

Proposed 2027 Zoning Ordinance Changes

As of 9/15/2026

Cluster Subdivision Ordinance

Proposed By: Planning Board

Status: Discussed at PB meetings. Waiting on draft.

Summary of Changes: Lots of discussed changes.

Wetlands Setback Ordinance

Proposed By: Conservation Commission

Status: Draft agreed upon by PB and CCC.

Summary of Changes: Remove vernal pools size minimum. This was a mistake in the ordinance drafted last year. 2K sqft was only meant to apply to wetlands, not vernal pools.

Warrant Article Draft:

Are you in favor of amending the Town of Canterbury Zoning Ordinance Article 5.2.D.3. (Wetland Setback) as follows (removals crossed out):

“No new structures may be erected within 25 feet of, and no land disturbing activity may be conducted within 15 feet of: (i) wetlands that are larger than 2,000 square feet; (ii) vernal pools ~~that are larger than 2,000 square feet~~; or (iii) surface waters. The setback distance is measured from the edge of the wetland, vernal pool, or surface water to the edge of soil disturbance or foundation of structure.”

Building Permits Article Expired

Proposed By: Land Use Office

Status: Not discussed yet.

Summary of Changes: Article 11.8 says “This Article becomes effective upon adoption and shall remain in effect until March 31, 2026. However, no less frequently than every two years, the Planning Board shall review growth rates in the region and shall make a recommendation as to whether the percentage growth rate should be increased or decreased in order to achieve the purposes stated in Section 11.0.” so it looks like the limit on building permits expired? Should we just edit it to remove the expiration? Why was an expiration added in the first place?

Building Permits for ROW-only Access

Proposed By: Land Use Office

Status: No draft yet.

Summary of Changes: Per RSA 674:41, the Town cannot issue building permits for land that can only be accessed by a right of way (with some exceptions).

Should this be referenced in Article 11 Building Permits?

Article 5.2.E. Road Frontage and Access should be updated to make it clear that we cannot issue building permits in those circumstances.

Special Exception Validity Length

Proposed By: Zoning Board

Status: Discussed by ZBA. Draft not yet reviewed.

Summary of Changes: RSA 674:33,IV(b) says SE's are "valid if exercised within 2 years from the date of final approval..." Our ordinance says "A permit granted under a special exception shall expire if such use shall cease for more than one year." To reduce confusion about how long an SE is valid for, the wording should be changed.

Warrant Article Draft:

Are you in favor of amending the Town of Canterbury Zoning Ordinance Article 8.2.A. as follows (additions underlined, removals crossed out):

Per RSA 674:33,IV.(b), a permit granted under a special exception shall be valid if exercised within 2 years from the date of final approval, or as further extended by the Zoning Board of Adjustment for good cause, provided that no such special exception shall expire within 6 months after the resolution of a planning application filed in reliance upon the special exception. If a use permitted under a special exception is exercised and then ceases for more than one year, the permit shall expire. ~~A permit granted under a special exception shall expire if such use shall cease for more than one year.~~

Definitions for Table of Uses

Proposed By: Land Use Office

Status: Not discussed yet.

Summary of Changes: There are quite a few items in the Table of Uses that are not actually defined. This may be a project for next year or we could pick out a couple to start with.

Bed and breakfast/inn, church, commercial laundry, convenience store, educational facilities, commercial greenhouse, golf course, hotel/motel, recreation facility, nursing home/convalescent facility, office, firing range, parking lot, restaurant, retail establishment, veterinarian care, wholesale

Campgrounds Clarification

Proposed By: Land Use Office

Status: Draft not yet reviewed.

Summary of Changes: Table of Uses says that campgrounds may only be an accessory use to single-family dwelling principal residential use but Article 19 doesn't say that. These should be made consistent.

Warrant Article Draft:

Are you in favor of amending the Town of Canterbury Zoning Ordinance Article 19. (Campgrounds) as follows (additions underlined):

19.1: "These provisions are intended to allow Campgrounds as an accessory use to a Single-family Principal Residential Use..."

19.4: "Campgrounds are permitted in the Agricultural/Conservation or Rural districts as an accessory use to a Single-family Principal Residential Use where the property owner resides in the residence..."

Article 4 Clean-up

Proposed By: Land Use Office

Status: Draft not yet reviewed.

Summary of Changes: 4.2 negates 4.1, so both should be removed.

Warrant Article Draft:

Are you in favor of amending the Town of Canterbury Zoning Ordinance Article 4 (Non-Confirming Use) by removing sections 4.1 and 4.2?

Child Care Centers

Proposed By: Land Use Office

Status: Not discussed yet.

Summary of Changes: A 2026 legislative change requires municipalities to allow for child care agencies in their ordinances and regulations, in some cases requiring them to be permitted by right. We do not currently have anything in our ordinance about child care centers. Since we have permissive zoning, it might be a good idea to add it to the table of uses and the list of definitions.

Likely best to phrase the definition(s) as just referring to the RSAs in case they change the definitions in future years.

The Table of Uses would need to break it out into different types of child-care since it looks like the requirements for allowing it are different between home-based centers and centers meant for employees of a business and centers over/under 30 children.

We would definitely need to define educational facilities too so there isn't confusion between the two uses.