



## 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 Emanuel 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.**

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

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

#### 4. Ongoing Business:

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

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

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

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

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.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

195 **Mr. Houghton moved that the Planning Board conditionally approve the subdivision**  
196 **application and Route 33 Heritage District application for a condominium subdivision**  
197 **located at 217 Portsmouth Avenue, Tax Map 21, Lot 88 in the Route 33 Legacy Highway**  
198 **Heritage Zoning District subject to the site plans by Emanuel Engineering last revised, June**  
199 **6, 2025; subject to all conditions on the Notice of Decision, including those amended this**  
200 **evening. Mr. Zaremba seconded the motion. Mr. House, Mr. Canada, Mr. Zaremba, and Mr.**  
201 **Houghton voted aye. Mr. Kunowski voted nay. Motion passed 4:1.**  
202

203 Tim Phoenix of Hoefle, Phoenix, Gormley & Roberts asked the status of the Conditional Use  
204 Permit application. Ms. Price replied it was removed from the project because it is no longer a  
205 mixed-use development.  
206

## 207 **5. New Business:**

- 208 **a. Emanuel Engineering (Applicant) and Stratham School District c/o SAU16 (owner) request for**  
209 **Preliminary Consultation for educational additions to the Stratham Memorial School located at 39**  
210 **& 40 Gifford Farm Road (Tax Map 18, Lots 106 and 107), in the Manufactured Housing/Mobile**  
211 **Home and Residential/Agricultural Zoning Districts.**  
212

213 Ms. Price described that Careno Construction is looking to break ground shortly but wanted to  
214 come before the Board to present the project. The Town Administration office believes this project  
215 should go through the formal site plan process, but the applicant is not in agreement. She did not  
216 prepare a staff report.  
217

218 Mr. House stated that the discussion tonight is a non-binding consultation.  
219

220 Bruce Scamman of Emanuel Engineering and James Verra & Associates introduced the project  
221 team of Mark Jacobs representing the school district and Todd Harrington of Careno Construction  
222 who is the general contractor. The project includes three additions to the Stratham Memorial  
223 School. He stated they are before the Board for notification purposes. The town and the school  
224 district are separate entities and RSA 674:54 defines government use. After this notification, the  
225 Planning Board has 30 days to determine if a public hearing is required. Mr. Scamman described  
226 the entire project and the construction timeline.  
227

228 Ms. Price read aloud RSA 674:54 and noted some documents that are missing from the filing per  
229 the RSA. Mr. Houghton requested that the applicant file the documents for the record. Ms. Price  
230 stated that she spoke with the Building Inspector and both Ms. Price and the inspector support  
231 holding a public hearing on the project, so the inspector has confidence on what was approved for  
232 the site when he reviews the building permit. The Board discussed the possibility of a public  
233 hearing and determined there was no value in it as the project had many meetings at the school  
234 board level.  
235

236 Mr. House summarized that the applicant should provide the town with the documentation  
237 discussed previously, there will be no public hearing, and the date the town receives the additional  
238 documentation starts the 60-day notification period referenced in RSA 674:54.  
239

## 240 **6. Miscellaneous**

- 241  
242 **a. Review of Site Plan Regulations**  
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244 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.**