



Stratham Planning Board Meeting Minutes
January 17, 2024
Stratham Municipal Center
Time: 7:00 pm

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

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Mark Connors, Director of Planning and Community Development

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Mr. House called the meeting to order at 6:59 pm and took roll call.

2. Approval of Minutes

a. January 3, 2024

Mr. Zaremba made a motion to approve the January 3, 2024 meeting minutes. Mr. Kunowski seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

3. Public Hearing:

a. The Planning Board held a public hearing on the proposed zoning amendments outlined below.

Mr. House introduced that this is the second public hearing for articles for the March ballot. He stated that the Board has reviewed the draft language a number of times and no members of the public are present at the meeting. He introduced each of the amendments and asked Mr. Connors to describe any changes.

Mr. Canada made a motion to close the public hearing from January 3, 2024. Mr. Kunowski seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Mr. Canada made a motion to open the public hearing. Mr. Zaremba seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Amendment #2: To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section II Definitions, and Section III, Table 3.6 Table of Uses, and Footnotes to Table 3.6 to include new definitions and property uses that are not

defined under the Ordinance. This is a housekeeping amendment to better define terms, building uses and associated requirements, in the Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. Connors stated there are no changes to Article #1 from the last public hearing.

Mr. Zaremba made a motion to advance Amendment #2 to town ballot. Mr. Kunowski seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Mr. Zaremba made a motion that the Planning Board support Amendment #2. Mr. Kunowski seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Amendment #3: To amend the Building Ordinance, Article III *Permits*, to clarify the circumstances in which the Building Inspector may require that a plan prepared and stamped by a licensed land surveyor or certified wetland scientist be submitted with a building permit application? This amendment provides the Building Inspector discretion to require a plan prepared and stamped by a certified professional prior to the issuance of a building permit where there is a reasonable basis for questioning whether an application meets the requirements of the Zoning and Building Ordinances and/or the State Building and Fire Codes.

Mr. Canada made a motion to advance Amendment #3 to town ballot. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Mr. Canada made a motion that the Planning Board support Amendment #3. Mr. Zaremba seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Amendment #4: To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section V *Supplementary Regulations*, Subsection 5.12 *Home Occupation* to clarify the requirements associated with home occupations? This amendment would limit the aggregate size of home occupations and clarify requirements associated with inspections and renewals of home occupations.

Mr. Connors stated there were no changes to Article #3 or Article #4 from the last public hearing.

Mr. Houghton made a motion to advance Amendment #4 to town ballot. Mr. Zaremba seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Mr. Houghton made a motion that the Planning Board support Amendment #4. Mr. Zaremba seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Amendment #5: To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section III, *Footnotes to Table 3.6* to consolidate the number of criteria the Planning Board considers in Conditional Use Permit applications from 11 criteria to 7 criteria. The purpose of this amendment is to expedite reviews of Conditional Use Permit applications while maintaining core review criteria.

Mr. Zaremba made a motion to advance Amendment #5 to town ballot. Mr. Kunowski seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Mr. Zaremba made a motion that the Planning Board support Amendment #5. Mr. Kunowski seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Amendment #6: To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section VIII *Residential Open Space Cluster Development*, to incorporate four major changes to the requirements associated with residential cluster developments. This amendment would reduce the minimum lot size for cluster developments, establish minimum lot sizes for individual lots, require that open space parcels meet additional minimum requirements, and to require that historical and scenic resources be preserved and incorporated into such developments whenever practicable.

Mr. Connors stated there are a few changes to this Article from the last public hearing. References to feasibility with regards to historic structures was deleted. Additionally the percentage of wetlands allowed in the Open Space was reduced from 25% to 20%.

Mr. Zaremba made a motion to advance Amendment #6 to town ballot. Mr. Kunowski seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Mr. Zaremba made a motion that the Planning Board support Amendment #6. Mr. Kunowski seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Amendment #7: To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section V *Supplementary Regulations*, to create a new Sub-section 5.14 for *Small Accessory Structures*. The purpose of this amendment is to provide for reduced side, rear, and wetland setbacks for small sheds or accessory structures under 120 square-feet in size provided that the structure meets a number of criteria.

Mr. Connors stated there are no changes to this Article from the last public hearing.

