



Stratham Technical Review Committee Meeting Minutes
June 24, 2026
Stratham Municipal Center

Present: Vanessa Price, Director of Planning and Building
Matt Newton, Stratham Fire Inspector
Jay Fraprie, Planning Board
Brad Jones, Conservation Commission
Nate Merrill, Heritage Commission
John Lorden, PE, Beals & Associates
Brendan Sheehan, Owner of 210 Portsmouth Ave.
Bruce D. Scamman, James Verra & Associates, Inc. & Emanuel Engineering, Inc.

Absent: Jeff Denton, Stratham Fire Chief
Trevor Batchelder, Director of Public Works
Anthony King, Stratham Police Chief
Building Inspector

The meeting started at 10:00 AM.

210 Portsmouth Ave.

Present Committee members stated their names for the record, and Brendan Sheehan, the owner, and John Lorden of Beals & Associates were present for the 210 Portsmouth Ave project. Resubmittal #3

Ms. Price began the meeting by stating that the purpose of the meeting was to review the third submittal for 210 Portsmouth Avenue before the committee. The applicant will be providing some brief updates to the plans overall for the group, and this will be before the Conservation Commission on July 1, 2026, and the Public Hearing for the Planning Board on July 8, 2026.

Mr. Sheehan provided an update to the committee for resubmittal #3. He explained that the revised plan incorporates feedback received from the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and neighboring property owners. The changes primarily address the access drive, building locations, and site layout. Regarding the access drive, the driveway alignment at the front of the property was modified to avoid impacts to the Barker Farm wetland. The driveway has been relocated entirely outside the 25-foot wetland buffer in response to comments from both the Planning Board and abutters. Further along the access drive, the fire apparatus turnaround has also been shifted to reduce encroachment into the wetland buffer. The duplex buildings have been consolidated closer together and relocated entirely outside the 75-foot wetland buffer. As a result, none of the proposed duplexes require a Conditional Use Permit for wetland buffer impacts, as all structures are now located within upland areas beyond the buffer. Near the front of the property, the locations of Duplex 1 and the existing barn have been exchanged. The barn currently exists as a nonconforming structure within the wetland buffer and will be repositioned to access the shared driveway while remaining within the buffer area. Duplex 1 has been relocated outside

the 75-foot wetland buffer. Associated parking areas have been revised to accommodate both the existing residence and the proposed duplex. He also addressed comments regarding septic system placement. Consistent with the Town Attorney's interpretation that the farm pond qualifies as a water body, all septic system components and leach fields have been relocated to ensure compliance with the required 100-foot setback from water bodies and wetlands. No septic infrastructure is proposed within the applicable setback areas.

Mr. Newton stated that there is an adequate turnaround radius on the site. No issues.

Mr. Sheehan asked Mr. Newton to address a question previously raised by the Planning Board regarding the removal of the proposed cistern and fire pond. Specifically, Mr. Sheehan noted that some members had questioned whether a cistern or fire pond could provide a more effective fire suppression water source than installing sprinkler systems within the buildings. He requested Mr. Newton's comments on that.

Mr. Newton explained that the fire flow on-site needs to be addressed. A cistern is preferred for development, but for this site, the applicant suggested sprinklered buildings to meet the fire flow requirements. He also explained the different types of fire suppression systems (13R, 13D) and their requirements, including the use of sprinklers and cisterns. He mentioned there is a cistern across the street.

Mr. Sheehan asked Mr. Newton about the cistern across the street at 217 Portsmouth, and if that could be considered to meet the fire flow specifically for the front structures, the barn, the existing house, and that duplex, because it is within 1000 ft of a water source.

Mr. Newton said he would have to follow up with Mr. Sheehan at a later date to determine whether that would meet the State Fire Code and the site's fire flow. It's considered private in that the homeowners' association has to maintain it, as it is not maintained by the Town. He explained that it is basically it's a private water source that is maintained by these people that the fire department, by statute, can use as a resource in an emergency.

Mr. Fraprie asked why the fire pond was withdrawn.

