

Public Hearing Minutes

Location: Strafford Town Hall Conference Room

Date & Time: January 21, 2026 6:30PM

Members Present:

Charlie Moreno – Vice Chair
Terry Hyland
Don Clifford

Alternate Members Present:

Susan Arnold
Donald Coker

Others Present:

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

In the absence of Phil Auger, Charlie Moreno, Acting Chair, called the Public Hearing to order at 6:30PM and recognized Board members Terry Hyland, Don Clifford, Donald Coker, and Susan Arnold as present. He also recognized as present Owen Corcoran and Robert Fletcher.

The Chair appointed Donald Coker as a voting member to replace Phil Auger and Susan Arnold as Selectman Representative to replace Lynn Sweet. He stated that the purpose of the Public Hearing was to address three amendments to the town Zoning and Land Use Ordinance; Accessory Dwelling Units, In Home Child Care Facilities, and Non-Conforming Uses. He noted that no one from the public was in attendance at the hearing. He confirmed that all Board members present had read and reviewed the final version of the amendments. He then read into the record each of the proposed Warrant Articles and addressed the significant changes for each amendment.

AMENDMENT 1 Accessory Dwelling Units “ADUs”

The Town of Strafford is required to update its Zoning Ordinance provisions pertaining to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) to reflect changes to the State’s ADU law (RSA 674:71:73) per 2025 HB577. The existing Article 1.4.1.K Accessory Dwelling Units is proposed to be repealed and replaced with new provisions that, consistent with state requirements, allows one attached or detached ADU as a matter of right in all zoning districts where single-family homes are permitted; increases the maximum square footage to 950 sf for conforming lots; retains the requirement for owner occupancy of the single-family dwelling unit or ADU; allows for conversion of existing structures, including detached garages, into ADUs even if the structure doesn’t meet setback or lot coverage dimensional standards; and adds flexibility for ingress and egress. Additional amendments are made to Article 1.14 Definitions to include definitions of Accessory Dwelling Units, Attached, and Detached.

The Chair again noted that no one from the public was in attendance at the hearing and addressed the significant proposed amendment changes as follows:

- Article 1.4.1.K, paragraph 3h; addition of sentence “Applicants must have an installed NH Department of Environmental Services approved septic system prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy”. Legal counsel reviewed the proposed change and noted that it is unenforceable because, in this case, the town cannot make the Ordinance more stringent than the state

requirement. The state may require septic system installation in the future, and the Board agreed to leave the sentence in the proposed amendment.

- Article 1.4.1.K, paragraph 3j; change to read “The total living space of the accessory dwelling unit shall not exceed 750 square feet on a non-conforming lot or 950 square feet on a conforming lot and shall not exceed two (2) bedrooms”. The Board made no change to this paragraph.

There being no further discussion on the proposed amendment, Don Clifford made a motion to approve Amendment 1 as written which was seconded by Donald Coker and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members. The motion passed.

AMENDMENT 2 In Home Child Care Facilities

Adopt a new section 1.6 Home Based Child Care and renumber all subsequent sections. This new section intends to bring the town into compliance with NH RSA 674:16, VI that requires municipalities to allow such facilities by right or through a conditional use permit. This new section allows a home based child care accessory use to any residential use with a conditional use permit. Programs must be compliant with state licensing and all applicable building, fire, and health codes for residential properties. Additionally, while no additional parking is required, there must be safe space provided for drop-off and pick-up. Operators are encouraged to schedule drop-off and pick-up to minimize congestion.

The Chair again noted that no one from the public was in attendance at the hearing and addressed the proposed change to amendment as follows:

- New Section 1.6; addition of a sentence to last paragraph “Any child care facility other than a Home Based Child Care program as defined in Section 1.14 shall be subject to Site Plan Review under the Town’s Non-Residential Site Plan Regulations”. The Board made no change to this paragraph.

There being no further discussion on the proposed amendment, Donald Coker made a motion to approve Amendment 2 as written which was seconded by Susan Arnold and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members. The motion passed.

AMENDMENT 3 Non-Conforming Uses

Amend Article 1.7 Non-Conforming Use to clarify when Special Exceptions or Variances are required, or when neither is needed. Also, the amendments establish provisions to allow for the reconstruction of a non-conforming structure destroyed by fire or other act of nature within one year. Extensions may be granted by the Board of Selectmen or their designee.

The Chair again noted that no one from the public was in attendance at the hearing. There were no objections to the language of the proposed amendment and Donald Coker made a motion to approve Amendment 3 as written which was seconded by Susan Arnold and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members. The motion passed.

Other Discussion

Owen Corcoran noted the upcoming (spring-time) availability of state grants for "shovel-ready" recreation trail projects. The grants from NH Department of Natural & Cultural Resources may be up to \$80,000 with a 20 percent match.

There being no further business before the Board, the Chair called for a motion to close the Public Hearing and adjournment which was so moved by Donald Coker and seconded by Susan Arnold. The Board voted unanimously in favor, and the meeting adjourned at 6:54PM.

Minutes Prepared by Robert Fletcher