



**Stratham Planning Board Meeting Minutes**  
**January 17, 2024**  
**Stratham Municipal Center**  
**Time: 7:00 pm**

**Members Present:** Thomas House, Chair  
Mike Houghton, Select Board's Representative  
David Canada, Vice Chair  
Chris Zaremba, Regular Member  
John Kunowski, Regular Member  
Nate Allison, Alternate Member

**Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** Mark Connors, Director of Planning and Community Development

**1. Call to Order/Roll Call**

Mr. House called the meeting to order at 6:59 pm and took roll call.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

a. January 3, 2024

**Mr. Zaremba made a motion to approve the January 3, 2024 meeting minutes. Mr. Kunowski seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

**3. Public Hearing:**

a. The Planning Board held a public hearing on the proposed zoning amendments outlined below.

Mr. House introduced that this is the second public hearing for articles for the March ballot. He stated that the Board has reviewed the draft language a number of times and no members of the public are present at the meeting. He introduced each of the amendments and asked Mr. Connors to describe any changes.

**Mr. Canada made a motion to close the public hearing from January 3, 2024. Mr. Kunowski seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

**Mr. Canada made a motion to open the public hearing. Mr. Zaremba seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

Amendment #2: To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section II Definitions, and Section III, Table 3.6 Table of Uses, and Footnotes to Table 3.6 to include new definitions and property uses that are not

45 defined under the Ordinance. This is a housekeeping amendment to better define terms, building  
46 uses and associated requirements, in the Zoning Ordinance.

47  
48 Mr. Connors stated there are no changes to Article #1 from the last public hearing.

49  
50 **Mr. Zaremba made a motion to advance Amendment #2 to town ballot. Mr. Kunowski**  
51 **seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

52  
53 **Mr. Zaremba made a motion that the Planning Board support Amendment #2. Mr. Kunowski**  
54 **seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

55  
56 Amendment #3: To amend the Building Ordinance, Article III *Permits*, to clarify the circumstances  
57 in which the Building Inspector may require that a plan prepared and stamped by a licensed land  
58 surveyor or certified wetland scientist be submitted with a building permit application? This  
59 amendment provides the Building Inspector discretion to require a plan prepared and stamped by  
60 a certified professional prior to the issuance of a building permit where there is a reasonable basis  
61 for questioning whether an application meets the requirements of the Zoning and Building  
62 Ordinances and/or the State Building and Fire Codes.

63  
64 **Mr. Canada made a motion to advance Amendment #3 to town ballot. Mr. Houghton**  
65 **seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

66  
67 **Mr. Canada made a motion that the Planning Board support Amendment #3. Mr. Zaremba**  
68 **seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

69  
70 Amendment #4: To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section V *Supplementary Regulations*, Sub-  
71 section 5.12 *Home Occupation* to clarify the requirements associated with home occupations? This  
72 amendment would limit the aggregate size of home occupations and clarify requirements  
73 associated with inspections and renewals of home occupations.

74  
75 Mr. Connors stated there were no changes to Article #3 or Article #4 from the last public hearing.

76  
77 **Mr. Houghton made a motion to advance Amendment #4 to town ballot. Mr. Zaremba**  
78 **seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

79  
80 **Mr. Houghton made a motion that the Planning Board support Amendment #4. Mr. Zaremba**  
81 **seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

82  
83 Amendment #5: To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section III, *Footnotes to Table 3.6* to consolidate  
84 the number of criteria the Planning Board considers in Conditional Use Permit applications from  
85 11 criteria to 7 criteria. The purpose of this amendment is to expedite reviews of Conditional Use  
86 Permit applications while maintaining core review criteria.

87  
88 **Mr. Zaremba made a motion to advance Amendment #5 to town ballot. Mr. Kunowski**  
89 **seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

90  
91 **Mr. Zaremba made a motion that the Planning Board support Amendment #5. Mr. Kunowski**  
92 **seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

94 Amendment #6: To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section VIII *Residential Open Space Cluster*  
95 *Development*, to incorporate four major changes to the requirements associated with residential  
96 cluster developments. This amendment would reduce the minimum lot size for cluster  
97 developments, establish minimum lot sizes for individual lots, require that open space parcels meet  
98 additional minimum requirements, and to require that historical and scenic resources be preserved  
99 and incorporated into such developments whenever practicable.

100  
101 Mr. Connors stated there are a few changes to this Article from the last public hearing. References to  
102 feasibility with regards to historic structures was deleted. Additionally the percentage of wetlands  
103 allowed in the Open Space was reduced from 25% to 20%.

104  
105 **Mr. Zaremba made a motion to advance Amendment #6 to town ballot. Mr. Kunowski**  
106 **seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

107  
108 **Mr. Zaremba made a motion that the Planning Board support Amendment #6. Mr. Kunowski**  
109 **seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

110  
111 Amendment #7: To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section V *Supplementary Regulations*, to create  
112 a new Sub-section 5.14 for *Small Accessory Structures*. The purpose of this amendment is to  
113 provide for reduced side, rear, and wetland setbacks for small sheds or accessory structures under  
114 120 square-feet in size provided that the structure meets a number of criteria.

