



Stratham Planning Board Meeting Minutes

December 17, 2025

Stratham Municipal Center

Time: 7:00 pm

Members Present: Thomas House, Chair
David Canada, Vice Chair
Chris Zaremba, Regular Member
John Kunowski, Regular Member
Nate Allison, Alternate Member

Members Absent: Mike Houghton, Ex-Officio Select Board Member

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 roll call.

2. Approval of Minutes

A. December 3, 2025, Planning Board meeting minutes

Mr. Kunowski made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from November 5, 2025 as amended. Mr. Zaremba seconded the motion. Mr. Zaremba commented that his name is mistakenly listed as present. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

3. Public Hearing:

A. Boulders Realty Corp. (Applicant and Owner), Request for Design Review for a proposed housing development consisting of 20 residential lots with approximately 49 units at 13 and 15 Stoneybrook Drive, Zoned Special Commercial. Application submitted by Jones & Beach Engineers, Inc., P.O. Box 219, Stratham, NH 03885.

Mr. Allison recused himself.

Ms. Price explained that the application is a Design Review that included abutter notification. The plans were resubmitted to address the revised Wetlands Conservation District ordinance. A conditional use permit is needed for the multi-family units in accordance with Section 5.7 of the zoning ordinance. The plans as presented tonight would need to go back before the Zoning Board of Adjustment for relief from dimensional requirements for the lots to meet the Special Commercial Zoning District without utilities and possibly for wetland buffer encroachment. Conditional use permits and/or variances may be needed for each lot depending on final building location. The Shoreland Protection District Overlay applies to this project. The Applicant will need

45 to go before the Exeter Planning Board, the Exeter-Squamscott River Local Advisory Committee,
46 and the Stratham Conservation Commission. Initial concerns from the Conservation Commission
47 are with wetland buffer encroachment, that the open space is primarily wetlands and not real open
48 space, and that there is no access to the river for public use other than those in the HOA. The
49 Conservation Commission also requested that signage be installed designating wetland areas. The
50 Stratham Fire Inspector commented that there is not an adequate water supply for fire protection
51 on the plan set. Ms. Price continued stating that a variance was granted for single-family home use
52 on the lots. On November 18, 2024, there was an agreement to settle litigation over the proposed
53 development between the Select Board and the applicant. The agreement includes a commitment
54 to promote housing alternatives within the development that at least 20% of housing units be either
55 a joined array or townhouse style unit, where the units share a common wall, or multi-family units
56 with a minimum of three residential units per building. Additionally of the previously mentioned
57 20%, at least 60% will be units with a minimum of three residential units in each building. The
58 agreement also states that should the Planning Board not grant conditional approval for the duplex
59 and multi-family units, the plans may be modified to permit all single-family units.
60

61 Mr. House asked if this project will be designated as Regional Impact. Ms. Price replied that she
62 anticipates so since it is near Exeter, but that the Planning Board must determine that. The other
63 Planning Board members agreed it will be Regional Impact.
64

