

1 **Planning Board Meeting**
2 **7:00 p.m. January 27, 2026 at the Meeting House**
3

4 **Members Present:** Rich Marcou (Vice-Chair), Greg Meeh, Logan Snyder, Megan Portnoy,
5 Joshua Gordon, Scott Doherty (Selectboard Rep), Clifton Mathieu (Alternate)
6

7 **Members Absent:** Brendan O'Donnell (Chair), Hillary Nelson (Alternate)
8

9 **Others Present:** Kal McKay (Admin Assistant), Edgar Rivera (Libertad Press NH), Rob Riley,
10 Linda Bliss, David Booth (via Zoom), Calvin Todd, Matt McKerley, Steve Cochrane, Mark
11 Sargent, Bryan Bailey
12

13 **Call to Order**

14 The Planning Board meeting was called to order at 7 p.m.
15

16 Rich asked how many people are in attendance because they got a notice in the mail. Most
17 people in the room raised their hands, so Rich decided to do the public hearing for the proposed
18 zoning amendments first.
19

20 **Proposed Zoning Amendments**

21 Rich opened the public hearing on the proposed zoning amendments at 7:01 p.m.
22

23 Rich and Kal explained that the Town sent out letters to property owners who own property in
24 districts with 100 or fewer properties in order to notify them about this hearing per RSA 675:7, I-
25 a. Canterbury has 5 such districts: Commercial, Industrial, Natural Resource, Center Historic,
26 and Shaker Village Museum Preservation. This notice must be sent when a zoning amendment is
27 proposed that would change a boundary of a zoning district, change the minimum lot sizes, or
28 change the “permitted uses”. This includes changes that affect the entire town, not just ones that
29 target the small district. “Permitted uses” is a very general term, so we will likely need to send
30 these out every year.
31

32 Rich reviewed the proposed zoning amendments and opened the hearing to public comment.
33

34 Rob Riley of Old Tilton Road asked if any of the proposed articles disproportionately impact any
35 of the districts that were notified. Rich confirmed that the proposed changes were for all districts
36 and did not disproportionately affect the notified property owners.
37

38 Linda Bliss of Baptist Road asked where she could get more information about the warrant
39 articles since she won't be able to attend Town Meeting. Rich explained these are the ones that
40 will be on the ballot on voting day (March 10), not the ones that will be discussed at Town
41 Meeting (March 13). The Board had detailed discussion of them at the 1/13/26 meeting, so
42 reading those minutes/watching that video might be helpful.
43

44 David Booth of Baptist Road (via Zoom) spoke against the proposed cluster subdivision changes
45 (Article 6). By changing the allowed density to 50% of what a regular subdivision would allow,
46 it disincentivizes using this article and could result in more urban sprawl.

47 Joshua explained that the Board is doing this on purpose as a way to decrease the chances of it
48 being used in 2026. The cluster subdivision ordinance is flawed and the Board didn't have time
49 to fix it before the deadlines for preparing the 2026 warrant articles. Rather than removing the
50 article completely and trying to reinstate a fixed version next year, the Board is reducing the
51 density for 2026 and will introduce a fixed version for 2027.

52 Mr. Booth explained his opinion that zoning changes should be encouraging growth in town
53 centers to discourage sprawl. He expressed concern that this amendment would worsen sprawl.

54

55 Calvin Todd of Barnett Road asked if the Board will also be changing the density bonuses or just
56 changing the baseline density to 50%. Rich confirmed this year would just be changing the
57 baseline density.

58 Logan and Calvin discussed whether or not reducing the baseline would actually leave room for
59 the density bonus to be an attractive incentive for developers. Calvin felt the number of lots this
60 would provide was too small compared to what could be done with a regular subdivision. Logan
61 explained that almost all lots in Canterbury couldn't actually be developed as a normal
62 subdivision due to not meeting frontage requirements.

63 Joshua agreed with David Booth's concerns. He believes that 50% was too low and would prefer
64 75%.

65 Rich, Megan, and Greg all reiterated the point that the Board will be looking closely at the
66 density bonuses this coming year, but that this is a complicated topic and the Board would have
67 had to have final language prepared weeks ago to meet the deadlines.

68

69 Matt McKerley of Old Boyce Road asked how the 50% division of commercial vs residential is
70 calculated, by acres or units. Rich explained that the 50% of baseline density would be based on
71 the number of lots allowed in the district in question rounded to the nearest whole unit. (Note:
72 Mr. McKerley's original question was not answered.)

73

74 Steve Cochran of Old Tilton Road asked if the Board was looking for more commercial land
75 around Exit 18. He believes that his property on the western side of Exit 18 was changed to
76 commercial from agricultural by a previous Planning Board. Kal asked Steve to come to the
77 office to discuss. They had paperwork for him regarding his questions.

