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Plainfield Zoning Board
Meeting Monday March 9th 2026
Meriden Town Hall

Zoning Board
Members Present:

Richard Colburn Chair
Brad Atwater
Peter Martin

Matthew Decker
Mike Button

Others Present:

John Austin-Z	Karen Swett-Z	
Chris Swiniarski	Phil Greene	Rob Healy
Linda Buzzell	Elof Erikson	Gudrue Erikson
Elizabeth Todd	Brian Hampton	Roanne Rogerson
Sarah Brooks Governo	Lesley Pearson	Joanne Buchard
Jeanne Woodward Poor	Suzanne Spencer	Tim Buzzell

The meeting opened at 7:00pm

The December 18th 2025 minutes were approved as edited.

Chair Colburn opened the hearing on this case.

Case 26-01 – Atlantic Tower / Property of Phil Greene

Location: Off Old Stage Coach Road (Tax Map 208, Lot 5)

Zoning: RC II

Proposal: Special exception request, and any other applicable sections of the Plainfield Zoning Ordinance, to construct a 130-foot monopole telecommunications tower designed to accommodate up to four carriers.

Chair Colburn stated that the Zoning Board of Adjustment's first responsibility was to determine whether the application has the potential for regional impact under RSA 36. Close proximity to a municipal boundary is one indicator of such impact. Member Decker moved that the application be found to have the potential for regional impact. The motion was seconded and passed.

The hearing was then stopped to allow staff time to send required notices to the City of Lebanon and to the Regional Planning Commission.

Member Decker further noted that RSA 12-K also requires notice to any municipality from which the tower may be visible. Accordingly, notices will be sent to Enfield, Lebanon, and Cornish.

Several abutters expressed frustration at not being able to provide testimony at this meeting. Chair Colburn explained that testimony would be taken once all required notices had been sent and the hearing reconvened. It was clarified that staff cannot determine regional impact; that determination must be made by the appropriate land use board.

1 The hearing was recessed and continued to **Monday, April 13, at 7:00 p.m.** at the
2 Meriden Town Hall.

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6 Stephen Halleran

Richard Colburn, Chair

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Plainfield Zoning Board
Meeting Monday April 13th 2026
Meriden Town Hall

Zoning Board
Members Present:

Richard Colburn Chair
Brad Atwater
Peter Martin

Matthew Decker
Mike Button

Others Present:

John Austin-Z	Chris Swiniarski	Phil Greene	Rob Healy-Z
Linda Buzzell	Elof Erikson	Gudrue Erikson	Lee Oxenham
Elizabeth Todd	Brian Hampton	Roanne Rogerson-Z	James Tracy
Lesley Pearson	Joanne Buchard	Evan Oxenham	J Hutchins
Donna Bowie-Z	Suzanne Spencer-Z	Jeanne Woodward Poor	
Tim Buzzell	Sarah Governo	Sandy Steel-Z	
Megan Chapman-Z	If Steel-Z		

The meeting opened at 7:10pm

The minutes of March 9th were approved as amended.

Case 26-01 – Atlantic Tower / Property of Phil Greene

Location: Off Old Stage Coach Road (Tax Map 208, Lot 5)

Zoning: RC II

Proposal

Request for a special exception (and any other applicable sections of the Plainfield Zoning Ordinance) to construct a 130-foot monopole telecommunications tower, designed to accommodate up to four carriers, with a 75' x 75' fenced equipment compound. The tower would be located on the property of Phil Greene, behind and uphill from his residence, and would not be illuminated.

Procedural Status

- Since the March meeting, regional impact notices were sent out.
- Abutter and agency comments were posted on the town website and placed in the file.
- The Board discussed whether the application was sufficiently complete to proceed with public comment.
- The town had requested additional information on:
 - Alternative sites investigated; and
 - Application legal analysis (variance/special exception/other)
 - Visual analysis of the proposed tower.

The applicant (through Attorney Chris Swiniarski):

- Submitted some information regarding alternative sites investigated.
- Had not yet provided a visual analysis or finalized the form of relief requested.
- Noting he wanted confirmation of what the Board required.

The Zoning Board:

- Indicated the application should be filed as a **variance**.
- Requested a **visual analysis**, including a **balloon test** at tower height.
- Asked that the balloon test date be shared with the town so abutters and interested parties can be notified.

