



**CITY OF HAVERHILL
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

May 13, 2026 – 7:00 PM
City Hall, City Council Chambers, Room 202

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Howard.

Roll Call:

Present were Chairman Paul Howard; Members Mike Morales, Bill Evans, April DerBoghosian, and Freddy Perez. Also present were Planning Director Jacki Byerley and Head Clerk Melanie Sloan.

Absent were Bobby Brown, Nate Robertson and Ismael Matis.

Conduct of Hearing:

The Board read the standard conduct of hearing procedures into the record.

Public Hearing:

Amend Chapter 255 Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map – Battery Energy Storage Systems Overlay District (BESS)– by inserting a new section 7.9 Battery Energy Storage Systems, amending section 3.1.3 Table of Use and Parking Regulations. By allowing Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 BESS and amending the Zoning Map to include the BESS Overlay District; the Overlay District will create regulations for the installation and use of free-standing battery energy storage systems (BESS). The Overlay District with the allowed Tiers will be updated on the Zoning Map to include the BESS Overlay District, and/or take any other action regarding.

Planning Director Byerley provided an overview of the proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Overlay District. She explained that a BESS ordinance had previously been presented to the Planning Board in 2025 for application throughout the four Business Park (BP) Zoning Districts but was not finalized by the City Council. She noted that Haverhill's BP Districts are located in Ward Hill, Hilldale Avenue, Amesbury Road, and Computer Drive/Research Drive.

Planning Director Byerley stated that, since the 2025 proposal, the potential BESS project in the Ward Hill area is no longer being pursued. In consultation with the City Solicitor and following additional guidance and information issued by the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER), the proposed ordinance was revised to establish a more limited BESS Overlay District in the area near Dutton Airport/Amesbury Road.

The proposed overlay would apply specifically to the designated area near Amesbury Road. Planning Director Byerley explained that the area had previously been considered for a future business park infrastructure; however, the identification of turtle habitat on approximately 90 acres made the development of a city funded infrastructure in the area financially impractical. The overlay would not require a change to the underlying zoning district and would remain in place should the underlying district be amended in the future.

Planning Director Byerley further clarified that a BESS facility within the proposed overlay would require a Special Permit from the City Council.

Following the discussion, Planning Director Byerley recommended that the Planning Board approve the proposed BESS Overlay District to the City Council based on the information provided by the City Solicitor and the draft ordinance.

Member Evans made a motion to recommend approval of the proposed Battery Energy Storage System Overlay District to the City Council. Member Morales seconded the motion. Motion passed, 5-0.

Minutes:

Member Evans made a motion to approve the March 11, 2026, meeting minutes. Member Morales seconded the motion. Motion passed, 5-0.

Member DerBoghosian made a motion to approve the April 8, 2026, meeting minutes. Member Perez seconded the motion. Motion passed, 5-0.

Other Business:

Planning Director Byerley announced that the Planning Board will hold a special meeting on May 27th, 2026, to discuss the proposed social marijuana ordinance submitted by residents.

Adjournment:

On a motion by Member DerBoghosian, seconded by Member Morales, the Board voted to adjourn. Motion passed, 5-0. The meeting was adjourned.