

Land Use Boards Draft Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: April 23, 2026, 7:00 PM

Attendance: Scott Doherty (Board of Selectmen), Ken Folsom (Town Administrator), Brendan O'Donnell (Planning Board Chair), Chery Andrews (Recording Secretary), Randi Johnson (Zoning Board Alternate), Mandy Irving (Town Assessor), Kal McKay (Administrative Assistant), Calvin Todd (Board of Selectmen), Kevin Bragg (Historic District Chair), Web Stout (Zoning Board Vice Chair), Scott Herrick (Zoning Board Member), Jim Wieck (Zoning Board Chair), Logan Snyder (Planning Board Member), Joshua Gordon (Planning Board Member), Kelly Short (Conservation Commission Chair), Lisa Carlson (Zoning Board Alternate and Secretary), Janice DellaCroce (Planning Board Member), Mark Stevens (Agricultural Commission Chair, via Zoom), Michelle Hammond (Land Use Administrator).

Administrative

Right-to-Know (RTK) training: Kal discussed Right-to-Know training requirements and noted that it is mandatory for people appointed by the Select Board and optional (but recommended) for newly elected members. The training will be held on May 19, 2026, at 6:30 PM at Town Hall. The first 15 minutes of the May 19th meeting will cover updates and new information; if you have attended in the past, you do not have to stay for the remainder of the meeting.

Email scams: Kal discussed recent fraudulent emails targeting applicants during the application process with the land use boards. Michelle is notifying all new applicants when an application is received and will include a caution that the Town will not request payment or sensitive information by email. The information the scammers use is public information. (Nothing has been hacked.) Brendan suggested redacting (or omitting) applicant email addresses. Mandy asked whether other towns are experiencing similar issues; Logan noted this is very common.

Zoom bombing/cybersecurity: Kal discussed meeting security controls for Zoom. The Zoom waiting room is enabled, and hosts will admit participants as appropriate. Written instructions for starting a meeting and managing basic security settings (including waiting room/admit, removing disruptive participants, and controlling screen sharing) are posted next to the Meeting House laptop.

Email accounts: Members were reminded to use their official town/government email accounts for all board business to support record retention and Right-to-Know compliance. All members should confirm they can access their accounts (login, password reset, and sending/receiving) and notify Kal if assistance is needed. It was also noted that using personal accounts can create public records and security issues.

Website: The Town website login issue has been resolved. Kal will set up user access as needed (including creating/confirming accounts and permissions) for board members who require posting or editing privileges.

Project Updates

Gas Station Project

The pump infrastructure has been installed, and the parking lot is now paved. The pump stands and canopy supports have been put in place, and the operator is beginning the process of hiring staff.

A change to the sign location has been proposed. The Zoning Board determined that if the sign is illuminated, they would schedule a re-hearing; however, if the sign remains non-illuminated, no re-hearing is required.

The Building Inspector has not received any updates pertaining to structural changes to the building itself. Renovations are limited to interior improvements at this time. Additionally, the project includes the installation of an exterior walk-in freezer located on the highway ramp side of the building, with dimensions of 10 feet by 10 feet.

West Road/Condo Project

The West Road/Condo Project has obtained its Alteration of Terrain (AOT) permit and is currently progressing with site preparation and dirt excavation. The loam pile on-site will be screened and repurposed for landscaping around the development. The project has scheduled the paving of roads for June 1, 2026.

Store

Approximately a year and a half ago, the Zoning Board of Adjustment conducted a review of the store as a continuation of the store's existing use.

Storage Units

Ken provided an overview of the town's ongoing challenges with storage units. He reported that the units located on Hall Road have experienced repeated issues, most notably individuals residing within the units, which is not permitted under town regulations.

These unauthorized living situations have led to frequent fire alarm activations. As a result, fines have been imposed under the town ordinance, with penalties reaching up to \$1,200 for violations.

Mandy is actively working with the owners of the storage units to conduct a proper assessment. However, this process has encountered delays and difficulties due to a lack of cooperation from the ownership, which has hindered progress.

Ken advised that any future applications related to storage units should clearly outline all requirements and enforcement expectations to ensure compliance and prevent similar issues moving forward.

Zoning Changes

The Planning Board approved five warrant articles this year. For copies, please contact Kal.

Zoning Ordinance Updates

Two updates were recently made to the town's zoning ordinance. These changes were prompted by revisions to the wetland and floodplain maps issued by FEMA. As a result, the ordinance was amended to reflect the updated FEMA information.

Additionally, Kal reorganized the zoning ordinance's table of uses. This reorganization was completed strictly for clarity and ease of reference; no changes were made to its actual content or the uses permitted within each zoning category.

Cluster Subdivision Ordinance: Brendan stated the Planning Board is evaluating a lower baseline density, a fixed bonus density, and discretionary bonuses to protect open space. He asked members to email any suggestions on the Cluster Subdivision Ordinance, and he will bring them up at the next Planning Board meeting.

