



City of New Bedford

Department of City Planning

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MAYOR
JON MITCHELL
PLANNING DIRECTOR
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PLANNING BOARD

STAFF REPORT

REPORT DATE
May 8, 2026

MEETING DATE
May 13, 2026

Case #26-08: Site Plan Review
NS Braley Road
Map: 135 Lot: 9

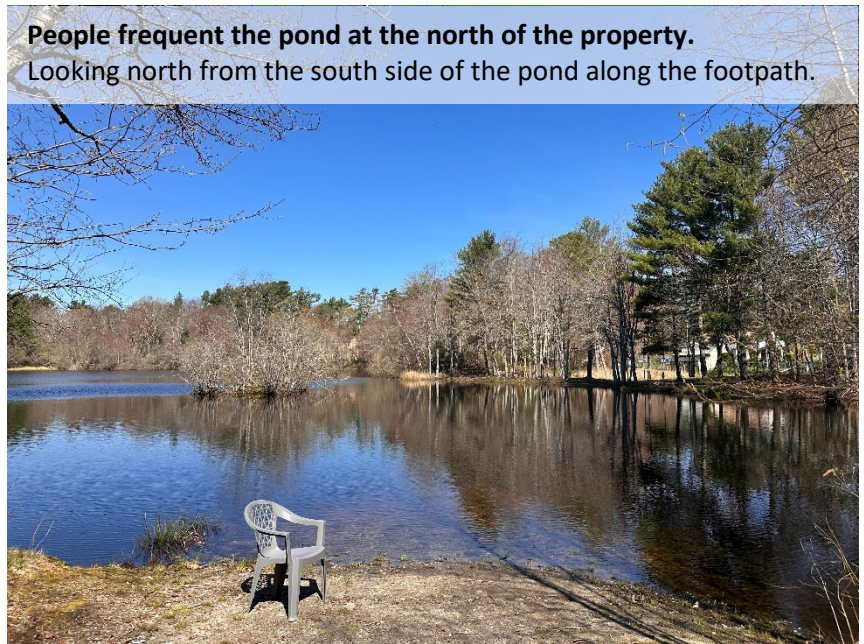
**Owner/
Applicant:** PILLAR, LLC
150 John Vertente Blvd,
New Bedford, MA 02745

Zoning District: Mixed-Use Business
(MUB)

Site Area: 12.5 ± acres

Overview: Development of a new
72-unit six story
apartment building with
associated parking.

People frequent the pond at the north of the property.
Looking north from the south side of the pond along the footpath.



Existing Conditions

The project site is a 12.5 acre lot in the far north end of city with 480± feet of frontage along the west side of Braley Road. The property extends west to the railroad tracks.

Abutting the pond east/northeast along the west side of Braley Road are four parcels occupied by single-family homes. The Braley Woods Condominiums and duplex townhouses are east/northeast across Braley Road. These are 3-story buildings with off-street parking provided for residents and visitors in front of and alongside of the buildings. Roadside parking is evident between utility poles along the east side Braley Road.

Residential, industrial, and commercial development farther south is buffeted by woods and wetland.

The South Coast Rail project restored the New York New Haven & Hartford railroad (previously the Old Colony railroad) for MBTA commuter service to/from New Bedford, and abuts the property in the rear.

Further west of the tracks is the New Bedford Business Park (operated by the Greater New Bedford Industrial Foundation), which formally opened in 1961 and has operated continuously since as a major employment hub. The portion of the park nearest the project site has been partially developed for solar energy production.

At least as early as 1911, the Sassaquin Cranberry Co. occupied the site (plate 41, Atlas of New Bedford 1911). The cranberry bogs were later abandoned without being properly decommissioned. Because of this, much of the infrastructure

remains intact but in a somewhat derelict state. Culverts show evidence of tampering in certain areas or a need for maintenance. Berms that had functioned to provide for bog operations equipment access are now overgrown with grasses and shrubs and in sore need of clearing.

The abandonment of the bogs has generated grassy fields with growing maples, birches and white pine trees. Mature white pine stands exist at the south and east of the site. Opportunistic plants such as bayberry shrub and waterlilies were observed. Native fauna observed during a site visit include bumble bees, blue jays, and a turkey vulture. Evidence of predation of small mammals was also observed on the walking paths in the form of fur remnants, as was scat likely belonging to skunk or opossum. A dead bass was observed floating at the edge of the pond.

