



Stratham Planning Board Meeting Minutes
September 17, 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 7:00 pm and took the roll call.

2. Approval of Minutes

a. September 3, 2025, regular meeting minutes

Mr. Kunowski made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from September 3, 2025. Mr. Canada seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

3. Public Meeting (New Business):

a. Bruce Scamman (Applicant) and Stella D. Scamman Revocable Trust (Owner) request a Preliminary Consultation for an expansion of use on a residential structure to include a 16'x24' addition and septic located at 69 Portsmouth Avenue (Tax Map 9, Lot 7), in the Gateway Commercial Business Zoning District.

Ms. Price explained that the Applicant requested to continue the application to the October 1st Planning Board Meeting due to a schedule conflict.

Mr. Zaremba made a motion to continue the application to the meeting on October 1st. Mr. Kunowski seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

4. Public Hearing (Ongoing Business)

a. Copley Properties LLC (Applicant) and Helen E. Gallant Revocable Trust of 1995 (Owner), request for approval of a Residential Open Space Cluster Subdivision and Conditional Use Permit for a proposed subdivision of 80 and 80R Winnicutt Road, Tax Map 14, Lots 56 and 57, Zoned Residential/Agricultural.

Ms. Price explained that the Applicant is here to finalize the Notice of Decision for the application. At the last meeting, additional waivers were approved, as well as both Conditional Use Permits.

Staff recommends conditional approval of the subdivision application. A draft Notice of Decision is available for the Board's review that includes comments from Ms. Price and from the Applicant. A wetlands buffer sign detail as approved by the Planning Board in August is also in the Board's packet.

Mr. House stated there are no comments on the first two and a half pages. Ms. Price stepped through some of the edits including 1) removing the public water system approval applicability as NHDES provided a response; 2) providing adequate signage such as 'children present' and multiple posted speed limit signs of 20 miles per hour; and 3) comment from the Police Chief to include a center island in the smaller cul-de-sac because of the increase in possible traffic and children at play. Mr. House added that a center island should be considered on the main road as well. Tim Phoenix, legal counsel for the Applicant, replied that they don't have any problem with the concept of signage, but would like the condition clarified. Mr. Canada suggested adding "to the satisfaction of the police chief". The Applicant agreed.

Ms. Price continued presenting changes – 4) extending the easement on Lots 26 and 27 to the rear property line for septic system maintenance and 5) the Applicant requested a change from the wetland buffer sign detail recently adopted by the Board. Mr. Phoenix described the Applicant's opposition to the sign detail – the suggested sign is huge where most towns have examples of 5 by 7 and it is unclear whether the signs go at the buffer or at the wetland. He typically sees them at the wetland. Mr. Goddard added that he previously agreed to install them on the wetland line and discussed with the Conservation Commission a size of 5 by 7 prior to the Board's recent adoption of sign standards. He stated that this application is not bound to any new regulations. He has less concern with the language of the sign, but is concerned with the size, the type, and the location. Mr. House asked the Board's thoughts. Mr. Canada asked what is Mr. Goddard's suggestion for signage. Mr. Goddard replied there are multiple pre-made wetland signs that the team has used on other projects. One was selected and put on the plan set. He reiterated he is most concerned with the size and the location. Mr. House replied that the text the Board wants would be too small on a smaller sign. Mr. Canada questioned why Mr. Goddard wants the sign on the wetlands line and not the buffer line. Mr. Goddard replied that the important thing is about protecting the wetlands. It's not protecting the buffer. He knows it's desired to protect the buffer, but the buffer is to protect the wetland. And ultimately, what's really important is the wetland, to make sure people aren't actually in the wetland. If he installs signs on the buffer lines, it's going to be that much more visible and when things are more visible, homeowners are going to remove them. They're not going to last the test of time. He stated ultimately, our objective is to protect the wetlands and from the very get go, he voluntarily said that we would put it on the wetland line, not the buffer line, so he'd like to just stick to what we've always discussed. Mr. House replied that the no-disturbance buffer line is to protect the wetlands and signage is to remind the owners that you cannot do anything in the buffer. If the sign is installed at the wetlands, then owners may disturb the buffer zone. Mr. Canada added that they will certainly put fertilizer on the lawn. Mr. Goddard replied not necessarily as some buffer areas are wooded and he has been willing to install signs voluntarily, but if he is asked to follow a regulation that is not applicable to this application, then he would prefer to not install signs. Mr. Houghton replied that installing signs at the buffer line is not a new thing and many subdivisions have installed them at the buffer. The buffer is there to protect the wetland and a sign at the wetland is not going to be as impactful. Owners cannot build within the buffer area and having a sign back in the wetland would suggest that there is permission to do things in the buffer that they are not allowed to. Mr. Goddard replied that the Town has to be able to instill what you're able to enforce, and that's not a regulation; there's nothing in zoning that states that I need to put signs on the buffer. Mr. Houghton replied that Mr. Goddard can do whatever he wants and the right thing to do is to put it at the buffer line. That's what protects the wetland. Mr.