78

79 Rich closed the hearing to public comment at 7:24 p.m.

80

81 Greg moved to submit the proposed warrant article to define and ban data centers. Joshua
82 seconded.

83

84 Clifton reiterated his concerns from the last meeting. The language doesn't differentiate between
85 traditional data centers and AI data centers. Traditional ones don't use as much energy/water and
86 he doesn't want to discourage those from coming to town.

87

88 Rich reiterated his concerns from the last meeting. He doesn't think the Merrimack River
89 provides enough water for a data center at its low point in the summer. He also thinks the
90 electricity prices in NH are too high to make data centers feasible here.

91

92 Logan reiterated their reasons for supporting this article. Even if it is unlikely that a data center
93 would come to town, we can't assume that today's technical limits will continue to exist in the
94 future. The legislation needs to be in place before a data center application arrives or it will end
95 up in court. Logan doesn't want any data centers, so they aren't concerned about differentiating
96 between traditional and AI.

97

98 Joshua seconded Logan's points.

99

100 The Board voted on the motion to submit the proposed warrant article to define and ban data
101 centers. Scott, Megan, Joshua, Greg, and Logan voted aye. Clifton and Rich voted nay. Motion
102 carried.

103

104 Greg moved to submit the proposed warrant article to define gross living area for ADUs. Logan
105 seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.

106

107 Joshua moved to submit the proposed warrant article to bring the zoning ordinance into
108 compliance with legislative changes. Greg seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.

109

110 Greg moved to submit the proposed warrant article to create a wetland setback ordinance. Megan
111 seconded.

112

113 Clifton reiterated his concern from the previous meeting that 25 ft is not enough and the setback
114 should be 50 ft.

115

116 This ordinance was created by a joint subcommittee with the Conservation Commission.
117 Brendan and Megan were the Planning Board reps on the subcommittee. They wrote the
118 ordinance with a smallish setback of 25 ft so the townspeople could vote on if they wanted this
119 ordinance at all. If this is passed and the Board gets feedback that the townspeople would like a
120 stronger ordinance, edits can be proposed in the future. Megan recommended not changing the
121 proposal tonight.

122

123 The Board voted on the motion to submit the proposed warrant article to create a wetland setback
124 ordinance. Scott, Megan, Joshua, Greg, Rich, and Logan voted aye. Clifton voted nay. Motion
125 carried.

126

127 Greg moved to submit the proposed warrant article to edit the cluster subdivision ordinance
128 section 6.4.C. Joshua seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.

129

130 Greg commented that even though he wasn't able to attend the previous meeting, he read the
131 minutes and thought the Board had a very thoughtful and productive discussion on the proposed
132 articles.

133

134 **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

135 Clifton moved to approve the minutes for the Planning Board meeting on January 13, 2026. Rich
136 seconded.

137

138 Kal read aloud the proposed changes.

139 On line 76, clarify that Joshua said the Merrimack River “could” be a sufficient source of water,
140 not that it was definitely a sufficient source. On line 77, clarify that Rich said the Merrimack
141 wouldn’t be a sufficient source of water “at it’s low point in the summer”.

142

143 The Board voted on the motion to approve the minutes for the Planning Board meeting on
144 January 13, 2026 as amended. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.

145

146 **Subdivision Application for Map 258 Lot 26**

147 This hearing was continued from the 1/13/2026 Planning Board meeting.

148

149 Mark Sargent of the Richard D. Bartlett & Associates, LLC surveying group attended to
150 represent the applicant, Amy Fifield.

151

152 Mr. Sargent explained that the proposed subdivision is for 129 Pickard Road and would divide
153 the property into 3 parcels (Lots 26, 26-1, 26-2). All 3 meet the minimum lot size requirement (3
154 acres). Lot 26-2 would only have frontage on Old Schoolhouse Road which is Class VI, so it
155 would be designated as an open space parcel.

156

157 Rich asked that a wetland scientist stamp the plan since there are wetland delineations on it. Mr.
158 Sargent agreed to do that.

159

160 Rich asked why Mr. Sargent put in a waiver request for marking wells and septic systems. Mr.
161 Sargent explained that he did mark them for the property in question, but he wasn’t able to do so
162 for a neighboring parcel because he wasn’t granted permission to enter that property. Many
163 towns require that the neighboring wells/septics be marked, so he requested a waiver. He
164 believes the well/septic on that neighboring property is greater than 75 ft away from the property
165 line.

166

167 Joshua asked how far the well on Lot 26 is from the edge of the property. Mr. Sargent estimated
168 about 200 ft.

169

170 Rich asked if there was an intention to move the driveway on Lot 26-1 so it goes directly to
171 Pickard Road instead of out to Old Schoolhouse Road. Mr. Sargent said he didn’t think so.