The pond at the north of the site is actively used by people, likely locals only, as evidenced by a canoe stored on site, a plastic patio chair, and two waste bins filled with empty beverage bottles. Evidence of human activity exists mostly around the south edge of the pond. Footpaths are evident throughout the site, especially along the perimeter berms.

Tires were dumped in several locations along the rear of the site. Evidence of erosion controls that were never removed extends along the length of the property at the rear of the site. An area at the east of the site nearest Braley Road shows evidence of infill. A stockpile of mixed fieldstone and cut granite is south of this area. An solar production site enclosed by fencing is operating on an abutting property to the south.

Related Permitting

The Zoning Commissioner has determine the project requires a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals for the number of stories proposed.

This project requires review by the Conservation Commission (#SE 049-0986). The applicant requested a continuance before the Commission at the May 5, 2026, hearing.

Decision Criteria

The applicant is requesting a Site Plan Review. The ordinance provides the Board the following criteria for reaching a decision.

Site Plan Review Criteria

In considering Site Plan Approval for the proposed project, the Board must find that the plan meets the objectives identified in Section 5471 of the City's Zoning Ordinance (c.9) including:

- Minimize the volume of cut and fill, the number of removed trees six-inch caliper or larger, the length of removed stone walls, the area of wetland vegetation displaced, the extent of stormwater flow increase from the site, soil erosion, and the threat of air and water pollution;
- Maximize pedestrian and vehicular safety to and from the site;
- Minimize obstruction of scenic views from publicly accessible locations;
- Minimize visual intrusion by controlling the layout and visibility of parking, storage, or other outdoor service areas viewed from public ways or premises that are residentially used or zoned;
- Minimize glare from vehicle headlights and lighting fixtures;
- Minimize unreasonable departure from the character, materials, and scale of buildings in the vicinity as viewed from public ways and places.
- Minimize contamination of groundwater from on-site wastewater disposal systems or operations on the premises involving the use, storage, handling, or containment of solid and liquid wastes and hazardous substances;
- Comply with the provisions of this Zoning Ordinance.
- Minimize damage to existing adjacent public ways.
- Promote orderly and reasonable internal circulation within the site to protect public safety and not unreasonably interfere with access to a public way or circulation of traffic on a public way in general.
- Provide a building and landscape design that is considerate of the existing architectural context of the adjacent properties, other buildings visible from the site, and the surrounding neighborhood. Where feasible, the design of new or renovated buildings and extensions to existing buildings should complement the architectural qualities of the historic architectural characteristics of other buildings in the neighborhood.

Proposed Conditions

The applicant proposes to develop a 6-story, 72-unit residential building with a paved parking lot on a 2 acre portion of the property at the east of the site closest to and along Braley Road.

The project narrative included with the stormwater management report (p. 2) indicates that 2 acres are proposed for development, and the “remaining 10.5 acres will be preserved with a voluntary conservation restriction.”

The applicant intends to provide 20 one-bedroom units and 52 two-bedroom units. The building’s main entrance will face into the parking lot; and the rear of the building will face Braley Road. All floors will have access to elevator service. Renderings and elevations indicate all apartment units will have windows that provide access to natural lighting and air circulation in their common areas and bedrooms. The project narrative states “the project will provide modern, energy efficient, compact, market rate housing with open space and nature trails.”

The proposal includes 109 parking spaces (including 5 handicapped spaces; and 14 compact spaces). The parking proposed exceeds the minimum parking and loading requirements of the Parking & Loading Requirements under Parking Code B: 1 space per unit; 2 spaces for units with 3+ bedrooms and 1 loading space for each multifamily dwelling containing more than 10 dwelling units, or more than 20 household units. 9 bicycle parking spaces are also proposed.

The plans show a gravel walkway that appears to be a walking trail; though it is unclear from the plans or the materials what the extent or intent of this pathway is on the remainder of the 12 acres.

Staff Review

The table below outlines the proposed site changes and highlights items for discussion and the Board’s consideration.

Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 40 parking spaces including 4 HC parking spaces are proposed at the rear of the building along the westerly edge of the parking lot. 24 parking spaces are proposed on the south side of the proposed building. 35 parking spaces are proposed north of the building, including 1 HC space and 14 compact vehicle spaces. The Board may wish to discuss appropriate screening of the parking lot on all sides to mitigate glare impacts on the neighborhood, including the surrounding natural environment.• A 9-bike rack is proposed at the west of the parking lot next to the transformer and snow storage area. The Board may wish to discuss with the applicant (a) if the bike rack is intended for residents or users of the trail proposed, and (b) options for residents that provide security, access, and appropriately protect private property from the elements (see Architectural below).
Landscaping & Site Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Test pits are not indicated in the plan details. It is within the Board’s purview to request a test pit exploration and accompanying report. The Board may also request a peer review if deemed appropriate.• A 20’ utility easement is indicated along the Braley Road frontage. The Board may wish to discuss the purpose of this easement and any potential issues with the proposed parking layout relative to the easement with the applicant.• Footpaths and footbridges are proposed at the west of the site. No further details on the development of a trail system or any improvement proposed to the former cranberry bogs are included in the site plan. The Board may wish to discuss the owner’s intentions for the paths relative to the noted proposed conservation restriction and how the owner envisions access to, restriction from, and maintenance of the property.• A 2’ landscaping buffer mix of annuals and perennials is proposed around the building foundation on the north, south and west sides.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Native plantings are proposed at the detention basins and embankment at the west of the site. Staff defer to the Conservation Agent regarding the appropriateness of the plant schedule in regard to species, quantities, and massing. The Board may wish to further discuss nature-based solutions to mitigate project impacts with the applicant.
Circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A 5' paved walkway is proposed at the west side of the parking lot adjacent to ADA parking and footpaths. The Board may wish to confirm/discuss whether the paths will be ADA accessible with the applicant. 25'± curb cuts are proposed on either side of the building with two-way circulation. The loading space is proposed in front of the main entrance marked with 30' of striping. Drive aisle widths are indicated at 22' with the aisle directly south of the building at 26'. Vehicle turns show ingress/egress of a single unit truck relative to Braley Road.
Traffic/Transit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant has provided traffic impact estimates of the Institute of Traffic Engineers manual, which indicate fewer than 30 trips to and from the site at peak hours. Most trips are predicted to be to and from the Route 140 on/off ramps southeast of the site. The Board may wish to discuss the submitted estimates and anticipated peak traffic flows for the building with the applicant. The Church Street MBTA Station is 4.5 miles to the south, about a 20-minute bike ride. The main entrance to the New Bedford Business Park and the ramp to/from Highway Route 140 are 0.75 mi south of the project site. Pulaski Elementary School, the Ross C. Mathieu Trail, and Pulaski Park are 1 mile southeast of the project site.
Stormwater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roof runoff will be directed to a subsurface recharge system south of the building, which will drain to the southwest detention basin and ultimately to the wetlands. Parking lot runoff will be captured by catch basins will divert to the detention basins at the northwest and southwest of the site prior to discharge in the wetlands. Planning staff defers to the Department of Public Infrastructure regarding compliance with the City's Stormwater Rules and Regulations.
Snow Storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Snow storage is indicated at the front of the site in the utility easement, and at the rear of the site next to the transformer, next to the trash enclosure, and next to the detention basin. The Board may wish to review adequacy of the proposed snow storage and plans for removing excess snow so it does not impact the wetlands with the applicant.
Waste Receptacles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The trash enclosure is proposed at the southwest corner of the parking lot. Plans propose two 10 cubic yard dumpsters. The Board may wish to discuss waste removal plans with the applicant including scheduled removal and wildlife management. The Board may wish to discuss how the project will meet mandatory recycling requirements with the applicant.
Utilities and Mechanical Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An electrical transformer is proposed at the west of the parking lot at and inside the 25' wetland buffer. The Board may wish to discuss alternative locations for the transformer with the applicant. Staff recommend the Board condition the relocation of the transformer to the decision. Floorplans indicate two electrical rooms on each of the 6 floors. The Board may wish to confirm with the applicant whether any exterior HVAC units or other mechanical units are proposed and condition screening accordingly.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An overhead wire connection across Braley Road is proposed. The Board may wish to discuss back-up generator or similar ancillary energy support system in the event of a power outage with the applicant. Plans include a forced sewer main along Braley Road to connect at Susan Road as part of the project’s off-site improvements. The Board may wish to discuss construction impacts of the forced main with the applicant. Planning Staff defers to the Department of Public Infrastructure regarding compliance with the City’s Rules and Regulations.
Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans do not indicate exterior lighting elements. The Board may wish to request plans be revised to include lighting locations and that a photometric plan be provided The Board may wish to discuss DarkSky lighting with the applicant and consider a condition to the decision that all exterior lighting shall be dark-sky friendly lighting, with a warm color temperature not to exceed 800 lumens per lamp.
Demolition and Erosion Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans indicate the construction entrance at the proposed south curb cut. Staging and stockpile areas are proposed at the south of the project site. Silt fencing is proposed at the wetland delineation between flags 3 and 11. The Board may wish to consider a condition relative to the removal of demolition and erosion controls post-construction, prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.
Architectural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Architectural elevations show a 6 story, flat-roof apartment building with a brick veneer. The Board may wish to discuss the appropriateness of exterior materials relative to the character of the surrounding neighborhood with the applicant. Based on the location and scale of the building, the Board may wish to discuss glass options, architectural features, and best practices to reducing bird collisions with buildings with the applicant. Staff recommend the Board condition the decision subject to revisions of plans to include such elements that reflect best practices as described by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, with supporting evidence as provided by the National Wildlife Federation (Iss. Spring 2026). Floor plans indicate a first-floor office. The Board may wish to discuss property management relative to staffing and services provided with the applicant. The Board may wish to review the proposed amenities of the building with the applicant, including the locker area, resident bicycle parking, mailroom, laundry amenities, etc.
Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Cover Sheet indicates an application for a new ground sign will be filed under separate cover. Details for a new ground sign are included in the plan set. Staff recommend the Board review the ground sign and include it in any approval, if the applicant confirms it is the final sign design.
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The narrative proposes a timeline for construction of summer 2026 – summer 2027 at a cost of approximately \$10 million. The narrative states no phasing is proposed. Plans indicate a future development “by others” on an abutting parcel. The Board may wish to discuss the project timeline and clarify for the benefit of the Board and general public the build-out of the site and any proposed phasing of work.
Strategic Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In response to the increased demand for housing, New Bedford has initiated a zoning update to address the barriers to housing development, streamlined permitting, and

