

**Palmer Town Council  
Meeting Minutes  
September 10, 2018**

1        **Call to Order**

2            The Palmer Town Council Meeting of Monday, September 10, 2018 was called to order  
3            at 6:30 pm by Town Council President Barbara Barry. Councilors Lorinda Baker, Mary  
4            Salzmann, Karl Williams, Matthew Lemieux, and Michelle Sikes and Robert Lavoie  
5            were present. Also present was Town Manager, Charles Blanchard and Executive  
6            Assistant, Nicole Parker.  
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9        **Old Business**

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11        **VOTE Ordinance 2019-01 Zone Change Recommendation; 1701 Park Street**

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13        B.Barry informed the Council that the vote requires a 2/3 vote as it is a zone change. K.Williams  
14        stated that he is in favor of the zone change due to the fact that restaurant business is a struggling  
15        industry. He also stated the proposed buyer is a big employer in town and feels the business  
16        should stay in town. R.Lavoie agreed with K. Williams and is in favor of the proposed zone  
17        change to accommodate the prospective buyer. M.Sikes requested clarification as to whether this  
18        vote would be spot zoning, and if so she has not seen substantial public benefit.  
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20        K.Williams made the motion to approve the Zone Change with the public benefit of expanding  
21        the business to hopefully bring more jobs, and more workers that spend money in the Town.  
22        Seconded by R.Lavoie.  
23

24        It was then brought up for discussion. M.Salzmann stated that there is no site plan and no  
25        definite plan for the parcel and it is an entry into the Town and believes without having an  
26        approved plan she does not feel it's a good idea. M.Sikes stated that she does not see how an  
27        argument for Town benefit has been established and could not agree to approve on a zone change  
28        with the word "hopefully" in the motion. M.Lemieux stated that he believes it sets a dangerous  
29        precedent in approving a zone change that may be spot zoning, is not recommended by the  
30        Planning Board, and there are Industrial A parcels available in Town. L.Baker stated that it  
31        should not be rezoned if there is enough Industrial space available in town. B.Barry stated that  
32        she could not support the zone change because she believes she does not have adequate  
33        information to uphold a challenge to the change in the event there was one.  
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35        With a motion and a second on the floor, the Motion failed (2:5)

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37        **6:52PM Public Hearing; Adult Use Marijuana Ordinance 2018-03**

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39        R. Lavoie read public hearing notice.  
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41 Linda Leduc, Town Planner, distributed maps and Ordinance to all Councilors. She proceeded to  
42 read the ordinance. Among the ordinance it proposes the retail facilities to be in Highway  
43 Business Districts not to be closer than 2000 feet, with a maximum of five facilities in the Town.  
44

45 M.Lemieux inquired as to why the minimum distance is 2000 feet? L.Leduc stated that the  
46 Board's opinion was not to limit but also to only allow so many.  
47

48 M.Salzman asked if they can increase the amount of facilities from five? L.Leduc replied that  
49 the Town should have at least three. Two are required from our liquor license quota and one  
50 approved medical facility that can convert to adult is already permitted. L.Leduc also stated that  
51 if five were permitted, they could not then be taken away.  
52

53 B.Barry stated that she believes the Town should start with three including the approved medical  
54 that can be converted. She also feels the 2000 feet between facilities should be eliminated.  
55

56 B.Barry opened up the comments from the public.  
57

58 Jim Rooney, of Palmer, proposes adding language in the ordinance that protects residences, and  
59 cited that because it is a cash business, there is the potential of crime.  
60

61 Kevin Wenzel, of 1212 Thorndike St., stated there should be extra security, or it should be 500  
62 feet from residences. He stated that he is a direct abutter to Altitude Organics, the currently  
63 approved only medical marijuana facility in Palmer, and does not want to see this business across  
64 the street.  
65

66 Attorney Jerry Plumb of O'Connell and Plumb of Springfield, was present representing Altitude  
67 Organics to say that although this was not a referendum on Altitude Organics, wanted to state for  
68 the record that there has always been a business at that location. He also read a text from Mr.  
69 Andrew Boulieau of Altitude Organics received from Mr. Wenzel stating that he can be bought  
70 out for \$600,000.00. Mr. Wenzel confirmed that he did say that, and that he does not want to be  
71 there if they (Altitude Organics) are there.  
72

73 Celeste Fay, owner of the Thorndike Mills, stated that her parcel is located in Industrial A and  
74 it's highly attractive for cultivation and manufacturing of marijuana and to put it deep inside the  
75 building. She explained how hydro power for the industry will help the economy by bringing in  
76 jobs. She stated that limiting permits will inhibit our Industrial Parks from a highly sought after  
77 industry.  
78

79 Palmer Police Chief John Janulewicz stated that he supports language in the ordinance  
80 specifically targeting residents for safety purposes and that he supports bringing the number of  
81 licenses from five to three.  
82

83 Eric Cromwell, a partner with the owners of Thorndike Mills, requested how people will  
84 transport product if it is not allowed. The Council corrected him in that home delivery is still not  
85 allowed, not transporting.  
86

87 Jessica Allen, of Wilbraham Street, stated that she has a Highway Business and is interested in  
88 getting involved in the marijuana industry. She inquired as to why we do not allow  
89 manufacturing in Highway Business. L.Leduc stated that our Zoning Ordinance allows  
90 manufacturing in Industrial Districts only.

