hunter noted that pedestrian movement off the property isn't provided in the plan. The proximity of The Loop was listed as a positive criterion for location, but there is no consideration for pedestrian movement toward The Loop. There's no connection to the sidewalk across the street in front of the apartment buildings. He asked why that was not considered.

Dennis Griecci responded that there's not sufficient room on the southerly side of Pleasant Valley Street due to the guard rail, the retaining wall and the steep drop off from Pleasant Valley Street to the site. He pointed out where the guard rail was right up against the pavement. He believes there is a paved sidewalk across the street in front of the Summit Place Apartments. He said that they could take a look at providing a connection and a crosswalk to that sidewalk.

Mr. Hunter stated there isn't a sidewalk across the street until the west side of the entrance to Summit Place. He said that the property should be working with the City on what the future plan is for sidewalks along Pleasant Valley Street. He mentioned TEC's comment that the bridge to the west of the property has the sidewalk on the north side, as is the sidewalk to the west of the Summit Place entrance.

Attorney Copani mentioned that the City's Master Plan mentioned that this particular area needs some off site and off road improvements.

Mr. Hunter also noted that the traffic report didn't take into consideration the impact of Old Ferry Road on the hotel driveway. He said that Old Ferry Road has some traffic now and that will only increase when the warehouse at the top of the hill is occupied. He noted that the TEC review indicated that sight lines were something that needed to be looked at.

Attorney Copani commented that it would be nice to have sidewalks go all the way to The Loop but it's a long walk and he believes most people would be driving from the hotel to The Loop

Heather Plunkett asked if a shuttle service from the hotel to restaurants or retail locations has ever been considered at any of their other locations.

Mr. Hefflin responded that they don't offer that at their properties. A shuttle service to one or two retail destinations is not feasible for them.

Mr. Hunter noted that truck turning template shows that a fire truck would be driving over one of the islands.

Mr. Griecci said that there looks like there's plenty of room and he will redo the plan.

Mr. Hatem asked how many employees they will hire.

Mr. Hefflin responded that they would staff 6 full time employees; a general manager, an assistant manager, a building engineer and housekeeping staff.

Mr. Forbes asked if there was a second egress.

Chairman DeFeo noted that the site is surrounded by wetlands and there isn't any other place for an egress.

Kathleen Colwell noted that we received a letter from TEC, our peer review engineers, with several items and the applicant is working through a response. She noted that most of the comments are minor. The staff had discussed pedestrian connections both internally and externally. The staff talked about providing a sidewalk on the southern side of Pleasant Valley Street; however, the guard rail would prohibit that, but potentially there could be a connection to the sidewalk across the street. That will be an ongoing conversation with the applicant.

Mr. Hunter said that he wanted to make sure that the plans for this project are consistent with the City's longer term plans for this roadway because we know that this section of Pleasant Valley Street is in need of improvement all the way down to the lights.

Kathleen Colwell said that she would contact DPW to see what their plans are. TEC noted in their memo that they were working with DPW to replace the culvert under Pleasant Valley Street east of Chippy Lane. She knows that TEC is also looking at this stretch of Pleasant Valley Street.

Heather Plunkett asked if this was a pet friendly hotel and would there be a safe area for people to walk their dogs.

Mr. Hefflin answered that they do allow dogs and that there is a pad to the east of the building that they would not develop and would be lawn area there as well as walkability around the site.

Mr. Hunter noted the vinyl fence between the road and the property and mentioned that it limited visibility for the first floor occupants and also that vinyl fences are susceptible to damage in the cold weather, as the Board has discussed in their review of other projects.

Mr. Griecci agreed to take a look to see if the fence was necessary and take that into consideration.

Chairman DeFeo opened the floor for public comment.

For the record nobody spoke in favor or in opposition.

For the record, Kathleen Colwell stated that she did not receive any correspondence regarding this project.

Chairman DeFeo asked for the height of the hotel.

Mr. Griecci said that at its highest point it is 45 feet, which meets zoning.

Kathleen Colwell informed the Board that she didn't have any correspondence from the Fire Department, but they were at staff meetings and didn't have any issues with the project. She will contact them to make sure they look at the truck turning radius and provide the Board with a written letter.

Chairman DeFeo entertained a motion to table this to the next meeting.

MOTION: Michael Comei so moved.

SECOND: Heather Plunkett

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Roll Call

Stephen DeFeo, Chairman	Yes
Michael Comei, Vice Chair	Yes
Neal Hunter, Secretary	Yes
William Forbes, member	Yes
Ronald Hatem, member	Yes
Shadi Kassis, member	Absent
Heather Plunkett, member	Yes

8. New Business.

- a. Set Public Hearing Date:
 - i. 262 Howe Street – amend zoning district to allow an assisted living facility

Chairman DeFeo stated that this request was out of order because it was in an incorrect format and there was a concern that it would be considered spot zoning. Based on those issues, there will be no further action taken by either the City Council or the Community Development Board.

