



TOWN OF STRATHAM

Incorporated 1716

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

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

Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes May 27, 2026, 7:00 p.m.

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

Members Not Present: Chris West, Allison Knabb

Non-Members Present: Vanessa Price, Director of Planning and Building

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chairperson Cote

7:05 pm Squamscott Fields (aka Stuart Farm) Acquisition Public Hearing Update

Ms. Lori Sommer was in attendance to provide an update on the current status of the Stuart Farm Acquisition. The purpose of the acquisition and establishment of a conservation easement is to maintain portions of the property in perpetuity as open space. The Stratham Conservation Commission had already voted in favor of allocating funds to this project, so no voting to appropriate funds was required.

- Ms. Sommer (Coastal Watershed Land Manager, SELT) provided a background history of the acquisition timeline, details of the funding source (NOAA) and grant process, and general property overview.
 - NOAA (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act) funding was granted in the amount of \$2.1M USD, while additional funds (\$500,000) will come from Stratham Conservation Fund, with an additional \$17,541 coming from the Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership.
 - The easement will be co-owned by SELT and Town of Stratham
 - Final paperwork, which has already been reviewed and approved by Stratham Legal Counsel, will be filed with NOAA by June 30th
 - Mr. Olsen asked a question regarding future decisions in relation to the use and activities on the property. Ms. Sommer clarified joint ownership decisions will be under the jurisdiction of the Stratham Select Board and SELT.
- **7:15pm Public comment opened.** Mr. Keating made 1st Motion, Mr. McAuliffe 2nd the motion, all members in favor to open public comment:
 - Ms. Zoe Manos asked a question regarding specific designation of the easement and public access. Ms. Sommer replied that the property would allow public access via the Squamscott River.

7:21 pm Public Meeting:

1. Ben Collins request for Conditional Use Permit for proposed swimming pool, 11 Treat Farm Rd.

- Mr. Collins described the nature of the project details and provided plan proposals for a 16-foot by 40-foot swimming pool and surrounding patio.
- Mr. Collins is requesting a conditional use permit for construction work to be conducted within the 75-foot wetland buffer setback as well as allow for a small portion of patio landscaping to occur within the setback.
- Conservation Commission members commented on the fact that the pool is appropriately outside the 75-foot wetland setback and that by reducing the size of the patio and landscaped area, the total project could be contained outside of the setback.

- Mr. McAuliffe stated that it is the commission's position that setbacks must be enforced as strictly as possible and that reduction of the patio size would be the recommended action to allow the project to proceed.
- Mr. Collins stated an alternative plan for a smaller patio design could be submitted to remove any changes to the wetland setback area.
- Conservation Commission members generally agreed that temporary construction activity within the setback would be acceptable if activities and impact were kept to a minimum
- Mr. McAuliffe made a motion to recommend granting the CUP on the conditions that the updated plans reduce the size of the patio area outside of the 75-foot setback and that construction work within the setback be minimized as much as is feasible. Mr. Keating provided a 2nd to the motion. All members in favor.

2. Review of NHDES Major Wetland Dredge and Fill Application (NHDES: 2026-001170): 80 & 80R Winnicutt Subdivision (Gallant Property)

- Attendees:
 - (Drew Goddard, Copley Properties) and 3rd party affiliates (Tim Pheonix, Legal Counsel, Hoefle, Pheonix, Gormley & Roberts, PLLC), (Bruce Scamman, Emmanuel Engineering)
 - General Public (~30 attendees)
- Representatives of Copley Properties provided an update on the proposed development project at 80 & 80R Winnicutt (Gallant Property) and reviewed the status and details of a NHDES Major Wetland Dredge Application they have submitted. The Conservation Commission received notice of the permit application from NHDES and requested an extension from NHDES to allow time for additional review and a public meeting.
 - Mr. Scamman (Emmanuel Engineering) provided a general overview of the current proposed plans, specifically detailing the seven locations where Dredge and Fill work would be required. These locations include two impact areas (A,B) at the entrance to the shared driveway off of Winnicutt Rd., two impact areas (C,D) for the shared driveway to Lots 30, 31, and 32; two impact areas (F, G) relating to septic area and service road; one impact area (G) related to shared driveway servicing Lots 26&27.
 - Due to the nature of the wetlands impacts a Major Wetland Dredge and Fill Permit will be required by NHDES.
 - Commission Members asked questions and Mr. Scamman provided clarity on the specific work to be done at each impact zone as well as the current permitting process review.
 - Mr. Cote asked general questions on current project status and for a second detailed review of impacted areas for NHDES application.
 - Mr. Phoenix provided his understanding of the conditional approval of the development and the development being subject to previous 2024 setback requirements.
 - Currently, conditional approval for the lot placement has been approved; however, wetlands permits, septic permits, and EPA permits are still in process for the proposed plan.
 - Mr. McAulliffe provided background comments on previous Conservation Commission concerns regarding the wetland impacts as well as the density of the planned development and the proximity of development to critical wetlands. It was stated that the commission's charter includes minimizing environmental impacts as

much as possible, and this application was in direct conflict with the conservation commission's position.

