



## Stratham Planning Board Meeting Minutes

June 18, 2025

## Stratham Municipal Center

Time: 7:00 pm

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

### **Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** Vanessa Price, Director of Planning and Building

## 1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Mr. House called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm and took roll call.

## 2. Approval of Minutes

a. June 4, 2025

**Mr. Kunowski made a motion to approve the June 4, 2025 minutes as drafted. Mr. Zaremba seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

### 3. New Business:

- a. Copley Properties, LLC (Applicant) and CAT Trust (Owner) request for approval of a Site Plan, Conditional Use Permit, and Route 33 Heritage District Application for an approximate 4,535 SF, three-unit, multi-family structure consisting of 3-bedroom units. The location is 301 Portsmouth Avenue (Tax Map 22, Lot 24), in the Route 33 Legacy Highway Heritage Zoning District.

Ms. Price addressed the Board. The application was submitted on May 21, 2025. Staff reviewed the application materials and recommends that the application is not complete. On June 5, 2025 Emanual Engineering was notified of nine items needed. Some items were submitted late yesterday and a new site plan was submitted at the Route 33 Heritage District Advisory Committee meeting on June 11 that addressed some Department Head comments. There was not ample time for staff to review the materials submitted, there are other materials still outstanding, and no waivers were submitted to request a waiver from submitting those materials.

Mr. House does not believe the application is complete and polled the Board. The Board agreed unanimously that the application is not complete.

Mr. Canada made a motion to continue the application to July 2, 2025. Mr. Kunowski seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

45 Mr. House and Ms. Price explained to the audience that the meeting cannot be opened for public  
46 comment until the application is accepted as complete and the public hearing is opened.  
47

48 Abigail Horrigan of 297 Portsmouth Avenue asked how she can submit comments as she will not  
49 be in town on July 2<sup>nd</sup>. Ms. Price replied that written comments can be dropped off at the office or  
50 emailed to [planning@strathamnh.gov](mailto:planning@strathamnh.gov). She explained that she wants to know if the property owner  
51 is going to remove the giant, ugly trailer that is on her property, but belongs to the property owner  
52 for this project. Ms. Price replied that she will notify the Code Enforcement Officer.  
53

54 **4. Ongoing Business:**

55 a. Land Bank Properties, LLC (Applicant and Owner) request for approval of a Condominium  
56 Subdivision, Conditional Use Permit, and Route 33 Heritage District Application at 217  
57 Portsmouth Avenue, Tax Map 21, Lot 88 in the Route 33 Legacy Highway Heritage District.  
58

59 Ms. Price provided an update for the Board. The applicant and his engineer met with Ms. Price,  
60 the Stratham Fire Chief, and the Stratham Fire Inspector to discuss the Town's comments on the  
61 fire cistern. There were additional comments to add to the plan notes from that meeting. CMA  
62 completed a second engineering review and additional comments were included as conditions of  
63 the draft Notice of Decision. There are nine waivers that the Board needs to review along with  
64 details for wetlands signage.  
65

66 Bruce Scamman of Emanuel Engineering presented the waiver requests. The first waiver is from  
67 Subdivision Regulation 2.3.2.d. to provide HISS mapping. They used county soils maps for this  
68 project which is what NHDES uses for lot sizing. Michael Seekamp, a wetlands scientist,  
69 completed a wetlands delineation which included an on-site soil delineation. A series of test pits  
70 were also completed. Mr. Allison stated he believes the work completed is adequate for this  
71 property. **Mr. Zaremba made a motion to grant a waiver with respect to Section 2.3.2.d with**  
72 **respect to high intensity soil information. Mr. Allison seconded the motion. All voted in favor**  
73 **and the motion passed.**  
74