- b. Cooper Lane – street acceptance

Kathleen Colwell explained that this was a subdivision that was approved several years ago and now the developer has requested the City Council to accept the roadway. The Community Development Board's role is to make a report to the City Council regarding street acceptance. Typically, the Board would look to make sure that all of the conditions of approval were met and to make sure that the DPW has inspected the street and would recommend acceptance. We also work with the City Solicitor's office to make sure the deeds and easements are in order. She stated that she doesn't have anything from DPW in writing. They are still working through the plans and documents; however, she did have a conversation with Felix Garcia, the Deputy DPW Director, who had gone out in the field and didn't see any issues. She mentioned that the Board could send a report stating the city staff is continuing to look at the plans and documents.. The next step for the City Council is to schedule a public hearing. With our report, the process can move forward with the understanding that those items should be resolved before a final vote by the City Council. This Board is still holding bond money that will not be released until receipt of a written report from DPW.

Chairman DeFeo clarified for the Board that the road was built with the intention of it becoming a public roadway. The developer is responsible to plow and maintain the road and pick up trash until such time that the road is accepted. A homeowners' association was formed for the maintenance of the drainage structures that are not located in the right of way. Any structures in the right of way will be maintained by the City upon road acceptance.

TJ Melvin, engineer for the developer stated that he understands that there is a multitude of paperwork that needs to be reviewed and approved by a number of different departments. He asked that the Board move this forward to street acceptance by sending a report to the City Council that outlined the items that needed to be reviewed or obtained. He said that the road was completed and it has been reviewed in the field by the DPW. He also noted that the Community Development Board had previously voted to release the bond.

Mr. Hunter pointed out that we were approaching the date that the City Council could hold a public hearing without having a Community Development Board report in hand. If they reach that point and the Community Development Board has made a report flagging the outstanding items, at least they have the information in front of them letting them know that they should be looking for a report from the DPW before they accept the roadway.

For background, Kathleen Colwell explained that this project was constructively approved at a time when we did not have enough Board members to act on a project, which means that it was approved as submitted and some of the typical processes did not happen with this project. Ultimately, the developer came back to the Board, went through the public hearing process and accepted the conditions for approval, which he didn't have to do. In the end, the project was approved and constructed appropriately and per plan.

MOTION: Michael Comei made a motion to send forth a positive report regarding street acceptance of Cooper Lane highlighting that there are some outstanding documents still being processed.

SECOND: Heather Plunkett

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Roll Call

Stephen DeFeo, Chairman	Yes
Michael Comei, Vice Chair	Yes
Neal Hunter, Secretary	Yes
William Forbes, member	Yes
Ronald Hatem, member	Yes
Shadi Kassis, member	Absent
Heather Plunkett, member	Yes

c. Any other new business

Kathleen Colwell informed the Board that plans were delivered for 11 Cross Street and suggested that the Board set the public hearing for February 11th at 6:30 pm.

MOTION: Michael Comei moved to set the public hearing for February 11th at 6:30 pm.

SECOND: William Forbes

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Roll Call

Stephen DeFeo, Chairman	Yes
Michael Comei, Vice Chair	Yes
Neal Hunter, Secretary	Yes
William Forbes, member	Yes
Ronald Hatem, member	Yes
Shadi Kassis, member	Absent
Heather Plunkett, member	Yes

For the record there was no other new business.

9. **Old Business.**

a. Any other old business

For the record there was no old business.

10. **Correspondence.**

For the record there was no additional correspondence.

11. **Adjourn.**

There being no further business before the Board, Chairman Stephen DeFeo entertained a motion to adjourn.

MOTION: William Forbes so moved.

SECOND: Heather Plunkett

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Roll Call

Stephen DeFeo, Chairman	Yes
Michael Comei, Vice Chair	Yes
Neal Hunter, Secretary	Yes
William Forbes, member	Yes
Ronald Hatem, member	Yes
Shadi Kassis, member	Absent
Heather Plunkett, member	Yes

Chairman Stephen DeFeo adjourned the meeting at 7:59 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy P. Hudson
Temporary Community Development Confidential Secretary

*****NEXT REGULAR MEETING Wednesday February 11, 2026 *****

 Anyone needing an access accommodation to participate in City of Methuen programs or services, please contact Sandy Almonte, ADA/DEI Coordinator at 978-983-8580 or salmonte@ci.methuen.ma.us at least 2 weeks in advance, or 2 business days before any Board or Commission meeting. This notice is available in alternative formats upon request.