

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Location: Strafford Town Hall Conference Room

Date & Time: April 8, 2026 6:30PM

Members Present:

Phil Auger – Chair
Charlie Moreno – Vice Chair
Terry Hyland
Don Clifford
Steve Leighton – Selectman Representative

Alternate Members Present:

Donald Coker
Susan Arnold

Others Present:

Jen Czysz, Strafford Regional Planning Commission, Executive Director
Robert Fletcher, Minutes Recorder

The Chair, Phil Auger, called the meeting to order at 6:31PM and recognized Board members Charlie Moreno, Terry Hyland, Don Clifford, Steve Leighton, Donald Coker, and Susan Arnold as present. He also recognized as present Jen Czysz and Robert Fletcher.

General Public Comment

The Chair asked the public attendees if there were any comments or questions that were unrelated to the items on the agenda. There were none.

Continuing Business

Major Subdivision by Cumulative Impact – Sarah & Thomas Collins and the Blue Hills Foundation, Inc., 2-Lot Conservation Development, Province Road and Evans Mountain Road (Tax Map 6, Lot 1)

The Chair recused himself and asked the Vice-Chair, Charlie Moreno, to preside. The Vice Chair appointed Susan Arnold as a voting member. He indicated that during a previous meeting the Board accepted the applicant's plan as complete, determined that the proposed major subdivision presented no regional impact, heard the applicant's subdivision plan and waiver requests, and opened the meeting for public comments.

The Vice Chair opened the meeting for public comments at 6:35PM, and there being none, asked Daniel O'Lone of Berry Surveying & Engineering, representing the Collins' and the Blue Hills Foundation, to address any plan changes. Mr. O'Lone indicated that the plan was updated with notes regarding a yield plan formula, a line chart, parking restriction unless Evans Mountain Road is upgrade for management access or greater standard, designation of the conserved area as Lot 1-1, and a reference to a recorded conservation easement document. Don Clifford asked about the status of that document and it was stated that it is being reviewed by the town attorney. Mr. O'Lone also noted the submittal of an escrow check in the amount of \$1,000.00 and updated waiver requests.

The Vice Chair asked Mr. O'Lone to address the waiver requests and he presented them as follows:

1. Waiver to Section 2.71(E) – Requirement to delineate water courses, ponds or standing water, rock ledges, stonewalls, location of soil and groundwater test pits, percolation test data, building lines, and septic setback line to wetlands. The proposed conservation Lot 1-1 is a non-buildable lot and Lot 1, which contains an existing residence, has a 1996 NHDES approved septic system which included test pit and prec tests. A full and complete topographical survey of the entire parcel to delineate and locate the above items would create an undue hardship on the applicant. The spirit and intent of the regulation is upheld in that Lot 1 is already fully developed and will continue to meet the zoning ordinance. Don Clifford made a motion to grant the waiver for the reasons stated above by Mr. O’Lone. The motion was seconded by Susan Arnold and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members. The motion passed.
2. Waiver to Section 2.7.1(M) – Requirement for a complete wetland delineation of the lot. Wetlands certified by a certified wetland scientist are delineated for the buildable area around the existing home on Lot-1 and Lot 1-1 is proposed to be a conservation, non-buildable lot. A full and complete wetland survey of the entire parcel to locate all wetland areas would create an undue hardship on the applicant. The spirit and intent of the regulation is upheld in that Lot 1 is already fully developed and will continue to meet the zoning ordinance. Don Clifford made a motion to grant the waiver for the reasons stated above by Mr. O’Lone. The motion was seconded by Susan Arnold and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members. The motion passed.

The Vice Chair asked for public comments regarding the application, and there being none, closed the meeting for public comments at 6:44PM. He asked the Board if there were any questions or concerns and noted the changes to the plan as presented earlier by Mr. O’Lone which included a yield plan indicating a total of 38 lots on the parcel. He stated the finds of fact regarding the application as follows:

1. The applicant seeks to subdivide Tax Map 6, Lot 1, a 213.59-acre parcel into 2 lots; one lot consisting of 36.28 acres and containing an existing residential building and shed, and a second lot of 177.32 acres, the balance of the property, to be transferred to the Blue Hills Foundation and placed into permanent conservation.
2. The application was accepted as complete at the April 2, 2026 Planning Board meeting.
3. The application was determined to not be of regional impact at the April 2, 2026 Planning Board meeting.
4. Public hearings were conducted on April 2, 2026 and April 8, 2026.
5. The proposal is compliant with the Town of Strafford Zoning Ordinance in that; a) the proposed subdivision meets the minimum lot size requirements, b) Lot 1 Province Road frontage is a pre-existing non-conformity that will not change as a result of the subdivision and, as such, can continue as is, c) all provisions of 1.4.32 Conservation Development have been met, and d) a conservation easement document has been drafted and is being reviewed by the town attorney.
6. The applicant has demonstrated compliance with the Town of Strafford Subdivision Regulation Section 2.6 General Requirements for applications, notably; a) the applicant has demonstrated that the lots are suitable for the proposal and there will be no impact to ponds, streams o wetlands, b) there is no development proposed on the majority of the land intended for conservation and the parent parcel has existing development, c) there is existing water and

septic on Lot 1 and being larger than 5 acres, it is exempt from state septic, d) No construction is proposed at this time, and e) any future development on Lot 1 will be subject to planning and zoning requirements and may require subsequent subdivision, site plan, or building permit approvals.

The Vice Chair noted the conditions of approval as follows:

1. Applicant will provide paper copies of the plan set along with electronic versions.
2. Submission of \$1,000.00 for escrow account cover cost of legal review.
3. Recording of conservation easement document upon completion of town attorney review.
4. Changes to the plan as detailed in the minutes, addition of approved waivers listed on the plan set, and boundary monuments to be set and any additional blazing to be completed.

The Vice Chair asked for a motion to approve the application. Don Clifford made a motion to approve the major subdivision application pursuant to the previously noted Findings of Fact and subject to the following conditions:

- Submission of three paper copies of the plan set with professional seals and signatures along with electronic versions.
- Submission of \$1,000.00 for escrow account to cover cost of conservation easement legal review.
- Conservation easement language review completed by town legal counsel.
- Changes to the plan as detailed in the minutes, boundary monuments to be set and any additional blazing to be completed, and the addition of approved waivers on the plan set.

The motion was seconded by Susan Arnold and the Vice Chair asked if there were further questions or concerns. There being none, he called for a vote and the motion was voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members. The motion passed.

Phil Auger resumed duties as the Chair and Susan Arnold returned to alternate member status.

Other Business

Rules of Procedure review. The Chair noted that the latest version contains the edits and additions by the town attorney. The Board made changes and additions for Board member replacements, order of business for Planning Board meetings, public hearing procedures, and waivers. The Board plans to approve the Rules and Procedures at the next Planning Board meeting and will conduct an annual review.

Strafford Regional Planning Commission Regional Planner. Jen Czysz indicated that a new regional planner will be assigned for Strafford and will be phased in over a number of monthly meetings.

The Board reviewed the minutes of the March 5, 2026 Planning Board Meeting. Don Clifford made a motion to accept the minutes as written, which was seconded by Terry Hyland and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all Board members. The motion passed.

There being no further business before the Board, Don Clifford made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Steve Leighton. The Board voted unanimously in favor, and the meeting adjourned at 7:53PM.

Minutes Prepared by Robert Fletcher