75 Mr. Scamman described the waiver from Subdivision Regulations Figure A; note 3, for cross  
76 culverts. He explained there is no need for cross culverts in the subdivision as they are not taking  
77 water from one side of the subdivision and crossing the road to the other side. Instead, water will  
78 flow down to the end of the road, around the hammerhead, and exit below the hammerhead. Mr.  
79 House asked if a culvert is needed under the driveways. Mr. Scamman replied that is a separate  
80 waiver. There were no comments from the Board. **Mr. Canada made a motion to grant a waiver**  
81 **from requiring the installation of cross culverts made of HDPE pipe with a 12" minimum**  
82 **diameter and a 3' minimum cover. Mr. Zaremba seconded the motion.** Mr. Zaremba asked if  
83 the Board does not grant a waiver to the crowned roadway, would this become an issue. Ms. Price  
84 replied that any waiver not granted tonight, would not conditionally approve the application. Mr.  
85 Zaremba is concerned that some waivers are contingent upon each other. Mr. Scamman explained  
86 that if the road is not single pitched, then it won't matter how the drainage is designed. Mr. Allison  
87 commented that he would be more concerned with needing standard drainage conveyances if this  
88 were a roadway that could accommodate a speed of 25 mph, but this road is a very short length  
89 with collection on both sides. Mr. Scamman explained that some roads have waterway crossings,  
90 but that doesn't exist here. He added that anytime water is directed under a road, moisture is added  
91 and there can be frost heaves and all culverts eventually need maintenance. Mr. Allison asked for  
92 confirmation that the stormwater will be mostly recharged anyway. Mr. Scamman replied correct.  
93 **All voted in favor and the motion passed.**  
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100 Mr. Scamman described the waiver for the crowned roadway. He stated this is an accessway or  
driveway and not a road. He feels strongly it is a good design and it has been constructed elsewhere  
in town. He offered to repeat previous presentations on the road construction, but the Board  
declined. **Mr. Zaremba made a motion to approve the waiver from Figure A crowned**  
**roadway. Mr. Kunowski seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

101  
102 Mr. Scamman described the waiver from Subdivision Regulation 3.3.3.a road profiles. They  
103 provided 400 feet of sight distance where 300 feet is required. **Mr. Houghton made a motion to**  
**104 approve the waiver for a 400-foot site distance. Mr. Canada seconded the motion. All voted**  
**in favor and the motion passed.**

105  
106 Mr. Scamman described the waiver from Subdivision Regulation 3.3.4, Traffic Impact Analysis.  
107 He stated that the Board has not asked for a traffic study so they are requesting a waiver from the  
108 regulation to provide one. Mr. House stated that the applicant should submit a copy of the study if  
109 required by NHDOT. Mr. Scamman replied the NHDOT has issued the permit and a traffic study  
110 was not required. **Mr. Zaremba made a motion to approve the waiver from Section 3.3.4.e.**  
111 **with respect to traffic studies. Mr. Kunowski seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the**  
112 **motion passed.**

113  
114 Mr. Scamman described the waiver from Subdivision Regulations Section 4.3.5, HISS mapping.  
115 He explained that the NHDES uses USDA soil lot sizing in lieu of HISS mapping and they  
116 completed that per NHDES's requirements. **Mr. Kunowski made a motion to approve the**  
117 **waiver of the minimum lot size by soil classifications based on the applicant's use of USDA**  
118 **and NHDES guidelines. Mr. Zaremba seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion**  
119 **passed.**