172

173 Rich asked that the dimensions of the existing structures be labeled on the plan since the Land
174 Development Regulations require it. Mr. Sargent agreed.

175

176 Rich requested that it be documented on the plan that Lot 26-2 is for open space uses only.

177

178 Rich recapped the three things the Board would like added to the plan: wetland stamp,
179 dimensions of the existing structures, and the open spaces designation for Lot 26-2.

180

181 There was some discussion about if the hearing should be continued so those items could be
182 added or if the application could be approved with those items as conditions of approval. The
183 Board decided to set them as conditions of approval, because the additional information wouldn’t

184 substantively alter the facts of the case and the Board Chair will check for them before signing
185 the mylar.

186
187 Rich opened the hearing to public comment. No one spoke.

188
189 Joshua moved to approve the application on the conditions that the plan is stamped by a certified
190 wetland scientist, verbiage is added to the plan to indicate that Lot 26-2 is for “open space uses
191 only”, and the dimensions of the existing buildings are shown on the plan. Clifton seconded. All
192 in favor by roll call, motion carried.

193
194 **Subdivision Application for Map 208 Lot 8**

195 This hearing was continued from the 1/13/2026 Planning Board meeting.

196
197 Surveyor Bryan Bailey attended to represent the applicants Mark and Sharon Akerstrom.

198
199 At the last meeting, the Board decided that the application wasn’t complete and asked for
200 modifications to the plan.

201
202 Mr. Bailey explained the new maps. Potential building sites and driveways have been added on
203 all three proposed lots to prove they can be placed to avoid wetlands and setbacks.

204
205 Joshua asked about visibility and line of site for the driveways. Scott confirmed that Road Agent
206 John O’Connor looked at the proposed driveways and okayed the site lines.

207
208 Rich asked what the units were in the Parcel Line Table. Mr. Bailey clarified that they are in feet
209 and confirmed he will indicate that on the plan.

210
211 Rich opened the hearing to public comment. No one spoke.

212
213 Logan moved to determine the application complete. Greg seconded. All in favor by roll call,
214 motion carried.

215
216 Joshua moved to approve the application. Megan seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion
217 carried.

218
219 **Lot Merger for Map 264 Lot 25**

220 The Board didn’t sign the paperwork for this application after they approved it at the 1/13/26
221 meeting. Four Board members who were present at the vote signed the paperwork.

222
223 **Building Permit Data**

224 Joshua asked if there was any movement on getting the building permit data he requested last
225 time.

226 Scott said he talked to Town Administrator Ken Folsom but hadn’t heard back yet. He requested
227 quarterly reports that splits the data between primary residences and ADUs.

228
229

230 **Warrant Article Communication**

231 Megan asked for the Board to confirm their reasoning behind each of the proposed zoning
232 amendments so that she could write up a draft public communication for the Board to review at
233 the next meeting.

234
235 The Board members discussed their reasons for voting for/against the wetland setback ordinance.
236 Greg noted a proposal like this has been in the works for at least 10 years.
237 Logan noted that a number of people felt the setback should be larger, but the Board decided to
238 go with a more moderate ordinance since something similar had been proposed many years ago
239 and was voted down.

240 Clifton noted that this setback is a lot less than other towns.

241
242 The Board noted that the legislative compliance amendment is due to new laws being passed in
243 2025 by the NH State Legislature.

244
245 The Board noted that the gross living area definition is just for clarification.

246
247 The Board members discussed their reasons for voting for the cluster subdivision amendment.

248 Joshua noted that the ordinance is intended to incentivize putting aside open space when
249 developing, but the Exit 18 application showed there were flaws.

250 Logan noted that the 50% number wasn't really chosen specifically, but the reduction in general
251 was to put more emphasis on the density bonuses.

252 Greg noted that the change is meant to put the brakes on the process so the Board has time to fix
253 the ordinance.

254 There was some discussion on how to word the idea that this change gives the Board more
255 control over what developers do.

256 The Board will focus their revisions this year on the bonus structure.

257
258 Megan will write up a draft of the communication and have Kal distribute it to the Board for the
259 next meeting.

260
261 Clifton asked if the ballot could show how many Board members voted for/against each
262 amendment. Kal will check with Town Clerk Sam Papps if it can legally go on the ballot. It
263 could at least be included in the communication Megan is writing up.

264
265 **Adjournment**

266 Logan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. Greg seconded. All in favor by roll
267 call, motion carried.

268
269 Next Meeting: 2026 February 10, 7:00 p.m. at the Meeting House
270 Minutes submitted by Kathleen McKay, Administrative Assistant