

John Donohue - Chair  
Tasha Buzzell - Vice-Chair  
Melinda Bernardo Cuerda -  
Secretary



Laura Wagner  
David Sequeira

Town of North Attleborough  
**CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE**  
43 South Washington Street, North Attleborough, MA 02760  
Phone: (508) 699-0100 ext. 2555

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Meeting called to order 6:38 PM

Members present: John Donohue (JD), Laura Wagner (LW), Melinda Bernardo Cuerda (MBC),  
David Sequeira (DS)

Members absent: Tasha Buzzell (TB)

3/27/2025 - Minutes

**I. Pledge Of Allegiance**

**II. Approval Of Minutes**

a. Approval of March 20, 2025 minutes

Motion by Wagner to approve 3/20/2025 minutes. Seconded by Sequeira

Approved (4-0)

**III. Community Announcements**

a. none

**IV. Resident And Community Comment**

a. Meeting for resident and community comment on charter

**V. Old Business**

**VI. New Business**

a. Gil Hilario, Town Planner

- b. Marie Clarner, Chair - Planning Board

## Interview with Gil Hilario (GH) - Town Planner, Marie Clarner (MC) - Chair of Planning Board, and Bill Blais (BB) - Vice Chair of Planning Board

### Background and Roles

1. **JD:** Asks for introduction and background
  1. **GH:** Started as Town Planner in August 2021
  2. **MC:** Involved in town business for 40 years; has served on Planning Board since 2016
  3. **BB:** Serving on the Planning Board since August 2019

### Responsibilities and Processes

1. **JD:** Asks about planning responsibilities
  1. **GH:** Describes overall planning board responsibilities -- enforcing zoning bylaws, making recommendations on proposed bylaws (as required by state law), updating master plan, and enforcing the subdivision control law.
  2. **MC:** Emphasizes importance of clarity in responsibilities ("who's on first"). Gives example of site plan reviews, which require multiple steps (e.g. circulation of plans to departments before public hearings). Notes view that some regulations are outdated and cumbersome. Indicates progress on mixed use bylaw
    1. **GH:** Gives example of responsibility for creation of zoning bylaws (e.g. Airbnb). Wanted to work on this but other work took priority.

### Affordable Housing and State Laws

1. **JD:** Asks about Planning Board authority regarding 40B and 40R projects.
  1. **BB:** Explains that 40R is change to local zoning bylaws, but doesn't override existing bylaws. Voluntary adoption by a municipality and the permit becomes by-right if criteria are met. 40B allows projects to override local zoning bylaws if they meet specific affordable housing thresholds. A town can challenge a 40B project if it meets "safe harbor" thresholds (e.g. 10% affordable housing)
    1. **GH:** Points out "reasonable progress" as another example of safe harbor
  2. **MC:** Points out that 40R provides town with more input (e.g. design standards) that aren't possible with 40B. Shares frustration about low attendance at public hearings for 40R district establishment

### Housing Plans and Zoning Impacts

1. **LW:** Asks why town's affordable housing level is low and asks about plan to reach

10%

1. **MC**: Notes awareness of %. Indicates that town's first housing plan was completed last year. Notes that historically zoning did not encourage smaller houses or building closer together. Says that the town is trying to take a more holistic approach to understand what makes it a more attractive to live (e.g. walkability)

2. **BB**: Explains specifics of how % is calculated with 40B projects. Notes that rental 40B projects are more likely to affect the 10% affordable housing threshold than for sale units. Emphasizes that new projects only count once they are built. Indicates importance of modernizing zoning bylaws

1. **MC**: Notes that town is a member of SRPEDD (Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District), which is a helpful resource for them.

### Infrastructure Challenges

1. **JD**: Raises question of pumping station

1. **MC**: Notes she will not discuss private property. Assents to explaining how sewer line became privately owned. Explains that when mall was built, the town allowed private ownership because of a lack of funds to expand sewer line.

2. **JD**: Asks about land development near Rt 1

1. **MC**: Indicates that undeveloped land in this area is constrained by wetlands or unsuitable soils

2. **BB**: Indicates that Infrastructure gaps limit development.\

### Governance and Charter Clarity

1. **JD**: Asked what charter issues need clarification.

1. **MC**: Notes personal opinion that TC should have staggered elections (e.g., 3-3-3) instead of electing all 9 councilors at once. Indicates concern that all 9 members could be replaced at once. Notes that TC should elect their own TCP, not have this based on vote totals.

2. **MC**: Further notes that 5 member boards should be changed back to three members.

3. **MC**: Suggests charter needs more clarity of reporting structure, especially for staff that report to both the TM and the board. Unclear on expectations of reporting for reporting to both (e.g. time off)

1. **MBC**: Asks whether clarifying what "report" means could help

1. **MC**: Says yes. Provides example: Town Planner has a Clerk. Believes that the town planner would report to the board on the business of the board and to the TM on other issues. Unsure

where those reporting divisions are for the planner and for the clerk.

2. **MBC**: Asks about evidence to support changing how TC is elected

1. **MC**: Indicates there's a risk of losing institutional memory.

2. **GH & BB**: Suggest that staggered terms would help maintain continuity. Note that assigning to subcommittees would be more difficult with a new, inexperienced full board.

3. **LW**: Expresses interest in learning how other towns structure their elections.

4. **MC**: Suggests using MMA data to compare council president selection processes.

3. **GH**: Suggests reducing the 21-day waiting period for bylaw enactments to 10 days, citing recent MBTA deadline concerns. Notes that amount of time it took to coordinate approvals and hearing risked missing the deadline. ([LINK TO CHARTER](#) for reference)

### **Closing Thoughts**

1. **MC**: Praises current Planning Board members and their dedication.

### **VII. Items Unforeseen By The Chair**

a. none

### **VIII. Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn meeting by Wagner. Seconded by Sequeira  
Unanimous approval. The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 PM