120  
121 Mr. Scamman described the waiver request from Subdivision Regulations Section 4.4.3.c and  
122 Figure A for road cross sections. He stated that they provided a typical road cross section and this  
123 is a condo development where the road will not be given to the Town. The road will be common  
124 space and not a right-of-way. He added that it is a very short road and they provided contours for  
125 the entire road. There are no cross culverts so the cross section is not needed to prove there is  
126 enough cover over pipes. Mr. Zaremba asked what is the general purpose of the 60-foot right-of-  
127 way. Mr. Scamman replied if the Town accepted the road, they would need room for snow plowing  
128 and other maintenance, for the swales, etc. and would need room to rebuild it. This will remain as  
129 a private accessway and therefore no right-of-way is required because the owners will own it all.  
130 Mr. Houghton asked for confirmation that the town is not plowing the road. Mr. Scamman replied  
131 correct. Mr. House asked if the bioswale maintenance will be in the HOA documents. Mr.  
132 Scamman replied yes. Mr. Allison commented that one reason to have the cross sections is because  
133 the cross sections would show the utilities and that is beneficial for contracting, but the utilities are  
134 shown on the plans so he believes that function is fulfilled there. Ms. Price stated for the record  
135 that the other reason for the waiver is because the regulations stated that private roads should be  
136 built to town standards and there is always a potential situation where many years down the line  
137 that the owners may petition the town to overtake it. Mr. House asked if they are building the road  
138 to town standards, and just don't want to include the right-of-way. Mr. Scamman replied that the  
139 access way is built to the town standards with regards to the thickness of gravel and the pavement  
140 on the top surface. Mr. Canada commented that Ms. Price had a good point as this came up around  
141 2010 when the people who owned the Wingate wanted the Town to take over their road. The Town  
142 replied that if the Wingate owners brought it up to Town standards, they would take it over. He  
143 presumes that would be the same in the future for this case. Mr. Scamman replied that his  
144 development petitioned the town to have his private road taken over and the response was that his

145 development needed to provide the 60-foot right-of-way. The owners could not do so because of  
146 septic tanks and trees that were in what would be the 60-foot right-of-way. **Mr. Kunowski made**  
147 **a motion to approve the waiver application to allow for a 36-foot wide right-of-way instead**  
148 **of a 60-foot wide right-of-way. Mr. Zaremba seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the**  
149 **motion passed.**

150  
151 Mr. Scamman described the waiver request from Section 4.5.2 in the Subdivision Regulations for  
152 cross sections every 50 feet. They provided instead typical cross sections. He added that there has  
153 been a third-party review of the road design and the project team is okay with the review. **Mr.**  
154 **Zaremba made a motion to grant the waiver from Section 4.5.2. Mr. Kunowski seconded the**  
155 **motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

156  
157 Mr. Scamman described the waiver from Figure D, Driveway Cross Section in the Subdivision  
158 Regulations. The drainage design is for bioretention on the lower side and a stone swale on the  
159 upper side. Both sides have stone in the bottom sections so they can transport water down the  
160 length of the road. Additionally, there is a small culvert (about a 6-inch diameter) where the  
161 Town's regulations require a 12-inch diameter under the driveways. The underdrain starts at the  
162 top and runs underneath the driveways, to around the back of the hammerhead and daylights down  
163 below. They believe this system is much better because it allows for better treatment of the water,  
164 and it takes on smaller sections versus pushing it all down to the bottom of the hill. He added there  
165 are sand filters, where treatment happens on the lower side of the road. Mr. House asked if the  
166 bioswale will pick up most of the movement of the water and instead they are requesting to use 6-  
167 inch culverts under the driveways. Mr. Scamman replied there are 6-inch underdrains that run  
168 underneath. It is a perforated pipe that will prevent groundwater from coming up and will take  
169 excess water that is draining down. The design includes 13 inches of stone at the base of the  
170 bioswale and the rock swale has 24 inches of stone. Both of those have a 6-inch perforated pipe  
171 that runs underneath them for the storage of stormwater. **Mr. Zaremba made a motion to grant**  
172 **the waiver from Figure D, driveway cross sections. Mr. Kunowski seconded the motion. All**  
173 **voted in favor and the motion passed.**

174  
175 Mr. House asked if the engineering review is complete. Ms. Price replied yes. She also noted  
176 changes on the plan set as a result of the meeting today with the fire chief that are not reflected in  
177 the draft notice of decision. Changes include replacing the word will with shall on page 4 of the  
178 plan set and adding a note that "water supply for fire protection provided by the 30,000 gallon  
179 cistern shall be maintained, serviced, and inspected by the HOA per NFPA 25". There was a  
180 discussion in that meeting about moving rocks that she does not think is necessary to put in the  
181 Notice of Decision and the fire chief requested no parking signage and pavement striping. Ms.  
182 Price requested a signature block on all pages and the details for wetlands buffer signage need to  
183 be finalized. The Board and Mr. Scamman discussed the wording, spacing, and size of the signage.