115  
116 Mr. Connors stated there are no changes to this Article from the last public hearing.

117  
118 **Mr. Zaremba made a motion to advance Amendment #7 to town ballot. Mr. Kunowski**  
119 **seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

120  
121 **Mr. Zaremba made a motion that the Planning Board support Amendment #7. Mr. Kunowski**  
122 **seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

123  
124 Amendment #8: To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section IV *Dimensional Regulations*, *Sub-*  
125 *section 4.1.4 Maximum Residential Density* to clarify that non-buildable areas, including wetlands,  
126 steep slopes, and areas protected by conservation easements or deed restrictions cannot be  
127 incorporated into maximum residential density calculations. This amendment would also reduce  
128 the maximum residential density in the Route 33 Heritage District from three units per acre to two  
129 units per acre.

130  
131 Mr. Connors stated there are no changes to this Article from the last public hearing.

132  
133 **Mr. Zaremba made a motion to advance Amendment #8 to town ballot. Mr. Kunowski**  
134 **seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

135  
136 **Mr. Zaremba made a motion that the Planning Board support Amendment #8. Mr. Kunowski**  
137 **seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

138  
139 Amendment #9: To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section V *Supplementary Regulations*, *Sub-*  
140 *section 5.13 Solar Energy Systems* to allow small-scale ground-mount solar energy systems by  
141 right if they meet a number of minimum criteria. The purpose of this amendment is to exempt  
142 small-scale solar energy systems from requiring a Conditional Use Permit by the Planning Board

143 if they meet certain minimum criteria.

144  
145 Mr. Connors stated there are no changes to this Article from the last public hearing.

146  
147 **Mr. Zaremba made a motion to advance Amendment #9 to town ballot. Mr. Kunowski**  
148 **seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

149  
150 **Mr. Zaremba made a motion that the Planning Board support Amendment #9. Mr. Kunowski**  
151 **seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

152  
153 Amendment #10: To amend Section V Supplementary Regulations to enact additional regulations,  
154 including screening requirements, on storage containers, semi trailers, and associated structures.

155  
156 Mr. Connors stated there was one change to this Article from the last public hearing. Previous language  
157 limited the requirements to recreational vehicles over 20 feet long. That language was deleted and the  
158 proposed ordinance would apply to all recreational vehicles with an exemption for vehicles that are  
159 registered and have passed inspection within the past 15 months.

160  
161 **Mr. Zaremba made a motion to advance Amendment #10 to the town ballot. Mr. Kunowski**  
162 **seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

163  
164 **Mr. Zaremba made a motion that the Planning Board support Amendment #10. Mr.**  
165 **Kunowski seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

166  
167 **Mr. Houghton made a motion to close the public hearing. Mr. Zaremba seconded the motion.**  
168 **All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

#### 169 170 4. Public Meeting

##### 171 172 a. Miscellaneous Community Planning Issues

##### 173 174 i. Open Space & Connectivity Plan Update

175  
176 Mr. Connors stated that a public event for the Open Space Plan has been scheduled for February  
177 12, 2024 at 6:00 pm at the Municipal Center. The draft recommendations of the plan will be  
178 presented along with a demonstration of the website for the plan. Mr. Connors asked the Board's  
179 assistance to get the word out and promote the event.

##### 180 181 ii. Housing Supply Update

182  
183 Mr. Connors directed the Board's attention to a staff memo on this topic. The State periodically  
184 releases the number of residential building permits that have been approved by towns. The recent  
185 release of data includes the number of residential building permits approved by municipality for  
186 the years 2019, 2020, and 2021. He stated that Merrimack is interesting because it has approved  
187 the highest number of units by far in the state and the units being added there are mostly multi-  
188 family units. There is also a lot of development in Salem and Lebanon. Stratham is comparable  
189 to other towns of its size in Rockingham County.

190  
191 Mr. Kunowski asked if most of the municipalities developing the most housing have public water

192 and sewer systems. Mr. Connors replied yes, he believes all of them do.

193

194 iii. Pending Land Use Applications Update

195

196 Mr. Connors presented an update on the Zoning Board meeting from last week that the ZBA  
197 approved the variance for residential single-family homes at the Stoneybrook parcel and denied  
198 an application for short-term rentals at 3 Apple Way.

199

200 Mr. House asked if there were any conditions on the Stoneybrook application. Mr. Connors  
201 replied yes, that the number of units and the design of development would be the purview of the  
202 Planning Board.

203

204 **Mr. Canada made a motion that the Planning Board enter a non-public session to discuss a**  
205 **matter which could be a legal issue. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor**  
206 **and the motion passed.**

207

208 **Mr. Canada made a motion to seal the minutes of the non-public session as its disclosure**  
209 **would render a proposed action ineffective. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted**  
210 **in favor and the motion passed.**

211

## 212 5. Adjournment

213

214 **Mr. Zaremba made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm. Mr. Canada seconded the**  
215 **motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**