- Mr. Olsen provided comment on similar concerns regarding the significant wetland impact of the proposed application as well as concerns for future impacts from residential encroachment on surrounding wetlands. Specific highlights were made regarding Impact Area (E) for a shared driveway that only services two of the proposed lots. It was stated that this impact seemed excessive in relation to the addition of only two lots.
 - Mr. Goddard provided comments on the lengthy process of development planning and changes to help minimize environmental impact as well as additional efforts taken to reduce future impacts, such as increased signage, and establishment of swales, catchments and other features to reduce wetland encroachment. Mr. Goddard answered questions from Mr. Olsen regarding the establishment of the HOA governing body and process of enforcing development covenants in relation to wetland impacts (if development moves forward).
- 8:20pm – Public Comment: Mr. Olsen proposed a motion to open the meeting for public comment; Mr. McAulliffe 2nd motion. All in favor to open public comment period.
 - Chairperson Cote established ground rules of public comment requesting that attendees keep comments to within five minutes and specific to the NHDES application.
 - Ms. Myra Citrin (abutter) read a letter (submitted to public record) regarding her concerns of the wetland impacts, animal impacts, and changes to recent NHDES survey processes which may have reduced the review of endangered species in the area, specifically the Blanding's Turtle. Ms. Citrin specifically highlighted concerns over Impact Area E, which constituted a large portion of the impact for only two proposed lots.
 - Ms. Heidi Hanson read a letter (submitted to public record) stating multiple concerns regarding wetlands impacts, impacts to watershed quality, stormwater planning and secondary impacts, and fragmentation of nature corridors, and loss of upland nesting habitat. Ms. Hanson specifically mentioned NHDES RSA 482-A:15) related to designation of areas as Prime Wetlands. Ms. Hanson also raised concerns over endangered species impacts and requested that a survey be conducted by NH Fish and Game to catalog any potential endangered species impacts that may not have been covered by the previous survey.
 - Ms. Susan Connors (resident) asked for clarification regarding difference in NH DES vs. Town of Stratham wetlands designations and buffers. Ms. Conner also noted that NH Fish and Game should be contacted for a formal endangered species survey in addition to the NHDES review of the proposed Dredge & Fill Application
 - Ms. Cindy Conlon asked additional questions regarding the difference in 2024 50ft Wetland setback buffer and the 2025 75-foot setback increase that was established by the Town of Stratham in relation to the current application, as well as for future building permits for each housing structure in the proposed development.
 1. Mr. Phoenix stated that NH DES does not consider town-established setbacks for Dredge and Fill permits and that building permit requirements would be enforced based on the timing of the original plan submittal (2024).
 2. Ms. Price stated that further clarification would be provided on future lot planning regarding enforcement of 2024 vs 2026 setback requirements, but

Stratham Wetland Buffer Setbacks are not related to the current NH DES application that was being discussed.

- Mr. Brandon (last name not recorded) asked about the nature of the comments that Stratham Conservation would be submitting and asked that the commission provide input on the total project in regard to animal impacts, wetland impacts, as well as additional concerns over secondary impacts to water quality, water usage, and the effects on the water table. Mr. Olsen stated that the Conservation Commission would compile comments and concerns that were previously submitted to the Planning and Select Boards regarding the total environmental impact of the development as well as specific concerns regarding the specific impacts to the areas described in the current NHDES Dredge and Fill application.
- Mr. David Wardrop submitted a letter to the Conservation Commission and to public record noting his similar concerns of wetland impacts and the greater overall impact of the development to the surrounding environment.
- 8:40pm All public comments were heard, and Mr. Keating made a motion to close public comment. Mr. McAullife seconded the motion; all in favor to close the public comments.
 - Conservation Commission members discussed the need for an additional meeting to compile all comments and recommendations that would be submitted to NHDES regarding the Dredge & Fill application. Meeting time of Monday, June 8th 4: 00 pm was set.
- 8:50pm Mr. Kyle Hollasch provided updates on the proposed action to apply to PREPA for a \$25,000 grant for planning and review of the Town Landing for improvements.
 - Mr. Hollasch provided an overview of the Town Landing area, current status, concerns over use, and need for future planning of improvements
 - Mr. Hollasch has been interacting with PREPA to determine suitability of Town Landing project and believes it is a strong candidate to receive funds for a planning project.
 - The grant money and proposed project would not relate to any changes or development of the site, but would be used to review the current status of the location and start the basis for future planning.
 - The project timeline for the grant submission and subsequent review work would fall between October 2026 and April 2028.
 - The project would include area surveys as well as public comment and input on how the Town could improve the Town Landing to mitigate environmental impacts while still facilitating public access and use of the Town Landing.
 - Mr. Hollasch requests an endorsement and sponsorship of the project by the Conservation Commission. No public funds would be required.
 - Mr. Copeland asked questions on expectations of future development, restriction of use, or input from abutters. Mr. Hollasch stated that public comment and abutter input would be included in the scope of work of the grant project. No restriction to current use would be made.
- 9:20 pm Mr. McAuliffe made a motion for the Conservation Commission to endorse the grant project. Mr. Olsen seconded the motion. All in favor to endorse.
 - It was stated that Ms. Price would act as the Town liaison to this project with input provided by the Conservation Commission and Select Board

Town and Other Business

- Commission Members reviewed schedule for site walk at 210 Portsmouth Ave. for May 28, 2026, at 6:00 PM
- Review of previous Meeting Minutes (April 22nd Meeting).
 - 9:23 pm Mr. Keating made a motion to accept previous meeting minutes as written. Mr. McAuliffe seconded the motion. All in favor to accept Minutes

Adjourn

9:42 pm Mr. McAuliffe made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Olsen seconded the motion. All in favor to adjourn.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Ryan Olsen