

**TOWN OF DEDHAM  
450 WASHINGTON STREET  
DEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS**

**MINUTES OF THE DECENNIAL BYLAW REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING  
AUGUST 11, 2025, 6:30 P.M.**

**MEMBERS:**

Cecilia Emery Butler	Chair
Fred Wofford	Vice Chair
Micah Flynn	Member
Norman Vigil	Member
Jennifer Doherty	Member
Michelle Labadini	Member

**STAFF:**

Nancy Baker	Assistant Town Manager
Doreen LaBrecque	Assistant to Administration

**ATTENDEE:**

Atty. Lauren Goldberg	Town Counsel
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Minutes prepared by Azra Ahmad of Minutes Solutions Inc. from a recording.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

There being a quorum present, and the Members and the public having been given adequate and proper notice of the meeting, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no comments.

**3. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION – PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENTS TO DATE**

*ACTION – Legal counsel will submit the summary of bylaw changes to the Decennial Bylaw Review Committee on August 12, 2025.*

There was discussion about bylaw language and grammar changes. Legal counsel emailed the police chief for feedback regarding some of the changes. The Committee also discussed further changes. The following highlights were noted:

- In Article 42-2, there is a requirement for civil fingerprinting for licensees. The police chief reiterated that this is a requirement.
- In Chapter 136, prohibitions are also criminal violations. The police chief noted that he may be in favor of the Peeping Tom bylaw. He also recommended a statute for reference.
- In Chapter 154, the police chief recommended keeping Section 3.
- In Article 199, the police chief kept 199-13 and 199-15 and he suggested keeping Sections 4 and 12 as well.
- In Chapter 265-10, the police chief asked that the highlighted language be deleted. In Sections 265-20 and 265-21, which pertain to parking for the disabled, he asked that the language be updated to reflect the statute language.
- The language about detailed officers was also revised as per the police chief's recommendation.
- 206-1A notes 300 feet and legal counsel explained that this bylaw matches state law.

- Section 34-2 includes the words “light recreational or educational use” but the word “light” is not used online. This language needs to be verified.
- Section 85-22 has the word “taxpayer,” which should be changed to either “voter” or “resident” instead.
- Sections 85-29 and 85-30 require the inclusion of the collective bargaining agreement in the Finance and Work Committee booklet and report. The Committee discussed replacing the agreements with executive summaries to the Committee and making the collective agreements available on the website. Agreements are sent in advance of a meeting, except on the very rare occasion. Many collective agreements expire and renew close together. The Committee agreed to leave the original language in this section unchanged.
- 168-4 pertains to the Historic District Commission and any amendment to this bylaw requires a two-thirds vote at a public hearing. This language remains unchanged. The Committee noted that this bylaw is not updated often.
- Section 1 will be amended to include “these general bylaws are severable, and if any chapter, section, subsection, or provision thereof shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid by a final judgment or order of a court of competent jurisdiction, said judgment or order shall not affect or impair any of the remaining provisions.” There had been discussion about adding a severability clause in the bylaws and removing various references to severability which are currently used at random.
- Section 246-6 has been updated to remove all extraneous language and will be enforced in accordance with Section 1-6. Section 1-6 sets penalties for violations at a warning, then \$50, \$100 and \$300.
- Subsection B of Section 250-9 notes a fine of not more than \$300. The Committee discussed how these violations pertain to utility companies and contractors who open streets and sidewalks for various works without following the proper process. The Committee agreed that the fine amount should remain unchanged and this bylaw should be a new Section 250-10 titled “Enforcement.” This bylaw would also apply to surface water collected from private property, which could create a street or sidewalk hazard.
- The addition of Section 250-10 should include the following language: “this bylaw may be enforced in accordance with Section 1-6, provided, however, that for violations of Sections 250-3, 4, and 9, the fine for each violation shall be \$300.”
- Sections 265-20 and 265-21 have been updated to reflect the statutory language.
- Section 265-10 pertains to abandoned and non-operating vehicles and carries a fine of \$50 that should be removed. Anyone violating this provision would be charged with a misdemeanor. An abandoned vehicle can be impounded but towing a car would cost more than \$50. The Committee agreed that the police chief’s recommendations should be followed.

Upon an inquiry from the Council, legal counsel explained that in most circumstances, state law supersedes an inconsistent bylaw, and therefore there is no need for an update to the latter. An exception to this would be a bylaw which takes its authority from the Charter. In some circumstances, the bylaw may be removed since it is unnecessary. A bylaw update would be necessary following a change to the law.

The discussion about bylaw changes continued. Legal counsel explained that, for example, there are many provisions in Chapter 154 and Section 265 governed by state laws. If the bylaw is not used as an enforcement mechanism, then there is criminal enforcement instead. Legal counsel noted that many bylaws are also used as local regulations. Zoning is considered a separate entity.

The Committee agreed that the police chief’s language and grammar recommendations should be implemented in the updated bylaws. The Committee also discussed addressing

traffic issues, such as motorized vehicles. Legal counsel agreed to send bylaw language to the Committee for its reference.

Legal counsel informed the Committee that it could prepare the final report. However, the Review Committee would need to meet again to discuss this before the Select Board meeting. This report would highlight the process followed for the bylaw review, including meetings.

The next charter study will be in 2030, and the master plan will be up for review in 2035.

4. **DISCUSSION AND VOTE – FINAL REPORT TO BE PRESENTED TO SELECT BOARD**  
On a motion made by Mr. Flynn and seconded by Ms. Doherty it was resolved that the Decennial Bylaw Review Committee agreed to the changes to be presented for the Select Board's consideration at the town meeting in the fall of 2025. Motion carried.
5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**  
On a motion duly made, it was resolved to approve the minutes from the Decennial Bylaw Review Committee meetings held on June 30, 2025, as amended, and July 28, 2025, as presented. Motion carried.
6. **NEW BUSINESS**  
No new business was discussed.
7. **NEXT MEETING**  
The date of the next Decennial Bylaw Review Committee meeting is August 25, 2025.
8. **ADJOURNMENT**  
On a motion made by, seconded by, and carried, it was voted to adjourn the Committee meeting at 7:28 p.m.

**DISCLAIMER**

The above minutes should be used as a summary of the motions passed and issues discussed at the meeting. This document shall not be considered a verbatim copy of every word spoken at the meeting.

Cecilia Emery Butler  
Cecilia Emery Butler, Chair

10-6-2025  
Date