

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Location: Strafford Town Hall Conference Room

Date & Time: March 6, 2025 6:30PM

Members Present:

Phil Auger – Chairman
Charlie Moreno – Vice Chairman
Terry Hyland
Don Clifford

Alternate Members Present:

Donald Coker
Susan Arnold

Others Present:

Owen Corcoran, Strafford Regional Planning Commission, Regional Planner
Robert Fletcher, Minutes Recorder

The Chairman, Phil Auger, called the meeting to order at 6:32PM and recognized Board members Charlie Moreno, Terry Hyland, Don Clifford, Donald Coker, and Susan Arnold as present. He also recognized as present Owen Corcoran and Robert Fletcher. The Chairman appointed Susan Arnold as a voting Board member to replace Lynn Sweet.

The applicants to address a Design Review for a proposed 3-Lot subdivision on Range Road had not arrived at the start of the meeting. In the interim, the Chairman addressed other items on the agenda.

Other Business

The Board reviewed the minutes of the February 19, 2025 Planning Board Meeting. Susan Arnold made a motion to accept the minutes as written, which was seconded by Charlie Moreno and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members present who attended the February 19th Planning Board Meeting.

Proposed Warrant Article 23. The Board reviewed the Warrant Article which will be presented at the March 15, 2025 Town Meeting on recommendation of the Planning Board. The article requests funds to develop a Bow Lake Watershed Management Plan which will include a comprehensive septic system inventory, road drainage analysis and mitigation to correct issues that are negatively impacting water quality in a defined watershed area.

The Select Board and their attorney requested changes to the article wording to clarify the funds request which is contingent upon the successful receipt of a Piscataqua Regional Estuaries Program grant. Phil Auger will present an amended article for consideration at the Town Meeting and provide background information on the project.

Class VI Road Policy. Don Clifford requested the Chairman read for the benefit of the Board members the updated proposed Policy of the Board of Selectmen Regarding Construction on Class VI Roads. The Planning Board concluded that a few minor changes were needed before forwarding it to the Selectmen for adoption.

Design Review – Ryan Joe and Eric Joe, proposed 3-lot subdivision, Range Road, (Tax Map 8, Lot 28-1)

The applicants, both Ryan and Eric Joe, arrived late for the meeting due to an understanding the meeting started at 7:00PM. An abutter in attendance confirmed the notice received for the Design Review indicated a 7:00PM meeting.

The Chairman asked the applicant to present the proposal. Ryan Joe, a current resident of Farmington (Eric Joe lives in Barington), addressed the proposal to subdivide Lot 28-1 on Range Road into three lots. It is a 12.7-acre parcel purchased two years ago with the intent of building his home on one lot, his brother Eric's home on another lot, and leaving the center lot vacant, except for the possible placement of a shop.

Eric Salovitch, President of Northam Survey, LLC., planned to be present to represent the applicant, but is on vacation in Florida. He provided a letter, which Mr. Joe read to the Board as a project presentation.

“Good evening Board,

I am preparing this letter ahead of time as I'm currently 1,200 miles south battling the crowds to provide my daughter a chance to see Micky Mouse. Thank you for hearing our proposal in my absence to keep this project on schedule.

The subject parcel resides on Range Road and is known as Tax Map 8 Lot 28-1. The lot was created by conveyance in April of 1985. This lot does not predate zoning though, as Strafford land use was first adopted in 1970. We did not find evidence that this parcel was created by subdivision. It was mentioned to us early on that because this lot was previously subdivided it would classify as a major subdivision. We feel this may be in error as no record subdivision plan exists. We would ask for this project to be classified as a minor subdivision, as we are proposing 3 frontage lots with no new ways.

Moving on with the proposal. This subject parcel is an existing lot of land being 12.74 acres in size with 622' of frontage on Range Road. The parcel is zoned Agricultural-Residential with new lots requiring 2 acres in size and 200' of frontage. As mentioned, the project proposes a 3-lot frontage subdivision with all lots being over 4 acres in size, more than double the required amount, with frontages over 200'. There is one overlay district, Wetland Conservation. Wetlands are shown heron and were delineated by Mission Wetland in October of 2024. Final plans will be sealed with Sergio's state stamp. More information on that under note 14 on the survey. We depict the 25' no disturbance buffer, 50' structure setback, and 75' septic setback that would be applicable with the Wetland Conservation ordinance.

The layout of the near 13-acre tract is unique in that a larger forested wetland intersects Range Road from the prime buildable area of the lot. Because of this, the lots are mutually subject to, and in benefit of a proposed 30' Access and Utility Easement.

