



PLANNING BOARD

P.O. Box 1305
Littleton, Massachusetts 01460



May 6, 2025, Article 17

Overview: *The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has adopted new Flood Insurance Rate Map panels and associated Flood Insurance Study for Littleton. Article 17 updates our Floodplain Zoning Bylaw to reference the new maps and to meet current FEMA Floodplain Bylaw standards. Replacing the outdated zoning bylaw regarding “Wetlands and Floodplain Regulations” will continue to make available the national flood insurance program for those Littleton residents who choose to participate. Article 17 would also remove reference to wetlands, which are fully covered in Town Code Chapter 171 Wetlands Protection administered by the Conservation Commission.*

The article would delete the existing zoning bylaw Article XVI: Wetlands and Floodplain Regulations in its entirety and replace it with the new Article XVI: “Floodplain Regulation” bylaw as printed in the Town Meeting Warrant. All wording is carefully crafted to meet FEMA requirements and has been reviewed and approved by the MEMA Floodplain Coordinator. The new FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map panels are published by FEMA; there is no local procedure to amend the maps – that authority and procedure remains with FEMA. The Planning Board and staff highly recommend that no amendments to the proposed article be made to ensure that the adopted bylaw meets strict FEMA guidelines.

Sections:

§ 173-71 Purpose. This section outlines the purpose: ensure public safety, eliminate new hazards, prevent public emergencies, avoid loss of utility services, eliminate clean-up costs, and reduce damage to property resulting from flooding.

§ 173-72 Description of the Floodplain District. This section points to the new FEMA Floodplain maps and associated detailed Flood Insurance Study.

§ 173-73 Definitions. This section provides detailed definitions for terms used in the bylaw.

§ 173-74 Standards. This section outlines that the Floodplain District is an overlay zoning district and references other relevant laws and regulations that work in conjunction with the floodplain bylaw.

§ 173-75 Procedures and Requirements. This section accomplishes several items.

- A. Designates the Littleton Building Commissioner as the official Floodplain Administrator for the Town and outlines their responsibilities.
- B. Outlines the required review process for all activities within the floodplain district.
- C Provides detailed guidance for regulated floodway areas.
- D. Provides guidance for large subdivisions.



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E. Outlines the variance procedure for Floodplain management relative to Building Code Floodplain Standards and for Local Floodplain Zoning. Variances to building code are heard by the State Building Code Appeals Board; variances to local zoning are heard by the Zoning Board of Appeals. Notice by the Building Commissioner or by the ZBA is required for any variances granted.

F. Requires notification to both the State and Federal Coordinators of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

G. Requires the Town to submit new data regarding Special Flood Hazard Areas to the State and Federal NFIP Coordinators.

§ 173-76 Enforcement. This section outlines the violation enforcement procedure. As with all Littleton Zoning Bylaws, enforcement is done by the Building Commissioner.

§ 173-77 Abrogation; Disclaimer of Liability; Severability. This section includes information on legal precedence, liability, and severability.

Planning staff reached out to the Town's public safety, health, and utility Departments. All Departments responded. No issues or concerns were raised, and several Departments offered support for the proposal.

The Town has made available the new FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map panels through the website, in the Planning Department, and in the Town Clerk's office. Littleton's GIS (online mapping at our website) includes the new electronic FEMA floodplain map layer. The FEMA website offers several different ways to view the maps – instructions are included on the town website linked below.

The Planning Board voted unanimously to recommend this article.

Any questions, please refer to the Floodplain Bylaw page of the Town website: <https://ma-littleton.civicplus.com/1273/Floodplain-Bylaw-and-Maps>

or contact Town Planner Maren Toohill at MTtoohill@littletonma.org or 978-540-2425