65 Mr. House invited the Applicant to speak.
66

67 Joe Coronati of Jones and Beach Engineers and Mike Garrepy of Garrepy Group represented the
68 Applicant.
69

70 Mr. Coronati stated that the goal tonight is to present the Board with what is planned for the
71 property. There have been many iterations, and they have tried unsuccessfully to get utilities from
72 the Town of Exeter. The development will be serviced by onsite water supply and septic systems.
73 The proposal includes 20 individual lots that meet the Special Commercial zoning. He questioned
74 Ms. Price's earlier comments about needing ZBA approval for the lots. Ms. Price replied that the
75 plan that was presented to the Conservation Commission might not meet front setbacks for all lots.
76 Mr. Coronati replied he will address that later, but that the lots meet the frontage and lot size
77 requirements. The parcels have a lot of wetlands both tidal and freshwater along with some uplands
78 that will make up open space common areas that will be maintained by the HOA. Two parcels are
79 set aside for community septic systems that is part of the settlement agreement. Wetlands permits
80 will be required for the project including a sizable box culvert or bridge over Parkman Brook. All
81 lots will have individual wells and a variation of housing including townhouses and single-family
82 homes in a joined array. Mr. Coronati's understanding is that joined array homes do not have to
83 have an attached wall between them which is why they are proposed as single-family style homes.
84 He requested clarification from the Board on that. A 60-foot right of way is proposed and with a
85 60-foot front setback, that would cause the driveways to be 80 feet long. Reducing the front setback
86 to 40 feet and the right of way to 40 feet is what the project team would like to discuss with the
87 Planning Board and potentially the Zoning Board. That would allow the homes to be moved closer
88 to the road and farther from wetlands in the rear. With the road being private, there will be no
89 maintenance responsibilities for the Town. He believes the 60-foot front setback seems to be
90 related to commercial uses. He presumes that fire cisterns will be added within 1,000 feet of all
91 homes and added that there are fire hydrants owned by the Town of Exeter on Stoneybrook Drive.
92 This development of 22 townhomes and 28 single-family homes is smaller than what was
93 presented to the Planning Board previously, which was 65 to 70 units. There is an existing house
94 on the property that over hangs a pond and they would like to work with NHDES to build a more

95 conforming home in place of the existing home. Mr. Coronati stated that he anticipates that
96 NHDES would require that the waterway be opened up. He explained the existing construction of
97 a dam with sluice gates that are partially in disrepair. He stated the Parkman Brook crossing will
98 likely be an open bottom, wider span structure. Mr. Coronati described the project as a subdivision
99 but with some site plan elements and would like to know what applications the Board would want
100 for this project. He asked for comments from the Board and offered to repeat his questions.
101

102 Mr. Canada asked if the plan submitted a yield plan is. Mr. Coronati replied no, this is a
103 conventional subdivision and that the Special Commercial District allows multiple units per lot.
104

105 Mr. House asked how long is the first branch off the main road with the hammerhead. Mr. Coronati
106 replied it is 634 feet.
107

108 Mr. House stated that the first lot will be a tough one to work on. He disclosed that he worked on
109 this project years ago with a different developer, but is comfortable staying on the Board for this
110 project. He encouraged the project team to look carefully at siting a new home on that first lot as
111 there is no way to get the proper distance from wetlands. Mr. Garrepy stated that if they need to
112 go to the Zoning Board for the front setbacks mentioned previously, then he assumes they would
113 seek relief for Lot 1 at the same time. They need to speak with NHDES and Gove Environmental
114 before making plans for that lot. Mr. Coronati added that he believes that technically they could
115 rebuild the house in the current location, but that is not the goal and that constructing up to the
116 edge of the wetland is an improvement over that. Mr. Canada asked how long the house has been
117 abandoned. Ms. Price will need to look into that.
118

119 Mr. Coronati stated that for this design review they laid out a plan that is in conformance with the
120 settlement agreement and the current regulations. They did not include cisterns and public access
121 at this stage as they didn't want to spend a lot of time on final design without Planning Board input.
122

123 Mr. Coronati is seeking a straw poll from the Board on the design that shows townhouses instead
124 of duplexes and that if a conditional use permit were not granted, then they would change the
125 project to all single-family homes. They are attempting to create a diversity of housing stock in
126 conformance with the settlement agreement.
127

128 Mr. Canada asked why do they want this configuration vs. single-family homes. Mr. Coronati
129 replied that they prefer single-family homes but the agreement with Select Board was that they
130 present a variety of housing types. Mr. Canada asked why did the Select Board request that. Mr.
131 Coronati does not know and can only speculate that they wanted it for different price ranges and
132 suggested the Select Board answer that.
133

134 Mr. Canada asked how many single-family homes would there be if it was all single-family. Mr.
135 Coronati replied that the existing single lots would stay single and the multi-family lots would be
136 converted to multiple detached single family units on each lot with a total number to be determined
137 later.
138

139 Mr. Kunowski questioned if a conventional subdivision must have one house per lot. Mr. Coronati
140 replied that the Special Commercial District allows multiple buildings on a lot. Mr. House added
141 that single-family and duplex units are regulated under the International Residential Code for
142 building but more than two residential units per lot becomes commercial and is a different building
143 code.
144