95 Goddard replied he respects that but he doesn't want to make the change. Mr. Houghton replied
96 that the Board has been equally fervent in this discussion in past meetings. Mr. Canada suggested
97 Mr. Goddard can go to the ZBA if he doesn't like a condition of the approval. Mr. Phoenix
98 described the aesthetics of a large sign from a homeowner's perspective. A smaller sign will be
99 visible when one walks up to it. He requested flexibility from the Board on the size. Mr. Allison
100 explained his support and reasoning for installing signs on the buffer zones. Mr. Canada suggested
101 a larger sign on the wetland line that states it applies to 50 feet forwards and backwards. Mr. House
102 stated the HOA should be required to maintain the signs. Mr. Phoenix stated if added to the HOA
103 documents, each owner must acknowledge receipt of the documents. Mr. House added that the
104 documents should state that it is the homeowner's responsibility for replacing missing signs. Mr.
105 Zaremba said that the reason for the requirement is because people have minimal respect for the
106 buffers. He thinks signs at the buffer are reasonable and the Board could be flexible in the sizing.
107 He thinks 5 by 7 is too small and suggested a size slightly larger, but less than 16 by 12. Mr.
108 Canada stated that the font size can be fairly small because one isn't driving by the signs. Mr.
109 Phoenix stated that he has seen small medallions that simply say wetland buffer or wetland line.
110 That along with the HOA documents should be sufficient. Mr. Kunowski stated he is comfortable
111 with the smaller sign and suggested less text on the sign along with information in the HOA
112 documents should be sufficient. He believes the signs should be placed at the buffer line. Mr.
113 House polled the Board on the buffer vs. wetland line location. Mr. Zaremba, Mr. Allison, Mr.
114 Kunowski, Mr. House and Mr. Houghton prefer the buffer and Mr. Canada thinks the wetland
115 boundary is sufficient. Mr. House summarized that the Board requires signage on the buffer and
116 the size of 5 by 7 will work as long as there is some language in the HOA documents that support
117 why the signs are there.

118
119 Mr. Phoenix requested a discussion on the sign locations. Mr. Goddard stated the plans suggest
120 every 75 feet and he may be able to space them out more because of visibility. The Board and the
121 Applicant agreed to one sign on each property line and one midway between property lines.

122
123 Ms. Price discussed the next change for the plan set to be updated in relation to the different soil
124 surveys and asked Mr. MacBride to describe it. Mr. MacBride stated that the surveyor plans used
125 the web soil survey and the engineering plans used the site specific soil which also had a mapping
126 conversion. The surveyors will update their plans to match. The Applicant agreed to that condition.

127
128 Mr. Goddard requested that the bonding for recreation trails be moved to a subsequent condition.
129 He stated that anything on the approved plan that is not installed at the time of the first building
130 permit will be bonded. The Board agreed.

131
132 Mr. Phoenix presented edits to the condition about items suggested to be included in the
133 Declaration or Bylaws that do not apply to this project like the interior square footage and rights
134 of access to garage facilities. The Board agreed.

135
136 Mr. Goddard requested to remove "winter maintenance" from the subsequent condition on
137 bonding. Ms. Price explained that the need for this can be included in the developer agreement.
138 The Board agreed.

139
140 Mr. Goddard requested to be able to obtain building permits for the existing home and for moving
141 the barn prior to posting the bond. The Board agreed.

142
143 Mr. Goddard requested that reference to protecting and documenting archeological resources be
144 removed as he believes that is a normal, commonplace practice. Mr. House replied that

145 archeological sensitivity is in the regulations and it doesn't hurt to keep it in. Mr. Phoenix stated
146 concern with reference to RSA 485-A:17 as they are required to comply with state RSAs and
147 questioned adding a specific requirement, which he could not find reference to in the RSA. Ms.
148 Price explained where it came from and agreed it can be removed if it is standard with the AoT
149 process. The Board agreed.