1 The application was deemed sufficiently complete to move forward, and Attorney
2 Swiniarski was invited to present.

4 **Applicant's Presentation**

- 5 • Purpose: To address a cellular coverage gap on Route 120 near the Lebanon line.
- 6 • Site selection: Multiple sites were reviewed; the Phil Greene property was chosen.
- 7 • Design:
 - 8 • 130-foot freestanding monopole.
 - 9 • Antennas for up to four carriers mounted on the outside of the tower.
 - 10 • 75' x 75' fenced equipment area at the base.
 - 11 • No lighting proposed.
- 12 • Zoning conflict: Telecommunications towers are not permitted in the RC II zone.
- 13 • Legal position: The applicant asserted that federal law (telecommunications siting
14 provisions) may preempt the local zoning ordinance, effectively requiring that the
15 use be allowed.

16 Chair Colburn then opened the public hearing.

18 **Public Comment**

19 **Opposed**

- 20 • **Don Cann**
 - 21 • Opposes the tower.
 - 22 • States the development is not in keeping with the neighborhood.
 - 23 • States the access road is no longer a public highway, having been
24 discontinued in 1910 (Article 8).
- 25 • **Brian Hampton**
 - 26 • Opposes the tower.
 - 27 • Believes it is not necessary and not consistent with neighborhood
28 character.
- 29 • **Tim Buzzell**
 - 30 • Opposes the tower.
 - 31 • Cites health concerns.
 - 32 • Objects to the idea that the town's zoning ordinance should be overridden
33 by federal law.
- 34 • **Lee Oxenham**
 - 35 • Opposes the tower.
 - 36 • Believes alternative technologies could address any existing coverage gap.
- 37 • **Elof Erikson**
 - 38 • States that he and his wife own two of the alternative sites mentioned by
39 the applicant.
 - 40 • Says they were never contacted.
 - 41 • States that characterizing them as "unresponsive" is inaccurate and calls
42 into question the adequacy of the alternative site evaluation.
- 43 • **Leslie Person**
 - 44 • Opposes the tower.
 - 45 • Believes further work on alternative sites is needed.
- 46 • **Rob Healy**
 - 47 • Opposes the tower.
 - 48 • Urges Board members to view the Heater Road tower in Lebanon as a
49 visual example of the likely impact.
- 50 • **John Austin**
 - 51 • Opposes the tower.

- Suggests that a site on Methodist Hill might offer comparable coverage with less impact on nearby homes.

In Favor

- **Jim Tracy**

- Supports the tower.
 - Cites public safety benefits for users of Route 120 in this area.
-

Board Discussion and Next Steps

- The public hearing was continued for further information gathering.
- Board members discussed the alternative site information submitted.
- They requested:
 - More detail on how alternative sites were vetted.
 - Consideration of additional sites, including locations on Methodist Hill Road.

The hearing was continued to:

Monday, June 8, 7:00 p.m., at the Town Offices

Items the Applicant Agreed to Provide Before the Continued Hearing:

1. **Balloon Test / Visual Analysis**

Schedule and provide a date for the balloon test.

Allow abutters to view the balloon and invite the visual consultant to photograph from their properties, if they wish.

2. **Alternative Sites Documentation**

Additional support and documentation for the alternative sites investigated.

Investigation of additional sites on Methodist Hill Road.

3. **Application Form**

Amend the application to include a **request for a variance** in addition to, or instead of, the special exception.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15pm.

Stephen Halleran

Richard Colburn, Chair

**Plainfield Zoning Board
Meeting Monday May 11th 2026
Meriden Town Hall**

Zoning Board

Members Present:

Richard Colburn Chair
Brad Atwater
Peter Martin

Matthew Decker
Mike Button

Others Present:

Matt Koff	Alex Scott, Esq.	Bree Hewyard
Amy Franklin-Z	Greg Castell-Z,	Paul Franklin

The meeting opened at 7:00pm, the April 13th minutes were approved as amended.