145 Mr. Kunowski asked if the total number of units on lot 5 conforms to what is allowed. Mr. Coronati
146 replied that he believes eight is the maximum allowed under the ordinance. Mr. House asked if
147 that includes the lot coverage limitation. Mr. Coronati replied that is a good point and they haven't
148 looked that closely yet, but they can modify the lot lines during a more detailed review. Ms. Price
149 added that she looked into the application aspect of the different housing types and it was
150 determined that this is a conventional subdivision and the multiple single-family homes on a single
151 lot can be reviewed as array homes like in the cluster subdivision section and the multi-family
152 homes will need a site plan application as well as a subdivision application. She added that the
153 ordinance requires that a percentage of multi-family housing be classified as workforce housing.
154

155 Mr. Coronati asked if multi-family applications are needed for each lot or just for the overall
156 project. Ms. Price replied that it would be for the overall project – a subdivision, site plan,
157 conditional use permit for multi-family, and conditional use permit for wetlands crossings.
158 Additionally, if any structures are proposed within the wetlands setback, at the time of building
159 permit application submittal, each parcel will need a conditional use permit or a variance,
160 whichever is applicable. Mr. Coronati replied that he believes Lot 1 is the only lot that will need
161 relief. All other structures will be proposed outside of the wetland buffer and building setback with
162 only minor grading for yards in the setback.
163

164 Mr. Zaremba asked if lots 2, 3, 4, and 5 are the ones designed to satisfy the Select Board agreement.
165 Mr. Garrepy replied yes, primarily along with the joined array lots. Mr. Zaremba asked if,
166 hypothetically, the Board did not approve multi-family, would those lots change to single-family
167 and would they keep the joined arrays. Mr. Coronati replied yes and there would probably be
168 multiple singles on lots 2, 3, 4, and 5 as well.
169

170 Mr. Zaremba commented that he agrees with Mr. Kunowski that it is confusing to cite the cluster
171 subdivision design of array housing in a development that is not a cluster subdivision; that is
172 doesn't seem to comply. Mr. Garrepy replied that they are treating them as single-family that are
173 allowed per the variance.
174

175 Mr. Canada asked how big the townhouses will be. Mr. Garrepy replied he thinks those are 24 by
176 40 which is subject to change, but not getting much smaller than that. Mr. Coronati added that the
177 plans show 24 by 36 with an eight-foot deck off the back. Mr. Canada asked if they are two
178 bedrooms. Mr. Coronati replied two or three bedrooms and three floors including a two-car garage
179 on the bottom. Mr. House commented that they need to watch the building height restriction.
180

181 Mr. Coronati showed a public access trail to the river and discussed a possible future location for
182 a pump station to Exeter sewer accessed under the Squamscott River. Mr. Garrepy noted that they
183 will provide the connection easement to the Town of Stratham as it is good planning and they tried
184 three times to get agreement from Exeter for water and sewer, but were unsuccessful.
185

186 Ms. Price asked if all the houses are planned to be located in Stratham. Mr. Coronati replied yes.
187 She noted that some lots might have rear yards in Exeter and if there are accessory structures, they
188 might have different restrictions than Stratham.
189

190 Mr. House asked if the private road will be built to town standards. Mr. Coronati replied yes.
191

192 Mr. Kunowski asked for confirmation that because this is a conventional subdivision that the open
193 space on the parcel is not used to calculate density or the number of lots. Ms. Price replied that is

194 correct. Mr. Garrepy added that they could incorporate all the open space into the lots, but they
195 think it is better stewardship of the open space to have it as part of the common land.
196

197 Mr. Canada asked if the variance application was for 59 single-family dwellings, then how can
198 they propose duplexes. Mr. Garrepy replied that when they were before the Zoning Board, they
199 were clear that they were not seeking any density relief. They were there to get the use approved
200 by way of the variance. At that time, they were not sure if water and sewer could be available from
201 Exeter. That density number may have been a lot larger than what they are talking about now. Mr.
202 Canada stated that he is having a hard time reconciling a project that is not all single-family as that
203 is what the Zoning Board granted. Mr. Garrepy replied that the Zoning Board granted the use of
204 single-family but did not restrict the property to only that use. Mr. Canada is not satisfied with that
205 response and believes the applicant is mixing and matching the zoning.
206

