



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 April 22, 2026, 7:00 p.m.

Members present: Bruce Cote, Allison Knab, Bob Keating, Dan McAuliffe, Brad Jones, Ryan Olsen, Tim Copeland (Alternate)

Members absent: Chris West

Non-members present: Vanessa Price, Director of Planning and Building

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

Review of 210 Portsmouth Ave (Red Barn Property) Conditional Use Permit Application

- Mr. Brendan Sheehan (210 Portsmouth property owner) and Mr. John Lorden (Sr. Engineer, Beales Associates) were in attendance to speak about multiple conditional use permits that were submitted to the town for review. The Conditional Permits are related to wetland buffer encroachments that are proposed as part of the development of the 210 Portsmouth Ave. property (Red Barn Property). Mr. Sergio Bonilla (Soil Scientist) joined via telephone.
- Mr. Sheehan presented a general overview of the development plan and goals as well as updates to the previous proposal, which highlighted changes that had been made to multiple aspects of the development plan including: Driveway location, proposed relocation of historical barn, number of units to be constructed, removal of proposed dry hydrant, and wetland impacts as a result of the above-mentioned changes. The previous plan included nine duplexes, which has now been reduced to four in the current plan. The walking trails on the property were to remain.
- Mr. Lorden and Mr. Bonilla reviewed the wetland impacts and their proposed buffer enhancements and impact mitigation efforts.
 - Mr. Bonilla described his wetland impact assessment that was conducted in 2025 and articulated that a full assessment was made and that he was able to take a full soil profile during his initial visit along with confirmation on a follow-up visit. Mr. Bonilla stated that there is a man-made pond from previous farming activity that he deemed as “low-quality”, however there are higher quality wetlands that would be directly impacted by the new location of the driveway.
 - Mr. Lorden stated that they had taken care in their development plan to include wetland buffer enhancements that would help to reduce future impact to the wetland buffer zones. Mr. Lorden stated that grading features to the driveway and runoff plan there would be a culvert.
- Members of the conservation commission expressed concerns of the significant amount of wetland buffer impacts (34,921 sq. ft) and direct wetland impacts (287sq ft) that are proposed, with special highlighted concern on the shared driveway, Duplex #1, and infiltration ponds as shown in the Wetland Impact Plan submitted.
 - Mr. Cote asked questions regarding the removal of the dry hydrant and its effect on the plans to line the bottom of the existing pond.
 - Mr. Lorden advised that due to the removal of the dry hydrant from the plans, that there was now no need to line the pond.

- Mr. McAuliffe raised concerns that Duplex #1 sits 100% within the 25' – 75' wetland buffer and would prefer that Conditional Use Permit #2 (Encroachment on Wetland buffer by Duplexes #1, #2 and #3) is separated into two separate conditional use applications. With one containing Duplex #1, and the second for Duplexes #2 & #3. With explanation that the minor infringements of Duplexes #2 & #3 were minimal and would constitute a reasonable Conditional Use Permit approval, however the significant infringement in the wetland buffer zone by Duplex #1 would traditionally be something that would not be recommended for approval by the Conservation Commission and the Commission would prefer to review these as separate conditional uses.
- Mr. Olsen brought attention to the proposed infiltration ponds being 100% contained within the wetland buffer area and highlighted concerns over flooding events and impacts to wetlands during weather events that may exceed the capacity of the infiltration ponds in the future.
- Ms. Knabb reviewed concerns that had been submitted by SELT and BCM Environmental & Land Law Firm on behalf of Barker's Farm in regarding to the 20-ft setback area.
- Ms. Knabb and Mr. Olsen both raised concerns regarding the area designated as a fire truck turnaround was within the wetland buffer and prefer to see this changed.

Public Comment: 210 Portsmouth Ave.

8:00pm Mr. Cote introduced motion to allow public comments period, Mr. Keating moved motion, Mr. McAuliffe seconded the motion, All were in favor to allow for public comment.