Kelly noted that “open space” is not necessarily protected space, and the committee would like to see the bonus structured to encourage developers. For example, a developer could set aside more than 20 acres and place it under a conservation easement in exchange for a density bonus, so it legally remains open space in perpetuity.

Brendan noted that language has been written into the condominium documents to address long-term responsibility. The condo association will be responsible for maintaining open space (kept in a field state, mowed, etc.). Public access could be addressed as a separate bonus. Affordable housing is not accessible right now, so an additional bonus could include 10% more units if they are sold at a set size of 1,500 sq. ft. or less, or are single-story, for example—features that would make units more accessible for older residents and others who need single-floor living.

Discussion also included adding clarity/definitions for open space vs. undisturbed space, and whether stylistic elements could be tied to bonus density.

The Historic District and Conservation Commission was invited to the next Planning Board meeting to discuss the cluster subdivision ordinance and definitions of open and undisturbed space.

Other Business

Preapproved DADU design plans: Brendan suggested creating preapproved design plans for Detached ADUs (DADUs). This would help residents get approvals faster and at lower costs. He advised starting with code enforcement and the Select Board and examining strategies used by other towns (Dover as an example).

ADU structures/enforcement: It was noted that living in campers is not allowed under current zoning regulations. Complaints must be submitted in writing and cannot be anonymous;

enforcement relies on a reasonable suspicion standard, and the building inspector will investigate.

Conservation Commission Wetlands Setback

The Conservation Commission is seeking to resolve a clerical error in the existing zoning ordinance regarding wetlands setbacks. Currently, setbacks apply to wetlands larger than 2,000 square feet, which unintentionally includes vernal pools. Vernal pools are typically much smaller.

To address this issue, the CCC will draft revised language for the ordinance. Audra and Bob will reach out to Ken and Joel to provide guidance on creating a practical definition and recognition standard for wetlands. During discussions, a general guideline was suggested: if an area is such that a person would avoid walking through it in sneakers, it is likely considered a wetland. For landowners with concerns about whether a particular area qualifies as a wetland, consultation with a wetland scientist may be necessary.

The group acknowledged that Canterbury contains a significant number of wetlands, underscoring the importance of clear definitions and standards in the ordinance.

Wetlands across property lines: Web asked whether 2,000-square-foot wetlands crossing a property line are treated as contiguous; the response indicated they are contiguous.

Rezoning at Exit 18

Rezoning at Exit 18 will be discussed at the next Planning Board meeting. Any change requires a warrant article and public notice; it was noted that there is a conservation easement on the land.

Zones with fewer than 100 residents will get public notices regarding proposed zoning changes. Next year, updates will be shared through the newsletter and town email, along with an FAQ in letters. Adaptive reuse was also referenced for future discussion.

Article 4 (non-conforming use): Proposed removal of Sections 4.1 and 4.2; voluntary and involuntary mergers to be reviewed by the Planning Board.

Article 19: Clarify if a campground is allowed on single-family parcels—Planning Board to review how campground use is reflected/handled in the Table of Uses.

Definition of “Tiny House”: Members noted to monitor potential state legislation upcoming this summer.

Land Use Change Tax Allocation

Calvin stated that the Select Board would coordinate with Conservation to determine percentage allocation. At present, all land change use tax goes to the Conservation Commission per town vote. Kelly mentioned the LCHIP Fund grant and suggested safeguards might be feasible, but further discussion is required.

Process Questions

Applicant guidance: It was noted that applicants are often unsure what is required. Brendan offered to provide a short outline of a Planning Board hearing process. An instructional process will be drafted for a ZBA application to help ensure applications are administratively complete.

Legislative & Other Updates

Legislative/zoning letters: Letters from the Zoning and Planning Boards were discussed, particularly regarding the data-center topic at the state level. Planning Board members have been deputized to speak, which has been positive. Logan will speak with a Concord Monitor contact regarding state-level data centers. The Select Board will add this to the agenda.

Mark Stevens (Agricultural Commission) has questions and concerns for the Planning Board regarding open space and wetland buffer setbacks and would like to attend a work session when these topics are on the agenda.

State Legislation Discussion

Kelly brought attention to Senate Bill 564, recommending it as a topic for further discussion. Bob Steenson indicated his intention to contact a state senator regarding this bill. The Planning Board asked to have Bob attend a future meeting to provide additional insight on Senate Bill 564.

CCC Mapping Update

The Conservation Commission (CCC) has partnered with the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC) to create a detailed map that highlights key conservation areas and priorities within the community. As a result of recent updates to the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department's Wildlife Action Plan, the CCC has begun revising its map to incorporate the latest information. Upon completion of this updated map, the CCC will share it with the other boards.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, September 15, 2026. Members were asked to email items (Zoning/Warrant Articles) for discussion to Kal; she will send out a reminder. (Note: Planning Board begins drafting language at this time of year.)

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Michelle Hammond, Land Use Administrator