The development of the lots will consist of a shared driveway. A NHDES Wetland Permit will be submitted for a crossing facilitating such. The initial calculations for the access easement are just under 10,000 Square Feet which would classify the wetland permit as a minimum expedited permit with the state. This will have to go before the conservation commission for their recommendation once we're further along. This crossing is depicted on our plan as “Proposed Access & Utility Easement”. We will be working with a land use attorney to create an HOA (Homeowners Association) which will address future maintenance of the shared driveway. This legal work and the engineering for the driveway have yet to be completed. The

driveway design will be in accordance with Chapter 4 – Building regulations 4.1.10 – Driveways and 4.1.10A – Shared Driveways.

At this time, test pits have not been dug. This work will be scheduled once the weather permits. Each new lot has ample space for a proposed dwelling, a well with a 75-foot protective radius, and a 4k area depicting the septic system area in which test pits will be dug. NRCS Soils are depicted on the survey with the developable area being shown as PdB – Paxton fine sandy loam. I’m not a soil scientist but do not expect any issues with the test pit results in this soil environment.

The lot is not in a flood zone, note #6 has more information on that. We conducted our field survey in October 2024. The survey is on State Plane Coordinates North American Datum 1983, the current mapping standard for New Hampshire and vertical datum NAVD88 per static GPS observations.

Also shown are setbacks relative to the Agricultural-Residential zone: 25’ side and rear setbacks for structures. A front setback is not shown as the wetland setback is the most stringent.

Although the ordinance (Section 2.6.14) requires Proposed utilities to be underground. With wetland crossing near the road, we would request that electric service be above ground, coming from the pole labeled “PSNH 822B/10”, shown across Range Road from Parcel B. Being above ground would help mitigate wetland impact. Once clear from delineated wetland area, we have no problem transitioning to underground service to the home following the utility easement area as proposed. Would this be acceptable to the Board?

Lastly, the plan we submitted depicts “New Bow Lake Road, an existing class VI Right of way” alongside note 13 on the plan that talks about the original town vote making it subject to gates and bars. Owen recently sent us the warrant articles from 2003 which voted to change the status of New Bow Lake Road to a class A trail. Plans will be updated accordingly for future submittals.

We look forward to hearing any/all the Boards comments during this design review and appreciate your time reviewing the application with us.”

Mr. Joe provided a copy of the letter to the Board. The Chairman indicated that a Preliminary Consultation would normally be the first step to review a proposal, which would be followed by a Design Review. Board recommendations during this sequence generally reduces applicant costs by eliminating multiple certified plan updates. The Chairman also stated that the proposed subdivision is not part of a previous subdivision, but part of a farm property that has been subdivided several times, and as such may need to be considered as a major subdivision. Mr. Joe indicated that the plans presented were developed prior to their purchase of the land, were being used as an example for their proposal, and they welcomed any Board comments or recommendations.

The Board provided the following comments and/or concerns with respect to the proposal:

- Concerns were raised about the anticipated negative impacts of the extensive wetland crossing for the proposed shared driveway if it were to be constructed. The Board may require the Town wetland scientist consultant (at applicant’s expense) to evaluate the final driveway design and other wetland considerations for the subdivision.
- A properly recorded shared driveway maintenance agreement.

- An emergency vehicle turn-out at some point on the shared driveway as approved by the Town Fire Department.
- Requirement for at least 60% of the minimum buildable portion of the land to be contiguous (Town of Strafford Ordinances and Regulations, Chapter 2.6.2). The most eastern lot of the proposed subdivision (Parcel C) may not satisfy this requirement without incorporating a portion of the proposed center lot (Parcel B).
- The need for subdividing Lot 28-1 into three lot instead of two lots.
- An understanding that New Bow Lake Road, which crosses the northern portion of all three proposed lots, is designated a Class A Trail and remains a public way.
- A site visit by the Board will most likely be needed.

The Chairman opened the meeting for public comments at 7:28PM.

Daniel Mooers, 134 Range Road, expressed concern about the environmental impact of the proposed driveway crossing approximately 400-feet of wetland area which is wet for nine months each year. There being no further comments from the public, the Chairman closed the meeting for public comments at 7:29PM.

Neither the applicant nor the Board had any need for further discussion, and the Chairman thanked the applicant for presenting the proposal.

Other Business Continued

Piscataqua Regional Estuaries Program Grant update. Owen Corcoran stated that he began creating a rough draft of the grant application but will need project timing justification and a detailed scope of work and tasks to collect data and develop the Bow Lake Watershed Management Plan. The application needs to be submitted by March 31, 2025.

Master Plan Information Table. Susan Arnold indicated that representatives from the committees will have an information table at the March 2025 Town Meeting to provide an opportunity for town residents to ask questions and obtain the latest Master Plan information.

There being no further business before the Board, Don Clifford made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Susan Arnold. The Board voted unanimously in favor, and the meeting adjourned at 7:41PM.