- Forrest Barker, 216 Portsmouth Ave. spoke on concerns regarding the proposed development at 210 Portsmouth Ave. and its affect on their irrigation pond which sits very close to the proposed shared driveway. The irrigation pond is their primary source of water and disruption the surround landscape and the possibility of pollution flowing into the ponds would significantly impact their farming activities and would be damaging to their business continuity. It was also stated, that special care to some of the wetland buffer enhancements such as nesting boxes would need to be taken to avoid having invasive or destructive species take up residence in those buffer zones, which are not currently found there.
- Eadie Barker, 216 Portsmouth Ave. expressed concerns about the proposed well buffers encroaching on their property and any impacts it may cause them in the future if they were to place buildings or other farming activities that would encroach on that well buffer. The proposed wetland buffer infringements described on the conditional use permits would affect wetlands that are shared by both properties and Ms. Barker is worried about the effect of the wetland buffer encroachment would have on their side of the wetlands.
- Mark Mordecai, Stratham, NH. Mr. Mordecai spoke to serious concerns about wastewater effluent and wetland impacts to the south of the proposed development. While most of the focus has been on mitigation of impacts on the Barker Farm property to the North of 210 Portsmouth ave., Mr. Mordecai feels that there has been a lack of focus on the effects to the South of the development. While Beales Associates had stated that no water runoff would flow to the North of the shared driveway, Mr. Mordecai requested that similar care be taken in regards to runoff and impacts to wetlands and farmland to the South of the development.

8:17pm Ms. Knabb made a motion to close public comment. Mr. Cote seconded the motion, Unanimous vote to close the public comment period.

Commission Votes on Individual Conditional Use Permits

Due to wide range of conditional use permit applications, the Commission held votes on each permit. The Conservation Commission is an advisory board, so these votes are non-binding and ultimate approval or denial will be provided by the Planning Board.

1. Conditional Use Permit #1 – Shared Driveway

8:20pm Mr. Copeland made a motion to approve the 1st Conditional Use Permit as written. No second was given, the motion died.

8:22pm Mr. Keating made motion to deny the 1st Conditional Use Permit as written, Mr. Olsen seconded the motion.

- Yay Votes – Mr. Olsen, Mr. Keating, Mr. Cote, Mr. Jones, Mr. McAuliffe
- Nay Votes – Ms. Knabb, Mr. Copeland
- Motion Passed 5-2

The Commission acknowledged that the denial of the first conditional use permit would effectively halt the development project, however if the conditional use permit was ultimately approved by the Planning Board, it was decided that voting on the other conditional use permits would be appropriate to provide the commissions stance on each permit if the project were to move forward.

2. Conditional Use Permit #2 – Wetland Buffer Impacts of Duplexes

- 8:30 pm Ms. Knabb made motion to approve Duplexes #2 & #4 as written but request a separate conditional use permit for Duplex #1. Mr. Keating seconded the motion.
 - All in favor, motion passed.

3. Conditional Use Permit #3 – Wetland Buffer Impacts of Stormwater Management Plan

- 8:45pm Ms. Knabb made motion to defer formal vote or recommendation for Conditional Use Perm #3 while the Town waits for formal engineering review which is scheduled for a future date. Mr. McAuliffe seconded the motion.
 - All in favor.

4. Conditional Use Permit #4 – Wetland Buffer Impacts for Well Locations

- 8:48pm Mr. Copeland made motion to accept Conditional Use Permit #4 as written, Mr. Macaullife seconded the motion.
 - All in favor, motion passed.

The Commission will provide a formal letter to the planning board stating their recommendations and concerns with the current plans and conditional use permits. This letter is to be submitted before the Planning Board reviews this development plan at their next meeting.

Meeting Minutes: March 25, 2026 meeting minutes were reviewed, and at 8:52pm Mr. Keating motioned to accept minutes as written without amendment, Mr. Jones seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Stratham Town Clean-up Day: Final plans and responsibilities of each member for bringing supplies and refreshments were reviewed and agreed upon.

Town and Other Business: No other business to conduct.

Adjourn: At 8:58pm Ms. Knabb motioned to adjourn meeting. Mr. Olsen seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Session ended.

Respectfully submitted by Ryan Olsen