150
151 The Board and Mr. Goddard agreed to minor edits on wetland signage during construction,
152 submittal of the SWPPP, inspection of erosion controls, exterior lighting, community water supply,
153 cistern bonding, changing the timing of as-built plan submittal to 60 days, submittal of an
154 engineer's certification on the project, and extending the duration of approval to 180 days.

155
156 **Mr. Houghton made a motion that the Planning Board conditionally approve, subject to**
157 **conditions stated in the draft Notice of Decision tonight 9/17/2025 and amended this evening,**
158 **the request for the subdivision plan of a Residential Open Space Cluster Subdivision**
159 **containing 33 lots with 48 single-family homes, approval of Residential Open Space Cluster**
160 **Subdivision 80-80R Winnicutt Road, Tax Map 14, Lots 56 and 57 in Residential/Agricultural**
161 **zoning district. This is subject to the site plans by Emanuel Engineering, last revised August**
162 **22, 2025. Mr. Kunowski seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.**

163
164 **5. Public Meeting (New Business):**

- 165 a. Mike and Kelly Guarascio (Applicants & Owners) request a Preliminary Consultation to construct
166 and install site amenities, including a pool, fencing, and a patio, in the side and back yards of their
167 single-family home. The site requires a Conditional Use Permit due to the wetlands on the property.
168 The location is 4 Tuckers Trail (Tax Map 24, Lot 48), in the Residential/Agricultural Zoning
169 District.

170
171 Ms. Price explained that the Applicant is here seeking a preliminary consultation with the Board.
172 Ms. Price discussed the proposed project with the Code Enforcement Officer, who agreed that a
173 survey is required of the wetland buffer and setback areas in order to submit a Conditional Use
174 Permit for the construction of a swimming pool and associated uses. The wetland buffer and
175 setback area can be approximated on a plan, and the owner is seeking an opinion from the Board
176 if the actual locations of the buffer and setback need to be surveyed along with the proposed
177 construction.

178
179 Mr. Allison stated he believes the area around the house should be demarcated by a wetland
180 scientist, and then a surveyor would locate it specifically on a plan.

181
182 Mr. House explained to Ms. Guarascio that this preliminary consultation is not binding and asked
183 her if she has any questions.

184
185 Ms. Guarascio stated that she understands this is preliminary and would like to know the difference
186 between a wetland delineation survey and a full site survey and which would be required for her
187 project. Mr. House replied that he thinks the wetland delineation. Mr. Allison stated that she has
188 the bare minimum of information and that he thinks it would benefit her to know where the septic
189 tank and other underground utilities are to make sure that where the pool is proposed will not
190 interfere with any of that. He believes a full property survey is not necessary, just information
191 around the house that shows the wetlands and real information on the proposal. Mr. House added
192 that what she has marked up on the draft plan is what she should be careful of, which is the area
193 around the wetlands and where she wants to put the fence and other areas of disturbance.

Ms. Guarascio stated they have a patio that existed prior to the changes in the Wetlands Ordinance this year. Mr. House replied to add that to the survey as well. Ms. Guarascio asked to get a preliminary opinion from the Board if her project is a reasonable ask before she spends money on a wetlands scientist and a site survey. She noted that her project is within the 75-foot setback and if the Board is thinking absolutely not, then she would not move forward with the site survey. Mr. Canada asked Ms. Price to explain the current wetland buffer and setback. Ms. Price replied that there is a 25-foot no-disturbance buffer and an additional 50-foot building setback beyond that. Construction within the 50-foot setback requires a Conditional Use Permit. Mr. Houghton stated from the draft drawing it appears the house and other features are within the setback. Mr. House stated to Ms. Guarascio that is why a wetlands survey around the house is necessary for a final application. Mr. Allison suggested adding locations for the well, propane tank, etc.

Mr. Canada asked if a property must have no current violations in order to have a CUP approved. This was discussed and determined the existing conditions are pre-existing, non-conforming and the Board has the authority to approve a CUP for this property as long as the project meets the CUP criteria.

Mr. Kunowski asked Ms. Guarascio to describe the location of the storm drain area that she referenced on the application. Ms. Guarascio described the location as to the right of the home off the road. Mr. Kunowski asked if it is like a concrete storm drain infrastructure. Ms. Guarascio replied she thinks it is and it goes under the road and is not like a stream or a river. Mr. Kunowski asked if it is within the red outline depicting the proposed fence. Ms. Guarascio replied no, it is much further outside.

