



Stratham Planning Board Meeting Minutes
December 4, 2024
Stratham Municipal Center
Time: 7:00 pm

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

Members Absent: Chris Zaremba, Regular Member

Staff Present: Susan Connors, Planning Project Assistant

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Mr. House called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and took roll call.

2. Approval of Minutes

a. November 6, 2024

Mr. Allison made a motion to approve the November 6, 2024 meeting minutes. Mr. Kunowski seconded the motion. Mr. Houghton abstained from the vote. All others voted in favor and the motion passed.

b. November 20, 2024

Mr. Houghton made a motion to approve the November 20, 2024 meeting minutes. Mr. Allison seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

3. Public Meeting (New Business):

a. Discussion of Potential Zoning Amendments

Ms. Connors explained that at a recent staff meeting the question was raised if the Board wants to allow sandwich board signs as a temporary sign or should they be prohibited. The Board confirmed that they agree that sandwich board signs should not be prohibited and can be permitted as temporary signs.

Draft Portsmouth Avenue Heritage Overlay District

Ms. Connors explained that the Town's attorney provided an opinion that the proposal, specifically related to demolition, is not supported by statute and is therefore not enforceable. Staff notes that demolition delay exists town-wide under Section 16.5 Historic Demolition Review. Ms. Connors presented this finding at the last Board meeting and the Board questioned if the proposal was limited to demolition. Ms. Connors reviewed past meeting minutes which confirmed that the proposal was specific to demolition. Mr. Canada stated he would take this opinion to the Heritage Commission, and they would discuss it over the next year to strategize on other suggestions.

45 *Professional Residential District architectural standards*

46 The Board provided some comments on the draft standards including:

- 47 • The standards should apply to all structures including single-family homes.
- 48 • The standards should apply to all projects regardless of whether or not a Site Plan Review or
- 49 Conditional Use Permit is required.
- 50 • Added a section for “Activities Subject to and Exempt from Review” following some of those
- 51 from the Route 33 District.
- 52 • Changed “historic buildings” to “building older than 50 years”.
- 53 • Changed 70% glass square footage to 50% on the front façade.
- 54 • Changed “wood or simulated wood trim” to “appropriate trim such as wood, wood-like, or
- 55 cement based artificial trim”.
- 56 • Removed “fire pits” as an example in the outdoor congregation areas as that is too much detail.

57
58 *Route 33 Heritage District CUP for additional density*

59 The Board discussed the proposal to permit a higher residential density on parcels that are 2 acres or
60 smaller if the application meets certain criteria. The Board is not in favor of this proposal, and it was
61 removed from consideration.

62
63 *Wetlands Conservation District*

64 The Board agreed on changes to the Ordinance including:

- 65 • Consolidating the two different buffers from poorly drained and very poorly drained soils to
- 66 a single buffer of 75 feet for all wetlands.
- 67 • Staff suggested allowing the construction of roads, access ways, etc. as a permitted use that
- 68 does not need Planning Board review since that use is also permitted by NHDES. The Board
- 69 prefers to retain the review for that use under a Conditional Use Permit.
- 70 • The Board agrees to proposed changes to allow some additional uses to be approved through
- 71 a Conditional Use Permit as opposed to a Variance.
- 72 • The Board agreed that proposed projects in the wetlands or within the 25-foot no disturbance
- 73 area would require a Variance from the Zoning Board.
- 74 • Add a statement in the permitted uses that qualifies that permitted uses may be subject to
- 75 additional federal or state requirements.

76
77 **4. Miscellaneous Community Planning Items**

78
79 Ms. Connors presented the Board with a draft schedule for 2025 with two choices for July. The Board
80 agreed with the schedule presented that is the first and third Wednesday of each month.

81
82 **5. Adjournment**

83
84 **Mr. Canada made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 pm. Mr. Kunowski seconded the**
85 **motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**