207 Mr. Zaremba asked if single-family was granted by right. Mr. Garrepy replied correct. Mr.
208 Zaremba asked if a conditional use permit is required for single-family use. Ms. Price replied no,
209 the Zoning Board permitted single-family dwelling units in a district where the use is not permitted.
210 She verified that array homes are included in that decision. Mr. Garrepy added that they would
211 have proposed all single-family homes if it had not been appealed by the Select Board and through
212 the negotiations with the Select Board, they agreed to do a mix. The Select Board is aware that the
213 Planning Board has the authority to not grant conditional use permits and if that is the case, they
214 will change the project to all single-family homes.
215

216 Ms. Price stated that the variance expires in two weeks. Mr. Garrepy replied that they are exercising
217 it right now. Ms. Price will check on that. Mr. Garrepy agreed that counsel should be consulted
218 and wondered if the clock stopped during the time spent working with the Select Board through
219 the appeal process. Mr. Canada noted that it has been over a year since the agreement.
220

221 Mr. House asked for final comments.
222

223 Mr. Kunowski commented that the project seems like a lot of units on the property. He knows it
224 has gone through a lot of discussion, and it may ultimately be determined by septic rules and things
225 like that.
226

227 Mr. Zaremba would like to see public access to open space, and he would like someone (e.g. town
228 engineer) to look at the sewer and water access and how it could serve the town in the future. He
229 also commented that the dimensional square required in Section 4.3(i) of the ordinance applies.
230

231 **Mr. Zaremba made a motion to open the meeting to the public. Mr. Kunowski seconded the**
232 **motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.** There were no comments from the public.
233

234 **Mr. Zaremba made a motion to close the meeting to the public. Mr. Kunowski seconded the**
235 **motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.**
236

237 Mr. Coronati asked if the Board would be concerned with the project proposing a waiver for
238 roadway width. Ms. Price clarified based on this design because if the design changes, then the
239 Board might feel differently. Mr. House replied that police and fire will need to respond. Mr.
240 Coronati replied that the pavement, traveled way will not be narrower. Mr. House replied that the
241 pavement is his main concern because it is a long way in and safety vehicles need to be able to get
242 around each other. He would not be in favor of minimizing the width of the drive itself. Mr.
243 Kunowski is confused by the question because the settlement agreement states it must be a private

244 road in perpetuity and there was a comment earlier about something happening in the future that it
245 became a town road. Mr. Garrepy clarified that Mr. Coronati's earlier statement was to use that as
246 a reason to not accept the road if residents asked. Mr. Kunowski stated that he is leaning towards
247 it should conform to normal road standards. Mr. House explained that the road itself will be
248 constructed to road standards, and they are asking to minimize the right-of-way width beyond the
249 pavement. Based on that, Mr. Kunowski does not feel strongly one way or the other in a private
250 road setting. Mr. Zaremba commented that even though the town won't maintain it, someone will
251 take care of the road, and he doesn't understand that just because the town isn't taking care of the
252 road, that the right-of-way can be reduced. Mr. Garrepy explained that a 60-foot right-of-way is
253 found more in a city environment where there is more room for utilities and sidewalks on both
254 sides of the road and wider travel lanes. In this type of application, they have constructed 40 and
255 sometimes 30-foot right of ways because the roads are narrower and the grading and drainage can
256 be located within that 40 feet. Basically, towns or cities require larger right of ways if there is more
257 need for infrastructure to be inside that right-of-way. Mr. Coronati added an example of tree
258 removal in the right of way and stated that this will be more like a condominium where an
259 association will handle all maintenance in the right-of-way. Mr. House asked if this will be a
260 condominium. Mr. Coronati replied on some lots there will be condominiums, but there will be an
261 HOA that will take care of everything. Mr. House noted that he thought the settlement agreement
262 mentioned condominiums. Mr. Coronati replied that all units will be sold individually and some
263 as condos. The maintenance will be common maintenance similar to Rollins Hill where there is a
264 private road off the end of a public road. Mr. Zaremba stated he is not fully convinced, but he will
265 look at a waiver. Mr. Coronati stated that the Conservation Commission strongly supported the
266 reduction in the right-of-way and front setbacks. Mr. Canada stated that generally speaking he
267 thinks the Board is allowing too many variations on zoning, but they make a good argument to
268 keep construction further away from the wetlands, so he'd probably be inclined to support it.
269