Ms. Guarascio asked for clarification on the survey requirements. The Board replied that she needs to have a wetlands delineation completed for the project. Ms. Price added that she should have the utility locations included as well.

Ms. Guarascio asked for an explanation on the first criteria. Ms. Price read aloud the criteria from the Zoning Ordinance. Ms. Price explained that staff explained to Ms. Price that it was copied from the criteria for road crossings into the new section that applies to CUP applications for wetlands setbacks and might not be applicable. She interprets it to be a comparison of uplands vs. wetlands.

- b. Packer Brook Holdings LLC (Applicant & Owner) requests a Preliminary Consultation to convert the existing residential duplex into an office and the construction of a new 5,500 SF shop and office for their building construction company. The location is 170 Portsmouth Avenue (Tax Map 17, Lot 86), in the Route 33 Legacy Highway Heritage Zoning District.**

Ms. Price stated the Applicant is here to discuss a proposed site plan to and professional office space is permitted, and retail sales and commercial services are permitted by a Conditional Use Permit in the Route 33 Legacy Highway Heritage Zoning District. A Route 33 Heritage District Application is required to be submitted with the formal site plan application. She recommends that the project be reviewed by the Town's consulting engineer. There are wetlands on the property so the project will need to comply with Section 11 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. House stated that this is a preliminary consultation, and anything discussed between the Applicant and Board is non-committal. He stated that the floor plans are not necessary to be reviewed at this time and put them aside and invited the Applicant to speak.

Eric Weinrieb of Altus Engineering spoke on behalf of the Applicant. He introduced Chris Redmond and Jeff Stacy from Packer Brook Holdings and Mighty Roots. He corrected that the property is not an existing duplex, but is a single-family home. He described the property as 2 ½ acres with a wetland system on the southern end along Route 33. Wetlands have been delineated, and test pits were witnessed by RCCD. They were pleasantly surprised to find there is no water table on the site, and they will be able to construct a traditional septic system and use best management practices with some bioretention basins with full infiltration. They plan to widen the entrance for commercial use, and he described the proposed internal traffic flow and employee parking. The existing building will be converted from residential use to an office with handicap accessibility. He noted there is a hand dug well on the abutting property that is within 75 feet of the proposed septic system, but there is no existing easement that precludes construction of the septic system within 75 feet. Mr. Canada asked if the well is in use. Mr. Weinrieb replied he does not know and presumes it might be for irrigation. Mr. Canada replied that if it is for drinking, then it will definitely get polluted. Mr. House stated the Applicant needs to look into that. Mr. Weinrieb replied that NH RSA does not allow the property owner to prohibit the Applicant from using that area. Mr. Canada replied it might impact the Board's ability to approve the project. Mr. House suggested moving the septic system location. Mr. Weinrieb replied that alternative locations would require a Conditional Use Permit for wetlands, and they would have to pump the system. The proposed area is the best location for the system on the site. Mr. Allison asked if it can be installed under the pavement. Mr. Weinrieb replied it would be an incredible hardship to the Applicant because it would require an H-20 design. Mr. Canada asked if they can find out if the well is in use. Mr. Weinrieb replied they can reach out to the owner.

Mr. Allison suggested that the Applicant ensure that when the ground is frozen and the recharge areas don't work, to make sure that whatever is above ground does not impact a neighbor or the Applicant's property. Mr. Weinrieb agreed that is a good point and said that often they add a small leaching catch basin that allows surface water to penetrate the frost layer and then infiltrate. Mr. Allison provided a description of an issue with another project in town that needed an emergency overflow. Mr. Weinrieb agreed.

Mr. Kunowski stated that looking at the satellite map it appears there is existing disturbance within 50 feet of the wetlands and asked if there is a willingness to let that area return to a more natural, undisturbed state. Someone from the project team responded that it is being mowed now and is very wet and they have no attachment to continuing to mow it. Mr. Kunowski stated that every time there is an opportunity to improve a wetland condition, he would like to. Mr. Weinrieb replied that often mowing areas like that once or twice per year to prevent woody overgrowth is sufficient.

Mr. Kunowski asked Ms. Price if the conversion from residential to commercial use is okay in this district. Ms. Price replied that professional office space is permitted, but that retail sales and commercial services require a Conditional Use Permit.

Mr. Zaremba suggested adding property screening in the rear for the benefit of abutters.