launched targeted interventions to unlock undeveloped and vacant properties, as called for in the 2023 housing plan “Building New Bedford”.

- The NB Resilient Dashboard identifies natural resources such as trees, native plant vegetation, dedicated green space, and pollinator species as critical to protecting our communities from the hazards of climate change.

Interdepartmental Review Comments

As required under city ordinance, the case submittal documents were distributed to City Clerk, City Solicitor, Health Department, Inspectional Services, Engineering, Public Infrastructure, Conservation Commission, Fire Department and School Department.

At the time of writing this report, no departmental memos have been received.

Site Photos



Outflow to wetlands from abandoned bog
Looking south from the south of the site.



Footpaths along overgrown berms.
Looking south from the east side of the site.

Fieldstone and cut stone stockpiles.
Looking north from the east side of the site.



Damaged and abandoned infrastructure in the bogs.
Looking west from the east side of the site.



Meadow grasses growing over the abandoned bogs.
Looking west from the east side of the site.



Abandoned pump house.
At the north of the property along the south side of the pond.



Area to be developed.
Looking north from the east of the property.



Watercourses remain around the site.
This one is at the west of the property.

Materials for Consideration

The engineered plan submission is shown as “Proposed Beaver Brook Residences” dated 3/26/26, and prepared by Prime Engineering of Lakeville, MA. The plans are stamped by Richard J. Rheume. The plan set consists of the following sheets:

- COVER SHEET
- OVERALL PARCEL PLAN
- EXISTING CONDITIONS PLAN
- SITE LAYOUT PLAN
- EROSION CONTROL PLAN
- GRADING & DRAINAGE PLAN
- UTILITIES PLAN
- LANDSCAPE PLAN
- TRUCK & EMERGENCY ACCESS PLAN
- OFF SITE SEWER IMPROVEMENTS
- OVERALL FORCEMAIN LAYOUT PLAN
- FORCEMAIN LAYOUT PLAN-1
- FORCEMAIN LAYOUT PLAN-2

- DETAILS-1
- DETAILS-2
- DETAILS-3
- DETAILS-4
- DETAILS-5: PUMP CHAMBER

The architectural plan submission is shown as “Beaver Brook Residences” dated 4/13/26, and prepared by RT Architecture, Inc., of Marion, MA. The plan set consists of the following sheets:

- T-1 COVER SHEET
- A 1.1 PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS, FLOOR 1 AND 2
- A 1.2 PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS, FLOOR 3 AND 4
- A 1.3 PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS, FLOOR 5 AND 6
- A 4.1 PROPOSED ELEVATIONS
- A 4.2 PROPOSED ELEVATIONS AND RENDERINGS