270 Mr. Canada asked if sound barriers will be installed. Mr. Garrepy replied if anything it would be
271 trees. Mr. Canada does not think that is sufficient for sound. Mr. Garrepy replied it does a bit for
272 sound and DOT is not putting up a sound wall and Mr. Garrepy is fine with that. Mr. Canada asked
273 if the developer is willing to put one up. Mr. Garrepy replied we are not. Mr. Canada stated that
274 he thinks sound is very important for the people that will be their customers, but also the town's
275 residents. He added that the Conservation Commission commented on that and suggested that
276 some decibel readings would be helpful.
277

278 Mr. House commented that a traffic study should be done. Mr. Coronati replied one has been
279 completed, and one benefit is that all the residents will have access to the lights at McDonald's.
280 Mr. House asked them to find out how wide the pavement is on Stoneybrook.
281

282 Mr. Zaremba asked if they have spoken with any of the residential abutters. Mr. Garrepy replied
283 that it has been a while since they spoke with the abutter in Stratham and they seemed supportive
284 of a residential project when they spoke. He thinks the Exeter residents weren't thrilled that
285 something was going to happen. Mr. Coronati replied that he recalls during the preliminary
286 consultation that many residents spoke that they were happy it wasn't a big commercial
287 development with trucks and dumpsters and access on weekends.
288

289 Mr. Garrepy will follow up with Ms. Price on a ZBA extension.
290

291 Ms. Price suggested that the Applicant review Section 5.1 of the Ordinance for Lot 1 as they may
292 have to ask for a Special Exception.
293

294 Mr. Kunowski asked if they have taken soil samples to review for density and conforming with
295 those requirements. Mr. Garrepy replied they did a first round of test pits and will complete another
296 round at some point.
297

298 **Mr. Zaremba made a motion to close the Design Review. Mr. Kunowski seconded the motion.**
299 **All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

300 Mr. Allison rejoined the Board at 8:30 pm.
302

303 B. Proposed 2026 Zoning Amendments.
304

305 Mr. House stated for the record that this is a public hearing, but no members of the public are
306 present.
307

308 Ms. Price explained the changes in this revision of the amendments since the last meeting. They
309 include corrections to Section 3.10.2 that have erroneous references and a requirement for a State
310 of New Hampshire Inventory Form for historic structures, and structure footprint limitations in the
311 Route 33 Heritage District. The Board provided comments to the language regarding footprint
312 limitations.
313

314 Ms. Price presented a proposed amendment to allow the Planning Board to set the application fee
315 for a Conditional Use Permit for Residential Open Space Cluster Subdivisions instead of the Select
316 Board. The Board rejected that proposal.
317

318 Ms. Price presented a definition of historic structure. The Board agreed.
319

320 **Mr. Zaremba made a motion to continue the public hearing to January 7, 2026. Mr. Canada**
321 **seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.**
322

323 The Board left the amendments open to the public.
324

325 **6. Miscellaneous**
326

327 A. Planning Board Rules of Procedure update discussion.
328

329 Ms. Price presented draft Rules of Procedure for the Board to review for a future public hearing.
330 The current rules were drafted in 2005 and have not been updated since then. The Board will
331 review the draft for a future meeting.
332

333 **7. Adjournment**
334

335 **Mr. Canada made a motion to adjourn at 9:01 pm. Mr. Zaremba seconded the motion. All voted**
336 **in favor, and the motion passed.**
337

Respectfully submitted by Susan Connors