

CITY OF METHUEN
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Wednesday, May 13, 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	Absent
Neal Hunter, Secretary	Present
William Forbes, member	Present
Ronald Hatem, member	Present
Shadi Kassis, member	Present
Heather Plunkett, member	Present

Others in Attendance

Kathleen Colwell, Director of Planning
Amy Priante-Walkowicz, Community Development Confidential Secretary
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

- e. January 14, 2026
- f. February 11, 2026
- g. March 11, 2026

Chairman Stephen DeFeo entertained a motion to accept approve items a. through c.

MOTION: Neal Hunter so moved.

SECOND: Heather Plunkett

DISCUSSION: NONE

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Roll Call

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

Agenda items 3. d. through g. are not available.

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. **Continued Public Hearings:**

- a. 11 Cross Street- Cross Street Planned Residential Development District Special Permit and Site Plan Approval

Kathleen Colwell read into the record an email from the applicant's attorney, Mark Bobrowski, requesting a continuance to the June 10th meeting. She explained that the reason for the continuance is that at this point in the project the Conservation Commission is reviewing the plan and they need to determine where the wetlands are and where the applicable buffer zones are before the Community Development Board can take any further steps. That review is underway and we expect that by the June 10th meeting we will have received direction from the Conservation Commission.

Approved by the Community Development Board 6/10/2026
MOTION: Neal Hunter moved to continue this item to the June 10th meeting.

SECOND: Shadi Kassis

DISCUSSION: NONE

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Roll Call

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

8. **New Business.**

a. Set Public Hearing date:

Kathleen Colwell informed the Board that there were no new applications, but the City Council referred a rezoning petition to the Community Development Board to schedule a joint public hearing. The joint public hearing has been scheduled for June 10th at 6:30 pm in the Great Hall of the Searles Building. This is a request to rezone the rear portion of 0 Arcadia Street from residential to business.

b. Endorse Plans:

i. 47 Lowell Street – Historic Preservation Special Permit

Kathleen Colwell reminded the Board that this project was approved in July 2025. The applicant has been working on final plans and documents that this Board requires prior to endorsement of the plans.

- A note to be added to the Landscape Plan that no plantings are to be allowed in the grass swale or on top of the drainage infiltration field. That note has been added to the Landscape Plan.
- The applicant has also been working on their draft historic preservation restriction for the historic building on the site. That has been submitted and it is under review.
- A common driveway easement and plan must be submitted for review and approval by the solicitor. Those items have been submitted, and they are currently under review.

All of the required items have been submitted so she recommends that the Board vote to authorize the Chairman to endorse the plans on behalf of the Board.

MOTION: Neal Hunter moved to authorize the Chairman to endorse the plans.

SECOND: Ronald Hatem

DISCUSSION: Ron Hatem asked if the Landscape Plan has been changed in any way. He has spoken to a concerned abutter. She's concerned that nobody will take care of the arborvitaes. She said that they can plant them on the other side of the fence in her yard if they want and she will take care of them. He also noted that the plan shows those trees planted in a lower area that will not give her privacy.

Kathleen Colwell said that the plan was to plant them on the project's property. She suggested that we could talk with the applicant and maybe they would be willing to plant them on the abutter's property, but we don't typically approve plantings on somebody else's property. She added that it was something that could be adjusted in the field. She noted that they will be working on the historic home first and the duplex will come later but the Board can look at that issue when the time comes.

Chairman DeFeo said that in his estimation, if the neighbor and the developer come to an agreement and the number of plantings and type of plantings go across the line to the neighbor's property, it doesn't violate the spirit of what the Board was looking for but the Board can't direct them to plant something on somebody else's property.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Roll Call

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

c. Any other new business

Chairman DeFeo mentioned that there were difficult issues with the FY 2027 budget and asked Kathleen Colwell what might be the worst case scenario for the Board after July 1st.

Kathleen Colwell responded that the worst case scenario would be that she's not here or Amy Priante-Walkowicz is not here. She said that they have been told that there will be significant layoffs and furlough time so there will most likely be a shortened work week. Everything is up in the air right now and the City Council will be holding budget hearings in the next week. The Mayor has yet to submit his budget but that is forthcoming. At that time, we'll have a better idea about which positions will be eliminated. At this point it is all speculation.

For the record there is no additional new business.

9. **Old Business.**

a. Any other old business

For the record there isn't any old business.

10. **Correspondence.**

For the record there isn't any additional correspondence.

11. **Adjourn.**

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

MOTION: Heather Plunkett so moved.

SECOND: Ronald Hatem

VOTE: UNANIMOUS of the members present.

Roll Call

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

Chairman Stephen DeFeo adjourned the meeting at 6:50 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy P. Hudson
Temporary Community Development Confidential Secretary

*****NEXT REGULAR MEETING Wednesday June10, 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.