Recommended Conditions

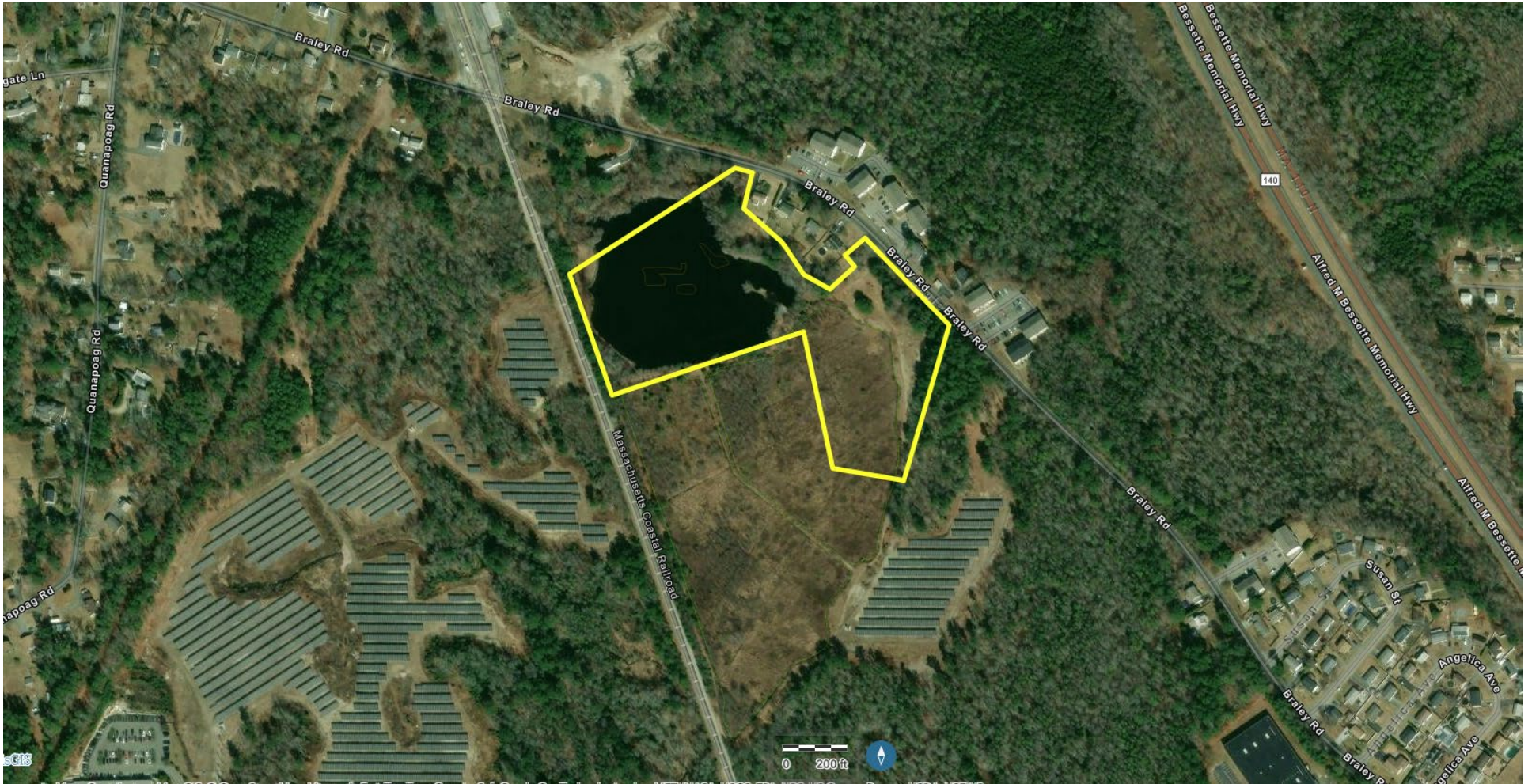
Having reviewed the submitted materials, **Planning staff recommend the Board continue the case subject to:**

- Results of test pits on the site and any peer review requested by the Board.
- Submission of a lighting and photometric plan for exterior and parking lot lighting.
- Revision of plans showing all proposed improvements for trails and the remaining wetland areas west of the building site, including any proposed wetland mitigations, and the relocation of the transformer.
- Submission of a waste management plan confirming the dumpsters provided are adequate for the proposed residential density and demonstrating compliance with the City's recycling regulations.
- Any additional revisions requested by the Board.

Materials Provided by the Applicant are available at: <https://www.newbedford-ma.gov/planning/planning-board-agenda-info-2026/>

Staff Report prepared by: Rachel Mulroy Staff Planner

Reviewed by: Michael McCarthy, Assistant City Planner & Jennifer Carloni, City Planner



WS Braley Road Map: 135 Lot: 9

NOTE: Property line is approximate; for discussion purposes, only. Aerial image is oriented north.