Mr. Loden discussed that the pond wasn't viable due to volume capacity.

Mr. Newton explained that for fire flow, you have to prove that it can provide that amount of water needed year-round, and that's a tough lift sometimes, and the other problem is the ISO rating in the town. Which is huge when you look at your insurance rating, because the ISO does not include ponds as a water source; it will include a cistern.

Mr. Merrill provided comments from the Heritage Commission's perspective, stating that the revised plan represents a net negative change to the project. He noted that relocating the historic barn farther from the road would reduce its visibility from the public way, diminishing the prominence of a significant historic structure. Conversely, the proposed duplex would be placed closer to the road and become more visible from the street. Mr. Merrill recalled prior discussions regarding the architectural design of the duplexes, noting that concerns about compliance with the Zoning District design standards were previously mitigated because the buildings would not be readily visible from the roadway. With the proposed relocation, he stated that architectural compatibility becomes a more significant consideration.

Mr. Merrill also expressed concern about the location of the parking area, which would be situated prominently near the front of the site. He stated that this configuration is inconsistent with the intent of the District and noted that the zoning ordinance specifically requires parking areas to be screened from

public view. He concluded that the revised plan raises several concerns related to historic preservation, architectural design, and site layout.

Mr. Fraprie asked if the barn could remain and be repurposed as a duplex without garages.

Mr. Sheehan commented on the architectural design of the proposed duplex homes on the site. He explained that the proposed duplex is intended to mirror the architectural character of the existing colonial-style structure on the property. The building design incorporates similar features, including a farmer's porch on the front façade, to maintain consistency with the existing architecture. He stated that the new structure would reflect the same colonial design elements and overall appearance as the existing building on the site.

Mr. Merrill respectfully disagreed with the applicant's characterization of the proposed architectural design. He stated that, unless revised architectural plans were presented, his concerns remained unchanged. Mr. Merrill recalled earlier discussions regarding the building elevations, noting that the façade facing the driveway, and, under the revised layout, facing Route 33, contained only a few small windows and was dominated by garage doors. He stated that while the design did not fully meet the intent and spirit of the District standards, he had previously accepted it because the building would not be readily visible from the street. With the proposed relocation placing the structure closer to the roadway, however, he stated that he could no longer support the design, as the building's appearance would become a prominent feature from the public view.

Mr. Sheehan stated there are no garages on the front building.

Mr. Merrill said he made his comments, other than the conservation-related items. He stated he still has concerns with wetland crossings and the barn in the setback.

Ms. Price stated that the plan set will go before the Conservation Commission at their July 1, 2026, meeting.

Mr. Jones commented to the Conservation Commission about the abutter's pond location to the proposed road.

Mr. Loden explained that proximity-wise, it's fairly close, but everything pitches away from it, so there's no impact on it. We're not sending any water runoff from the road towards it. It's all going to be coming to the south. The road is super elevated, so that it slopes away from it.

Mr. Jones asked about the wetland crossing.

Mr. Loden explained that the 287 square feet wetland still needs a conditional use permit.

Mr. Sheehan asked if he could invite Conservation Commission members to the property again.

Ms. Price stated that you shouldn't be meeting with members outside of a scheduled meeting. If he wanted to request another site walk and invite the Conservation Commission, he could. The request would have to be at the planning board level.

Mr. Jones stated he had concerns with the parking lot out front and the impervious surface.

Mr. Sheehan noted that the parking area is elevated above the roadway and stated that existing vegetation provides substantial screening from public view. He explained that, when driving past the property today,

145 parked vehicles are not readily visible due to the existing shrubbery and pine plantings along the frontage.
146 The applicant further stated that the proposed parking area would be located in the same general area
147 where vehicles are currently parked on the site and maintained that the existing vegetation would continue
148 to help screen the parking area from the roadway. Mr. Sheehan clarified that the proposed parking area
149 would be located generally where the existing barn is currently situated. He explained that a portion of the
150 parking area would occupy the area near the front of the existing barn, while much of the current parking
151 already occurs in front of the house and in areas behind it. He stated that the proposed layout would utilize
152 substantially the same parking area that exists today and suggested that, depending on future landscaping
153 and improvements to the front shrubbery, fewer vehicles may be visible from the roadway.
154

