

APRIL 13, 2026- PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Time: 6:00pm
Location: Winthrop Town Hall-Harvey Room & Virtual via Zoom
Members Present: Chris Boyce (Chair), Alyssa Gamble, Honor Merceret, and Jason Pallutro
Members Absent: Sarah Jane Fourness

PROPERTY DISCUSSED:

Petition by The Town of Winthrop for The Winthrop Central Fire Station project which includes construction of a new 31,000 square foot station building, with a three-story administrative area, with areas for day-to-day fire operations, bunk quarters and associated operational rooms, and emergency operations offices on the 3rd floor. Additionally, there are four (4) drive through apparatus bays, two auxiliary garage bays that are connected to Pauline Street. There is a new parking lot with 15 spaces to the west of the building that connects to the intersection of Waldemar Avenue and Wheelock Street. At the back of the building there is additional parking for 7 vehicles and connection of the drive through-bays to the existing drive at Ingleside Park connecting to Brookfield Road. The parking behind the rink and gymnasium at 151 Pauline Street will be reconfigured to accommodate 25 parking spaces. A new pedestrian connection between the fire station and the gym will have a park-like feel with plantings and lighting.

Town Manager Tony Marino noted that project presentation to the WPB is for project awareness, the design process is nearly complete, and that Board comments are non-binding. KBA Architects presented the project before the Board.

The meeting focused on advancing the design and site planning for the new fire station and improvements to the adjacent gymnasium, with emphasis on accessibility, stormwater management, architectural materials, lighting, and project scheduling.

Key site issues included pedestrian accessibility and curb cut design, with the project team proposing a 2% slope apron to improve accessibility while addressing safety concerns for emergency vehicle operations. Committee members emphasized the importance of incorporating trees and green elements to reduce heat and soften paved areas.

Stormwater management remained a central topic. The design includes trench drains and infiltration chambers beneath both west and rear parking areas, relocation of an existing catch basin behind the gym and rink, and installation of a new five-foot stormwater pipe between the gymnasium and fire station to manage runoff and slope drainage.

The Board reviewed plans for a new retaining wall along a steep slope, including foundation reinforcement and a brick shelf to integrate new veneer with the existing building. Proposed regrading impacts were discussed, with confirmation that the stormwater system is designed to address slope runoff. Lighting plans for the parking lot and building were presented, with confirmation that all fixtures will include full cut-offs to minimize light pollution. The building is also being designed as solar-ready, with infrastructure in place for future photovoltaic panels.

Please Note: This record may have been created with voice recognition software. Wrong word or 'sounded like' substitutions may have occurred due to the inherent limitations of the software. If words or phrases appear to be out of context and the meaning of a phrase or sentence is unclear, please contact our office for clarification.

Architectural discussions included floor plans, elevations, and exterior materials. Members raised concerns about the visual flatness of calcium silicate masonry units (CSMU), and the design team indicated that alternative textures or more natural stone-like finishes may be explored. Guardrail design on the west elevation will be revised to create a lighter, more open appearance, with multiple options to be presented. Building signage, including the street address, will be integrated into the plaza-facing façade.

A motion to approve the November and December 2025 meeting minutes and defer the March 2026 minutes review was made and seconded. All present voted in favor.

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. All present voted in favor.

Please Note: This record may have been created with voice recognition software. Wrong word or 'sounded like' substitutions may have occurred due to the inherent limitations of the software. If words or phrases appear to be out of context and the meaning of a phrase or sentence is unclear, please contact our office for clarification.