



TOWN OF STRATHAM

Incorporated 1716

10 Bunker Hill Avenue · Stratham, NH 03885

Town Clerk/Tax Collector 603-772-4741

Select Board's Office/ Administration/ Assessing 603-772-7391

Code Enforcement/Building Inspections/Planning 603-772-7391

Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes January 29, 2026, 7:00 p.m.

Members present: Bruce Cote, Brad Jones, Bob Keating, Ryan Olsen, Allison Knab

Members absent: Chris West, Dan McAuliffe, Tim Copeland (alternate)

Non-members present: Vanessa Price, Director of Planning and Building; Eric Weinrieb of Altus Engineering; Jeff Stacy and Chris Redmond of Packer Brook Holdings

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes:

Mr. Cote motioned, Mr. Jones seconded a motion to approve the December minutes as written. The motion passed unanimously.

Presentation, Green and Natural Burial Cemeteries

Sarah Arslanian of Lotus and Lavendar Natural Burial gave a presentation on green burial and natural burial cemeteries. She has been working on starting a natural burial cemetery on the Seacoast and gave a presentation at the library attended by several town cemetery trustees. Green burials involve the use of a pine coffin, shroud, or similar, and are much better for the environment than conventional burials or cremations. She said there are three types of natural cemeteries: a hybrid where a conventional cemetery allows green burials, a natural space that is more like a park or a walk in the woods, and a cemetery on conservation land. She has spoken with SELT and the Forest Society about her goals for a natural cemetery. The location would likely need parking, similar to a traditional cemetery. Members asked about sinkage for natural burials; she described how soil is mounded up to alleviate this problem. They can also be grown as a meadow, so they do not need to be mowed as frequently. She has formed a nonprofit and is looking for the right parcel to place a natural cemetery.

Land Use Application, 170 Portsmouth Avenue, Tax Map 17 Lot 86

Eric Weinrieb of Altus Engineering presented an application to construct a manufacturing facility office/shop behind an existing historic home on Portsmouth Avenue. The project is seeking a conditional use permit for encroachment on a wetland setback and one for mixed use. The property is 2.5 acres, and the existing home and its septic system are within the wetland buffer. The building would be 6100 square feet to include an office and a shop for a residential contracting business. There would be three formal parking spaces at the office, plus a gravel drive with space for 17 parking spots. This would decrease the amount of impervious surface proposed. The project would not create any new impervious surface in the wetland buffer, but stormwater mitigation work would impact 2350 square feet of buffer area. This includes regrading, an infiltration basin, and a small overflow area. The applicant discussed that their waste goes to farms in the area, and not on-site. There is no proposal for lighting at the entry of the

Mr. Cote asked about the size of the building and how much of the open space was impacted. He was concerned about the percentage of the impacted area.

Mr. Keating asked about the size and layout of the building.

Ms. Knab asked about noise concerns and whether there are limits on work hours. She was concerned about the possibility of future owners with more intense manufacturing and impacts to neighbors.

The developers plan to place wetland signs and allow for natural growth in the buffer, which is currently mowed. They would like to do this at the 50-foot setback, as the house is in the 75-foot setback.

Ms. Knab asked about placing the signs at 75 feet where possible. She also noted to mitigate the wetland areas when possible.

The Commission was generally supportive of the conditional use permit regarding the wetland impacts provided the developers used gravel for the parking lot as discussed. Ms. Price will convey their discussion to the Planning Board.

Town and Other Business

- Correspondence and mail included a legislation update from the NHACC, a thank you note from SELT, a magazine from SELT, and a notice from DES about vegetative maintenance being done by Unutil along NH-08.
- We received monitoring reports for: Zarnowski property, 173 Winnicutt Road, 13 Spring Road, 321 Portsmouth Ave, 317 Portsmouth Ave. members reviewed the reports. There is an issue with unapproved trail development at 173 Winnicutt Road. Ms. Price will share this information with the town Code Enforcement Officer for further action.
- We received an invoice for dues from the NHACC in the amount of \$525. Mr. Keating motioned, Mr. Olsen seconded a motion to pay the dues from the Conservation Operating Budget. The motion passed unanimously.
- The Commission agreed to move the February meeting to February 19 because of school vacation week. Ms. Price will reserve the room.
- The Commission discussed the need for standing officers. Mr. Keating motioned, Ms. Knab seconded a motion to appoint Mr. Cote as vice chair and Mr. Olsen as secretary. All voted in favor. Ms. West is currently acting chair and we will discuss appointing her permanent chair when she is in attendance.
- Mr. Cote attended a webinar on climate science and the Conservation Commission roundtable. He discussed the information shared and said he would email out information from the webinar.

At 8:23 p.m. Ms. Knab motioned, Mr. Keating seconded a motion to go into nonpublic session to discuss possible land acquisitions. (RSA 91-A:3, II(d).) The motion passed unanimously.

At 8:30 Mr. Keating motioned, Mr. Olsen seconded a motion to exit non public session and seal the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Keating motioned, Mr. Cote seconded a motion to adjourn at 8:37p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Allison Knab