155 Mr. Merrill stated that the parking doesn't meet the zoning code for screening in that district. The front of
156 the lot has a lot of asphalt in the front. His advisory opinion that this doesn't meet the vision or the intent
157 of the neighborhood heritage zoning district and the zoning code.
158

159 Mr. Sheehan stated he believes the screening concept is already being fulfilled.
160

161 Ms. Price stated to the TRC that the proposed changes will have to go through HDAC at a future meeting
162 date for review of the resubmittal.
163

164 Mr. Fraprie stated that he is looking for the heritage input.
165

166 Mr. Sheehan stated that he understands the role of the Town's boards and committees. He is seeking
167 reasonable, code-based feedback that clearly identifies where the proposal does not comply with
168 applicable regulations. He explained that if the project does not meet a specific requirement, he would
169 appreciate written or oral feedback identifying the applicable code provision, the basis for the
170 interpretation, and what changes could be made to achieve compliance.
171

172 Referring to comments about the parking layout, Mr. Sheehan stated that, in his opinion, the parking areas
173 are located to the side or rear of the buildings rather than in front, include front landscaping and screening,
174 and therefore comply with the ordinance. If the Town interprets the ordinance differently, he requested
175 that interpretation be provided in writing so the applicant can understand the basis for the determination
176 and make appropriate revisions.
177

178 Mr. Sheehan further stated that the applicant believes the Planning Board gives considerable weight to
179 recommendations from the Conservation Commission and Heritage Commission, which he views as
180 advisory bodies intended to provide technical guidance regarding compliance with the Town's regulations.
181 He said he has worked to address comments from the Technical Review Committee and other reviewing
182 boards and commissions throughout the process. However, he expressed concern that much of the
183 feedback received has been generally negative without identifying specific code deficiencies or providing
184 recommendations for modifications that would bring the project into compliance. He stated that the
185 applicant is looking for constructive, code-based guidance that can be incorporated into revised plans.
186

187 Mr. Merrill stated it's a very difficult parcel to try and develop, it's very narrow and very wet, and so it's
188 not surprising to me that you get a lot of pushback.
189

190 Mr. Sheehan stated that (the parcel) he agrees that the lot is narrow, but doesn't agree that it's very wet.
191 He thinks it's very dry. He stated there's one wet parcel that is really the center focus of this, this entire
192 because it's conditional use permit, and he states they satisfy all the criteria for the conditional use
193 permit to cross that wetland, and there's this - it's the only access we have, and this is the only reason
194 that we've asked for all of this feedback from all these committees, is to get that access, the upland area

up until this point.

Mr. Fraprie stated he is not with the Heritage Commission, but he was hearing that the Commission's primary focus has been on architectural design and preserving the historic character and views of the property. He acknowledges that some changes have been made by moving that duplex forward. Now, (Mr. Sheehan) went from two to three buildings in the front, that's basically what it's been from the beginning. Mr. Fraprie stated that, based on feedback received from the Heritage Commission, concerns remain regarding the design and layout of the proposed development along the property's frontage. He stated that what he was hearing from the Heritage Commission's comments suggests that increasing the number of visible buildings from two to three alters the site's historic appearance and diminishes the historic streetscape that the Town seeks to preserve. Mr. Fraprie suggested a possible alternative to incorporate the existing barn into the project in place of proposed Duplex No. 1, thereby maintaining only two primary buildings along the frontage while preserving the site's historic character. He acknowledged that this option may not be feasible if the barn is structurally unsound or otherwise unsuitable for reuse, but stated that the suggestion was intended as a potential solution to address the Heritage Commission's concerns.