Case 26-02: A request for a setback encroachment (Section 3.13 D of the Plainfield Zoning Ordinance) to allow for an ADU building to be located 10 feet from the side line of the applicants' property that is common with River View Farm. The required building setback is 20 feet from the property line. The property is located at 92 Pierce Road. Chairman Colburn opened the hearing, noting that this project was before the Board in 2024, when a combination-of-related-uses special exception was granted to allow 800 square feet of an existing small barn on the property to be converted to living space. At that time, the Town's zoning ordinance did not allow ADUs on lots that were nonconforming. The Koff property is 3.0 acres in a zone with a 3.5-acre minimum. Since the time of the first application, state law has been changed, requiring towns to be much more permissive with accessory dwelling unit (ADU) permits. Consequently, the Koff property now qualifies for an ADU.

Matthew Koff explained that, in the course of renovating the old barn—after jacking the structure up and pouring a new foundation (frost wall and pad)—their builder recommended, based on the building's condition, taking the old structure down and building new. This was done and, while the new building sits on the same-size foundation, it is taller and remains approximately 10 feet from the property line. Once the Zoning Administrator noted the issues with this new-build approach, the project was stopped and remains unfinished. To gain compliance, the project would need either to be moved 10 feet farther from the common line with the Franklin property, or some relief must be granted so that the building can remain at its current location, which is about 10 feet from the Franklin property line where 20 feet is required.

After some discussion about the materials in the file, the Zoning Board found the application substantially complete and moved to open the public hearing.

Public Comment

Paul Franklin: Stated that he is disappointed to be in this position and does not want to be against his neighbor, but the building is now new and taller and could have been made to fit properly on the lot. He encouraged the Town to be more diligent in its zoning enforcement. Paul questioned Surveyor Rollins' "averaging" of the building's distance to the property line (see April 24 letter in the file). At its closest point, the building is only 9.4 feet from the line and would not qualify for a setback encroachment.

Paul noted that his property has a conservation easement that prohibits further development or changes to the existing lot lines, so selling property to his neighbor is not an option.

1 **Amy Franklin:** Stated that the project is not what was approved and should be required
2 to meet the necessary setback. She expressed concern that this is another example of the
3 Town's permissive approach going poorly. Asking for forgiveness, she said, should not
4 be a strategy that is rewarded.

5 **Greg Castell:** Expressed similar sentiments and disappointment that the scale of the
6 project increased. He indicated that he plans to undertake his own project on his property
7 in the future.

8 **Attorney Alex Scott,** representing Matt Koff, noted that there was no malintent; the
9 owner reacted to evolving information from the builder, and what started out as a
10 renovation became more of a replacement. His client stopped construction as soon as he
11 became aware of the Town's concerns. He pointed out that changes in state law benefit
12 this project and that a setback encroachment or an equitable waiver would be a
13 reasonable form of relief to allow the project to continue.

14
15 The public hearing was closed.

16 **Board Discussion**

17 Board members began to consider the options available to grant any reasonable relief.
18 With regard to RSA 674:33-a, it was not immediately obvious to the Board that this
19 application meets the standards outlined in paragraph I.

20
21 Likewise, for a setback encroachment, the Board questioned whether this building could
22 have been reasonably located to satisfy the setback. Chair Colburn noted that the
23 evolution of the project—first as a renovation that began with jacking the building up and
24 pouring a new foundation—might have created a “reasonable” barrier to the new building
25 being moved to meet the setback. If the applicant had not intended to utilize the old
26 building, they would not have jacked it up to pour a new foundation under it.

27
28 Other Board members felt that the current situation was avoidable and that the owner or
29 his builder should have known to stop and discuss this level of change with the Town
30 first. The resulting situation puts the Zoning Board in a difficult position.

31
32 Denying this application would send the case to the Select Board for enforcement.

33
34 Bree Heyward noted that she and Matt are deeply sorry for the error and that it was
35 certainly not intentional. They are medical professionals and not familiar with the
36 building construction process. Until notified by the Town, they were unaware that the
37 building, as renovated, did not conform to their approval.

38
39 Board members felt that testimony from the builder, as to what he found as he began the
40 project, might be helpful, as well as testimony from the Town's building inspector.
41 The Board also suggested that the applicants look into the cost of moving the relatively
42 small building 10 feet to the west.

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44 The hearing was recessed until Monday June 22nd at 7pm Meriden Town Hall.

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46 The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

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49 Stephen Halleran/Chat GPT

Richard Colburn, Chair

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