91  
92 After more discussion, the Council stated they would like to lower the maximum retail locations  
93 from five to three, delete the 2000 feet requirement from establishments, put no limits on Special  
94 Permits in Industrial districts for manufacturing and/or cultivation, and proposed the amendment  
95 that protects residences and neighborhoods. The 500 feet from businesses will not be  
96 recommended due to the severe restrictions it will put on possible locations. The proposed  
97 language will go to the town Attorney for clarification and to finalize language. It was noted that  
98 none of these minor changes would require another public hearing.

99  
100 The public hearing was closed at 8:45PM. The vote will take place on September 17, 2018 at  
101 6:30PM.

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103 VOTE: `Ordinance 2018-02 Six Month Moratorium on Ground Mounted Photovoltaic Projects

104  
105 Motion was made to approve moratorium by M.Salzmann. Seconded by L.Baker. Motion passed  
106 (7:0)

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109 Legion Field Bleachers

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111 C.Blanchard distributed a revised price sheet for the replacing or repairing of the bleachers. He  
112 stated that he contacted the Architectural Access Board regarding just repairing the bleachers as  
113 opposed to replacing them. The replacement of the wooden boards would still trigger the  
114 requirement for access to the press box. A wheelchair access could be brought up to the top level  
115 rather than the first level. He stated that there could possibly be Community Development Block  
116 Grants available for assistance in paying for new aluminum bleachers. There was also the option  
117 of purchasing transportable bleachers. Removal and demolition would be an additional cost.  
118 M.Sikes stated that the cost is too high for the limited use of the field. She also stated that  
119 considering the future of Converse Middle School reuse is uncertain so it should be considered a  
120 whole package regarding renovations. M. Lemieux stated that they are in poor shape and need  
121 attention very soon. Gerry Skowronek, DPW Director, stated that they could possibly repair  
122 planks and seating in the meantime before a substantial decision is made. G.Skowronek made the  
123 suggestion of putting a committee together to determine what the needs are. C.Blanchard stated  
124 that his figure of approximately \$215000.00 is pretty accurate. The Town council ultimately  
125 decided that the DPW will repair what is necessary and table the discussion for another time.

126  
127  
128 G.Skowronek inquired about the Scum Concentrator. The last discussion included the centrifuge  
129 and adding them all together and bonding the entire project. C.Blanchard stated he will discuss  
130 the required funding and come up with a proposal.

131

132 B.Barry asked G.Skowronek about the line painting machine that the DPW needs to replace that  
133 was in his report. He stated that the cost is approximately \$4,500.00.

134 B.Barry made a motion to transfer \$4,500.00 from the Town Council Discretionary Account to  
135 pay for the painting machine. Seconded by R.Lavoie. Motion passed (7:0)

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### 138 Council Rules Update

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140 Deferred to next meeting

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143 B.Barry asked asked G.Skowronek about the sidewalk inventory. G.Skowronek stated that he  
144 would get together with his contacts and report back at the next meeting. C.Blanchard stated that  
145 the process for sidewalk inventory is far more involved than the manpower the Town can  
146 accomplish. He asked the Council to authorize him to send a letter to Pioneer Valley Planning  
147 Commission (PVPC) utilizing Direct Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) from them to get more  
148 detailed information. They will also perform a “train the trainer” training for our own employees  
149 to perform the work for what to look for in the sidewalk repair needs.

150

151 Motion was made to authorize C.Blanchard to send a letter requesting DLTA from PVPC by  
152 R.Lavoie. Seconded by R.Lavoie. Seconded by M.Salzmann. Motion passed (7:0)

153

### 154 New Business

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#### 156 Paul Wizniewski; Community Branding.

157 He distributed a picture of a symbol of an old train to be placed on top of street signs throughout  
158 town where people can see it to recognize that the Town of Palmer the “Town of 7 Railroads”.

159 He also brought in a prototype.

160

161

#### 162 First Reading; Ordinance 2018-04 Deletion of Article XXIV c 171-123 Medical Marijuana 163 Facilities and Operations

164 R.Lavoie read purpose.

165

166 Second Reading and Public Hearing will be at the October meeting

167

#### 168 Town Manager’s Report

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170 B. Barry requested an update of Town Manager Goals at the next meeting.

171

#### 172 Confirmation of new Conservation Commission appointment

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174 Motion was made to authorize the confirmation of Dorothy Lawrence to the Conservation  
175 Commission made by L.Baker. Seconded by K.Williams. Motion passed (7:0)

176

#### 177 Councilor’s Roundtable

178  
179 B.Barry asked C. Blanchard to look in to whether some cosmetic updates could be made to help  
180 some of the bridges that isn't necessarily a full structural repair. C.Blanchard stated that he will  
181 look into it.

182  
183 M.Lemieux wanted to thank everyone for coming to the annual picnic last Saturday, September  
184 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018 and supporting the Three Rivers Fire Department.

185  
186 Executive Session for the Comcast Contract was cancelled until the October meeting.

187  
188  
189 **Adjourn**

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191 Motion was made to adjourn at 10:05PM by L.Baker. Seconded by M.Salzmann. Motion passed  
192 (7:0)

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