Mr. Merrill agreed with Mr. Fraprie suggestion that adaptive reuse of historic buildings is supported and was one of the original intents of the Town's regulations, which encourage reinvestment in historic structures. The member agreed that, if the existing barn could be converted to residential use, it would be a more desirable alternative than the currently proposed new duplex and would better support the preservation of the property's historic character.

Mr. Fraprie stated from the Conservation side, in his opinion, several revisions to the proposal have improved the project. He noted that relocating the proposed buildings farther to the rear of the property and clustering them together was a positive change. He also commented that moving the access road farther from Barker Farm and outside the 25-foot buffer represented an improvement. Regarding the wetland crossing, he stated that he was personally less concerned than others, explaining that he viewed the area as a small, seasonal wetland and believed the proposed drainage improvements would maintain water flow to the pond. He acknowledged, however, that other board members continue to have concerns about impacts to the wetland, and this is only his opinion. Mr. Fraprie further expressed concern about relocating the historic barn farther into the wetland area. He reiterated his earlier suggestion that converting the existing barn to residential use in place of the proposed Duplex No. 1 could address both historic preservation and wetland concerns by maintaining two primary buildings along the frontage while reducing or avoiding additional wetland impacts. He stated that these comments reflected his personal observations regarding the wetland issues.

Mr. Sheehan stated the small wetland on site is classified as poorly drained. He thinks it's pretty well-drained soil, so it ended up in its farmland. He referred that John (Lorden) has said as many times as possible, it drains well, the water goes into the soil, and it runs through the aquifers into the water body.

Mr. Merrill asked to verify whether there was a site walk on the property.

Mr. Price answered, the meeting was posted, and the Planning Board and Conservation members were there.

Mr. Sheehan added that there were also abutters/neighbors who attended.

Mr. Merrill reiterated his point that if you (Mr. Sheehan) were willing to entertain the concept of abandoning the front duplex and convert the barn to a residential unit, that's something that he would

definitely be supportive of.

Mr. Sheehan stated he wasn't sure if it was feasible. He thanked the committee for their feedback.

41 Portsmouth Ave.

Ms. Price introduced the project. She stated that the applicant had met with her and the building inspector prior to submission of their project.

Mr. Scamman stated he is here to represent his client, and they are moving forward to get prices on the project, and determined that portions of the project have been deferred to a future phase to reduce the initial construction costs and make the project financially feasible. He explained the phasing of the project, including the car cleaning area, covered vehicle delivery area, and rear parking lot. He emphasized that these elements remain part of the approved site plan and are identified as Phases 2A, 2B, and 2C. He stated that the applicant may construct any or all of these improvements in the future as funding becomes available.

Mr. Fraprie asked for clarification that the deferred improvements remained part of the original proposal.

Mr. Scamman confirmed that they do. He described that additional parking will be provided, and the modified reconditioning (recon) bays. Just inside the garage doors, along the side of the building, will be the internal maintenance areas. He explained that the goal is to keep activities like washing vehicles separate from the mechanics' work areas. They don't want water and overspray getting into the maintenance bays, so the wash area will be enclosed with interior walls. The garage doors remain on the exterior; there will be a wall inside the building separating the wash area from the mechanic bays. He explained that the design has been reduced from five service bays to three. Another change is that new vehicles will now be delivered to customers outside in the parking lot. That means if it's raining, the salesperson and customer will be outside, possibly under an umbrella, while going over the customer's new vehicle. Mr. Scamman added that the overall site plan remains unchanged except for relocating the dumpster enclosure from one side of the transformer to the other to improve operational efficiency. He also noted that, during the initial phase, an area originally planned to be covered by a roof structure will instead be paved until the future phase is constructed. He showed the committee the plan set and the phases.

Mr. Merrill asked what the outside of the building was like with the changes.