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185 Mr. Houghton requested that the term roads be added to the draft precedent condition regarding  
186 Condo Declaration and Bylaws. Mr. Scamman added that the fire chief requested the cistern be  
187 added as well.

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189 Mr. Scamman requested 180 days instead of 120 days for the duration of approval as they have  
190 not submitted an application yet to NHDES for septic approval. The Board agreed to grant the  
191 request.

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193 **Mr. Canada made a motion to close the public portion of the meeting. Mr. Zaremba seconded**  
194 **the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

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Mr. Houghton moved that the Planning Board conditionally approve the subdivision application and Route 33 Heritage District application for a condominium subdivision located at 217 Portsmouth Avenue, Tax Map 21, Lot 88 in the Route 33 Legacy Highway Heritage Zoning District subject to the site plans by Emanuel Engineering last revised, June 6, 2025; subject to all conditions on the Notice of Decision, including those amended this evening. Mr. Zaremba seconded the motion. Mr. House, Mr. Canada, Mr. Zaremba, and Mr. Houghton voted aye. Mr. Kunowski voted nay. Motion passed 4:1.

Tim Phoenix of Hoefle, Phoenix, Gormley & Roberts asked the status of the Conditional Use Permit application. Ms. Price replied it was removed from the project because it is no longer a mixed-use development.

## 5. New Business:

- a. Emanuel Engineering (Applicant) and Stratham School District c/o SAU16 (owner) request for Preliminary Consultation for educational additions to the Stratham Memorial School located at 39 & 40 Gifford Farm Road (Tax Map 18, Lots 106 and 107), in the Manufactured Housing/Mobile Home and Residential/Agricultural Zoning Districts.

Ms. Price described that Careno Construction is looking to break ground shortly but wanted to come before the Board to present the project. The Town Administration office believes this project should go through the formal site plan process, but the applicant is not in agreement. She did not prepare a staff report.

Mr. House stated that the discussion tonight is a non-binding consultation.

Bruce Scamman of Emanuel Engineering and James Verra & Associates introduced the project team of Mark Jacobs representing the school district and Todd Harrington of Careno Construction who is the general contractor. The project includes three additions to the Stratham Memorial School. He stated they are before the Board for notification purposes. The town and the school district are separate entities and RSA 674:54 defines government use. After this notification, the Planning Board has 30 days to determine if a public hearing is required. Mr. Scamman described the entire project and the construction timeline.

Ms. Price read aloud RSA 674:54 and noted some documents that are missing from the filing per the RSA. Mr. Houghton requested that the applicant file the documents for the record. Ms. Price stated that she spoke with the Building Inspector and both Ms. Price and the inspector support holding a public hearing on the project, so the inspector has confidence on what was approved for the site when he reviews the building permit. The Board discussed the possibility of a public hearing and determined there was no value in it as the project had many meetings at the school board level.

Mr. House summarized that the applicant should provide the town with the documentation discussed previously, there will be no public hearing, and the date the town receives the additional documentation starts the 60-day notification period referenced in RSA 674:54.

## 6. Miscellaneous

- a. Review of Site Plan Regulations

Ms. Price described minor changes to the previous version. Mr. Kunowski provided minor edits.

245                   The Board decided to post the regulations for public hearing on July 16, 2025.  
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247           **7. Adjournment**

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249           **Mr. Zaremba made a motion to adjourn at 9:46 pm. Mr. Kunowski seconded the motion. All**  
250           **voted in favor and the motion passed.**