Mr. Allison asked if the leach field and the stormwater management areas could be swapped. Mr. Weinrieb replied they need to meet the 75-foot well radius for the onsite water supply well. He added that they may be able to move the septic system closer to test pit one, but they also need to treat the runoff and don't want to concentrate the runoff on top of the septic system.

Mr. Weinrieb asked about the process in this district. Ms. Price explained that a Route 33 Heritage District application should be submitted with the formal application. That application will be

reviewed by the Route 33 Heritage District Advisory Committee who will provide comments to the Planning Board. Mr. Weinrieb asked if they can start that part of the process early. Mr. House replied what they have might be sufficient. Ms. Price added that it is a separate application and if the architectural plans are complete and meet the regulations, then they can probably proceed. Mr. House commented that the Advisory Committee will need to see the materials and building heights.

Mr. Kunowski asked if they have any information on the existing house. Mr. Weinrieb replied that he does not know the age.

Mr. Canada stated that he does not believe warehousing is allowed in the district. Someone from the project team replied it is not a warehouse. Mr. Canada asked them to describe the use. Mr. Stacy replied they are a cabinet maker and a builder. Cabinet makers would build cabinets in the back. Mr. House stated that is manufacturing. Mr. Stacy agreed. Mr. Canada stated that outdoor storage is not allowed. Mr. Weinrieb replied that is covered staging. Mr. Stacy added that is enclosed storage for equipment. Mr. Canada asked if they are warehousing materials there. Mr. Stacy replied no, that everything they use in the shop would be stored indoors for climate control. Mr. Canada replied that sounds like warehousing. Mr. Stacy disagreed and explained that they order what they need to build a kitchen, bring it in, cut it up, and build the kitchen that is then sent to a job site. Mr. Canada asked if they have any stock. Mr. Stacy replied they have a small amount of stock, but generally they get a delivery and use it. They have trucks coming to their current shop in Greenland once per week, maybe, for delivery. They use the materials and then reorder.

Mr. Canada commented that the new building should be compatible and subservient to the existing building and in his opinion, it is not compatible with the neighborhood and not consistent with the spirit and intent of the ordinance. Mr. Weinrieb replied there is a contractor shop next door, the property to the rear is forested, and they are subservient in that they are set back from Route 33 and the prominent view of the site is going to be the wetland system and the existing house in front. From a distance it will look like a barn from an old farm property and often barns are larger than homes.

Mr. Canada asked if there will be a showroom. Mr. Redmond replied no, they build cabinets for their construction projects. Mr. Stacy explained they have their office kitchen and some door samples, and their only client interactions are when people come in for design consultations. They do not want people pulling off the road and coming in because it is their workspace. They invite clients to the site to work through designs.

The Board and the Applicant concluded the consultation.

6. Public Hearing (New Business)

a. Adoption of Amended Site Plan Review and Subdivision Regulations

Ms. Price requested that the Board consider the amendments to the site plan regulations for passage tonight. The amendments include updating the fire cistern specifications and adding a reference in the Preliminary Consultation section that consultations are required per the town meeting vote in 2006. She asked the Board if they want to add to the site plan regulations that the Board may require design review or may not. Mr. Zaremba asked if the design review is non-binding. Ms. Price replied that abutters are notified, and it is a more thorough plan. It also vests the project from zoning amendments and regulation changes. Because of the late time, Ms. Price requested that the Board review the amendments prepared for the hearing tonight.

There were no comments from the Board on the proposed changes regarding the fire cistern specifications and preliminary consultations.

Mr. Zarembo made a motion to open the hearing to the public. Mr. Kunowski seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Mr. House noted that no members of the public were present.

Mr. Zarembo made a motion to close the hearing to the public. Mr. Kunowski seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Mr. Kunowski made a motion that the Planning Board approve the amended site plan regulations with the updated cistern details and Section 4.1.1. Mr. Zarembo seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Ms. Price explained the proposed changes to the subdivision regulations. She asked the Board if they want to include that minor subdivisions require a preliminary consultation; currently, the regulations allow an exemption. The Board agreed that preliminary is good for all projects. Ms. Price explained the option to require or not require a design review. The Board agreed to continue the public hearing.

Mr. Houghton made a motion to continue the public hearing until October 1, 2025. Mr. Canada seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

7. Miscellaneous: Public Meeting (New Business)

a. Discussion of Zoning Amendments.

Ms. Price provided the Board with a list of topics for proposed zoning amendments.

8. Adjournment

Mr. Zarembo made a motion to adjourn at 10:05 pm. Mr. Canada seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by Susan Connors