Mr. Scamman explained that he is not the architect on the project, but will do his best to answer questions. The building will use the same exterior materials throughout. There are building elevations in the back of the presentation that illustrate these changes. Mr. Scamman explained during our meeting with the Planning Department that the architects updated the design. Originally, this area was going to have two garage doors with a roof overhang. That has now been changed to windows looking into the building. There had also been several garage doors and personnel doors along this wall, but those have been replaced with a solid wall. He explained they have added a small overhang and an emergency exit door that provides access directly into the service bays. Since there is only one garage door at the end of the building, we wanted a secondary means of egress in case that door is blocked or inoperable during an emergency. In the previous design, the emergency exit was proposed on the opposite side. I suggested adding a second garage door instead, which would have allowed vehicles to drive through the reconditioning (recon) bay in an emergency. We ultimately decided not to do that and instead added the emergency exit door inside the recon area. Mr. Scamman clarified that the original plan had four recon bays, not five. The revised design reduces that number to three. He also noted there's a larger door on the

295 second story for parts, so that they can put pallets of materials upstairs. It's like a hay loft door on an old
296 barn, but you have to be able to get there from the exterior; that was something new that was added. He
297 added that there is no longer an elevator. They need to have the ability to slide a pallet with parts in on
298 the second floor.
299

300 Mr. Merrill stated his concerns with the elevation facing River Road, which is a historic street. He
301 explained that before, there was a second roof line and some doors breaking up this facade, and now there
302 is this long monolith facade with a high roof only. He suggested that if there's any way that they can dress
303 this up to maybe add a few windows, maybe continue this lower roof longer. It would add a little cost, but
304 where it faces River Road, he would like to see something other than just that long front of the building.
305

306 Mr. Scamman explained that the latter phase would have all of the architectural details.
307

308 Mr. Merrill concerns if it doesn't ever get built, then you have the long building facing River Road.
309

310 Ms. Price stated that in the prior review by the Planning Board, there was some discussion through the
311 planning board process to not have it look like a warehouse. She explained that she would anticipate that
312 the board would have similar comments to the revised plans at their upcoming meeting.
313

314 Mr. Fraprie asked if the architectural design could include a similar window design as the other façade,
315 with little peaks, plus a couple of windows, which breaks it up, but then you could still keep it in the future
316 too.
317

318 Mr. Newton commented on the plan set for the fire department. He stated there was no issue with the
319 turning template and stated that the sprinkling and fire alarm needs to meet the state fire code.
320

321 Mr. Scamman explained that the building will connect to the existing utilities at the adjacent Nissan
322 dealership, which is under the same ownership. Referring to the site plans, he showed the proposed water
323 line extending from the Nissan property into the new building. He noted that the connection will tie into
324 an existing water valve near the hydrant before entering the building. He is comfortable that the prior
325 third-party fire engineer reviewed the plans.
326

327 Mr. Fraprie acknowledged this plan was previously approved, and doesn't have any further comments,
328 but asked, as the master plans looking for some diversity, and we don't have much diversity through the
329 Gateway.
330

331 Mr. Newton commented that the town doesn't have water and sewer, and that limits the type of
332 development.
333

334 Mr. Merrill added that the voters of the town turned down municipal water and sewer. Town staff, and
335 committees worked really hard to make it happen.
336

337 Mr. Scamman agreed that that is a limiting factor for development.
338

339 Mr. Fraprie stated that, other than the architectural changes, from the planning board representative, he
340 has no additional concerns.
341

342 Mr. Jones commented that Conservation has no comments on this.
343 Mr. Scamman explained that the site includes bioretention features designed to infiltrate stormwater back
344 into the groundwater rather than discharging it directly downstream. He noted that the project was updated

345 to comply with newer stormwater management regulations adopted by the state since the original design
346 was completed in 2014. These additional bioretention measures were incorporated as part of the current
347 approval process. He explained that the NHDOT process has been difficult with the sidewalks and the
348 island adjustment. Mr. Scamman acknowledged that the sidewalks will be installed as part of the project.
349
350 Ms. Price stated she has been in contact with NHDOT to initiate the process of the sidewalks.
351
352 Mr. Fraprie asked about the construction timeline.
353
354 Mr. Scamman stated they anticipate starting later this summer.
355
356 The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.
357
358 *Respectfully submitted by Vanessa Price*