Mr. Zaremba made a motion to advance Amendment #7 to town ballot. Mr. Kunowski seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Mr. Zaremba made a motion that the Planning Board support Amendment #7. Mr. Kunowski seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Amendment #8: To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section IV *Dimensional Regulations*, Sub-section 4.1.4 *Maximum Residential Density* to clarify that non-buildable areas, including wetlands, steep slopes, and areas protected by conservation easements or deed restrictions cannot be incorporated into maximum residential density calculations. This amendment would also reduce the maximum residential density in the Route 33 Heritage District from three units per acre to two units per acre.

Mr. Connors stated there are no changes to this Article from the last public hearing.

Mr. Zaremba made a motion to advance Amendment #8 to town ballot. Mr. Kunowski seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Mr. Zaremba made a motion that the Planning Board support Amendment #8. Mr. Kunowski seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Amendment #9: To amend the Zoning Ordinance, Section V *Supplementary Regulations*, Sub-section 5.13 *Solar Energy Systems* to allow small-scale ground-mount solar energy systems by right if they meet a number of minimum criteria. The purpose of this amendment is to exempt small-scale solar energy systems from requiring a Conditional Use Permit by the Planning Board

143 if they meet certain minimum criteria.

144
145 Mr. Connors stated there are no changes to this Article from the last public hearing.

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147 **Mr. Zaremba made a motion to advance Amendment #9 to town ballot. Mr. Kunowski**
148 **seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

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150 **Mr. Zaremba made a motion that the Planning Board support Amendment #9. Mr. Kunowski**
151 **seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

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153 Amendment #10: To amend Section V Supplementary Regulations to enact additional regulations,
154 including screening requirements, on storage containers, semi trailers, and associated structures.

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156 Mr. Connors stated there was one change to this Article from the last public hearing. Previous language
157 limited the requirements to recreational vehicles over 20 feet long. That language was deleted and the
158 proposed ordinance would apply to all recreational vehicles with an exemption for vehicles that are
159 registered and have passed inspection within the past 15 months.

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161 **Mr. Zaremba made a motion to advance Amendment #10 to the town ballot. Mr. Kunowski**
162 **seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

163
164 **Mr. Zaremba made a motion that the Planning Board support Amendment #10. Mr.**
165 **Kunowski seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

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167 **Mr. Houghton made a motion to close the public hearing. Mr. Zaremba seconded the motion.**
168 **All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

169 170 **4. Public Meeting**

171 172 **a. Miscellaneous Community Planning Issues**

173 174 **i. Open Space & Connectivity Plan Update**

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176 Mr. Connors stated that a public event for the Open Space Plan has been scheduled for February
177 12, 2024 at 6:00 pm at the Municipal Center. The draft recommendations of the plan will be
178 presented along with a demonstration of the website for the plan. Mr. Connors asked the Board's
179 assistance to get the word out and promote the event.

180 181 **ii. Housing Supply Update**

182
183 Mr. Connors directed the Board's attention to a staff memo on this topic. The State periodically
184 releases the number of residential building permits that have been approved by towns. The recent
185 release of data includes the number of residential building permits approved by municipality for
186 the years 2019, 2020, and 2021. He stated that Merrimack is interesting because it has approved
187 the highest number of units by far in the state and the units being added there are mostly multi-
188 family units. There is also a lot of development in Salem and Lebanon. Stratham is comparable
189 to other towns of its size in Rockingham County.

190
191 Mr. Kunowski asked if most of the municipalities developing the most housing have public water

192 and sewer systems. Mr. Connors replied yes, he believes all of them do.

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194 iii. Pending Land Use Applications Update

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196 Mr. Connors presented an update on the Zoning Board meeting from last week that the ZBA
197 approved the variance for residential single-family homes at the Stoneybrook parcel and denied
198 an application for short-term rentals at 3 Apple Way.

199
200 Mr. House asked if there were any conditions on the Stoneybrook application. Mr. Connors
201 replied yes, that the number of units and the design of development would be the purview of the
202 Planning Board.

203
204 **Mr. Canada made a motion that the Planning Board enter a non-public session to discuss a**
205 **matter which could be a legal issue. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor**
206 **and the motion passed.**

207
208 **Mr. Canada made a motion to seal the minutes of the non-public session as its disclosure**
209 **would render a proposed action ineffective. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted**
210 **in favor and the motion passed.**

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212 **5. Adjournment**

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214 **Mr. Zaremba made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm. Mr. Canada seconded the**
215 **motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**