

THE BOROUGH OF BANTAM PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

P.O. BOX 416

BANTAM 06750

INCORPORATED 1915

MINUTES WEDNESDAY, September 9, 2026 SPECIAL JOINT MEETING Bantam Borough Town Hall

Present: Adam Yarrish, Chair
John Buonaiuto
Sally Tornow

Absent: Pete Donohue, Vice Chair

Present for the Litchfield Board of Selectmen:
Denise Raap, First Selectman
Anne Dranginis
Jeff Zullo, by phone until 7:21 arrival
Daniel Morosani, arrived 7:27

Public: Dick Sheldon
Kim Griffen
Carol Bramly, Litchfield P&Z
Michael Peloquin
Anthony Champalimaud
John McKenna

Chairman Yarrish called the special joint meeting with the Litchfield Board of Selectmen to order at 7:07 p.m.

Discussion of property known as the Bantam Annex, Doyle Road, Bantam.

First Selectman Raap kicked off the meeting asking what the Borough envisioned for the use on that property. Chairman Yarrish replied open space, which is based on his many conversations with borough residents. First Selectman Raap asked if this included demolition of the former school, currently housing several Litchfield offices. Chairman Yarrish replied, yes.

First Selectman Raap stated that the Town would not be interested in selling the property to the Litchfield Housing Trust, or any other entity, but that the Town of Litchfield in conjunction with the Litchfield Housing Trust are looking to relocate the Town offices and convert the space into 14 residential units that would include 12 one-bedroom and 2 two-bedroom units. All units would be overseen by the Housing Trust and would count toward the Town's required affordable

housing inventory. She added that ideally an affordable daycare serving local families would be included in the building to incentivize young families to relocate to the area. It was noted that currently a family of four with \$94,000 annual income would qualify under the affordable housing requirements.

Selectman Zullo arrived.

The issue currently holding up the use of the building is the Borough's zoning of the property as Bantam Municipal Use District which only permits 4 residential units as a matter of right. Mr. Zullo stated that the State is currently funding rural apartments at \$300,000 per unit noting that there would be town sewer and water as well as heating for each unit. First Selectman Raap added that there was a need for smaller residences for older people to downsize.

Selectman Morosani arrived.

First Selectman Raap asked if there was a vision for the vacant land to the rear of the current structure to which Chairman Yarrish replied that the vision was to have the land remain as open space. Mr. Buonavito agreed and added that if the building were to be demolished then open space would be the preferred use.

Mr. Buonavito noted the density of Bantam and the possible traffic issues that 14 more housing units could create adding that the Route 202 traffic in that area is already difficult. Ms. Bramly added that the traffic Mr. Buonavito referenced is generated by the economic center. Mr. Buonavito stated that he has concerns with the ability for the fire department to get out onto Route 202 in cases of emergency. Mr. Zullo noted that traffic lights can, in the near future, be updated for better traffic control.

Mr. Zullo praised Bantam for its walkability noting that having a grocery store within walking distance is a rarity. He added that the Housing Trust oversees 60+ units throughout Town.

Mr. Buonavito asked what is being requested of Bantam. First Selectman Raap stated that in order to have the affordable housing Bantam through their Planning and Zoning would need to change the planning regulations with regard to the Bantam Municipal Use District to permit more than the currently allowed 4 residential units. Mr. Zullo noted that 14 is the number of units being used for discussion as there are plans drawn and it is demonstrated that 14 will work with the current footprint. The cost to the Town was discussed and it was noted that any cost not covered by grants would be worked into the Town's capital plan and bonded if necessary.

Public commentary was received at this time.

Mr. Michael Peloquin stated that he felt that the area needs more housing using local companies as an example of why it's needed in order to fill open positions. His opinion is that with the ten acres there should be a multi-floor building to accommodate more units.

Mr. Anthony Champalimaud spoke as a local resident and business owner noting that the traffic in Litchfield center is loud and congested on weekends so he very much understands the traffic concerns of Bantam. He noted that he and his family enjoy the walkability of downtown

Litchfield and encouraged the balance of housing and open space in this area adding that it was a remarkable opportunity to do so.

There was a discussion about a planned public meeting on September 29th at which options for the property will be discussed and comments from the public will be received regarding the use of the property. First Selectman Raap noted that it is important for Bantam to promote the meeting and for residents to attend to hear what the options are and to make their voices heard. It was added that in order to move forward with a referendum on the property there must be only one option and it is a yes or no vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Buonaiuto moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Ms. Tornow and carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "V. Douglass".

Valerie L. Douglass, Commission Clerk