NO LEGAL VALUE

October 22 2026

Planning Board Workshop Minutes

Location: Strafford Town Hall Conference Room

Date & Time: October 22, 2026, 6:30PM **Members**

Present:

Phil Auger – Chairman

Charles Moreno

Lynn Sweet, Selectmen's Rep **Alternate**

Members Present:

Sue Higgins Donald

Coker

Others Present:

Lisa Wise, Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SPRC), Regional Planner Todd

Crabtree, Recorder

1. Discussion with Select Board:

Selectman Steve Leighton presented **information** to the board about a piece of property that the town is exploring purchasing for a new Fire Department facility. **The** location will be shared by both the fire department and a future highway department. The property is located at 354 Rollercoaster Rd. Tax map 37 Lot 5. The current owner is Patricia Cowhig. The property is approximately 8 acres and will be purchased at fair market value for $400,000. The fire chief is very happy with the location as the village has the majority of their calls. In order to move forward with purchasing, the town needs approval from both the Planning board as well as the conservation commission, which has provided their approval. Then two public hearings will need to take place at least 10 days but no more than 14 days apart. After the second public hearing the board's vote cannot take place before 7 days and no more than 14 days. Once the purchase has been completed the occupant will have two years to reside at the location with a possible extension if the town is not ready to build at that time. The occupant will be responsible for utilities. Funds for this parcel will come from a capital reserve that is in place. The chair asked Donald Coker and Sue Higgins to participate in the vote. Donald Coker made a motion to support the Select Board to move forward with the process for the land acquisition per RSA 41:14. Sue Higgins seconded the motion. All voted in the affirmative. Phil Auger recommends the Selectman engage the wetland scientist to get **better maps** for future presentations.

2. Other Board Discussion

Site walk – The Planning Board would like to schedule a site walk for the New Styles Homes property on November 5th @ 3:30 Map 16 Lot 19. Lisa Wise will reach out to the applicant regarding scheduling.

3. Work Session for Amendments to The Zoning and Land Use Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, Non-Residential Site Plan Regulations, And Building Regulations a. Statutorily Mandated Amendments i. In-Home Childcare Facilities

Strafford updated their Child Care ordinance language a couple of years ago **which** went into effect July 1, 2026. Natalie Gemma from Strafford Regional Planning Commission has been working with Lisa on this initiative and provided a 1-page summary with background about the legislation. Another document and walks through a series of draft amendments.

Natalie's assessment **evaluated** the Town of Strafford's Zoning Ordinance and Site Plan Regulations for consistency with state child care legislation enacted in 2024 (HB 1567) and 2026 (HB 1195) and identifies required and recommended updates for the Town's consideration. Under these laws, home-based child care must be permitted by right on any lot where residential uses are allowed, and center-based child care must be permitted by right in commercially zoned areas, subject to applicable statutory conditions and exceptions. Several updates to the Town's Zoning Ordinance and Site Plan Review Regulations are required to achieve full compliance with the most recent legislative changes. Recommendations include:

1. In Section 1.14 Definitions of the Town Ordinance, replace 1.14.18 Home Based Child Care with the definitions of "Family Day Care Home", "Family Group Day Care Home", and "Child Care Center" to align the ordinance with state terminology and use classifications regulated under HB 1195.

2. Update Section 1.4.2 Land Uses Allowed of the Town Ordinance to reflect the requirements of HB 1195 by permitting Family Day Care Homes, Family Group Day Care Homes, and Child Care Centers by right where required by state law (and update/include related provisions, standards, and requirements accordingly).

3. Update any outdated references to child care in the Index section on pg. 109 accordingly (and add references to Child Care Centers). (Terminology Reference)

4. Consider adding a standalone child care section that establishes clear, child care-specific standards for home-based and center-based care and provides detailed guidance on applicable requirements, exemptions, and statutory provisions. (Optional)

5. Consider adding language in the Town's Site Plan Review Regulations that clarifies which child care uses are exempt from Site Plan Review.

Phil Auger and Lynn Sweet are concerned that this removes local oversight and want to know more about the state licensing requirements particularly regarding safety. It is assumed that in order to get permitting one has to have some type of contact with the fire department to verify safety. Lisa is to ask Natalie G. for more information about licensing requirements and safety.

Phil Auger said that we really have no say in this as this is driven by state legislation. Lisa walked through the options Natalie laid out, including whether to use the text of the definitions or just point to the RSA.

The board opted to point to the RSA, so it will still be effective in the event the RSA language gets amended in the future.

Sue Higgins pointed to the language in the draft that says child care programs must comply with fire codes, background checks, etc. **which** will involve the Fire department and Police department for background checks.

Lynn Sweet asked if there is a way to require a letter of intent be submitted to the Selectman, Planning Board, and/or building department so everyone is aware.

The board then discussed options for Child Care Centers (which are different from home-based care). Option A is to allow child care centers by right. Option B is to restrict child care centers for the 'exclusive use of employees of a business in that district.' Jay Schaefer (project manager of the new library building committee) asked about the school what if someone wanted to start a day care for the teachers' children? Lisa will ask Natalie if we can go forward with Option B but ensure the language would enable a child care center related to the school and/or other municipal entities. The board opted not to pursue adopting the model ordinance language at this time but will advance the other recommended amendments in order to comply with the state legislation.

ii. Dead-End Streets

Lisa Wise shared a resource on RSA 674:21-b (SB 564) which prohibits length limits and housing lot caps on dead-end roads and allows utility placement in certain buffer areas. There is some language we will need to update or remove. We may need input from the town attorney as well.

iii. Floodplain Management

The state is auditing municipalities' floodplain regulations to ensure towns are compliant with FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) so people can access flood insurance. There are new FEMA Floodplain maps for this region coming into effect next year. Strafford needs to update aspects of the floodplain regulations to comply with the NFIP requirements when the new maps become effective. Lisa explained that Jennifer Gilbert from the NH Coastal Program is working with the Office of Planning and Development to review regulations. Jennifer Gilbert has provided draft amendments, which include wording updates and removal of unnecessary text in Chapter 2. Subdivision Regulations (2.2.7 Special Flood Hazard Areas); addition of text in Chapter 3. Non-Residential Site Plan Regulations; and suggested additions, wording updates, and removal of unnecessary text to Chapter 4. Building Regulations (4.4 Floodplain Development Regulations).

Phil Auger asked about language in section B of the draft amendments to Chapter 2. Subdivision Regulations, which refers to "Subdivision proposals and other proposed new developments greater than 50 lots or 5 acres." The board was unsure what that means. Lisa will ask Jennifer for clarification. It appears this is language from FEMA and the NFIP regulations.

Lisa believes the other changes are pretty straight forward. Again, it is a case of needing to make updates to come into compliance.

b. Other Amendments i. Buildable/Contiguous Area

Phil Auger identified recommended improvements to the language regarding minimum land area and contiguous buildable area. He pointed out the language in 1.4.1 A that "There shall be no more than one residential structure per lot" may need to be updated to account for ADUs. Phil Auger also suggested

moving the “lot configuration” language from subdivision regulations into zoning, and applying the 75’ minimum width to the contiguous area as well. **Charlie Moreno suggested that perhaps 50 ft minimum would be less restrictive and that we should leave the buildable area configuration in subdivision regulations.**

ii. Formatting/Cleanup

Lisa mentioned a few overall formatting items in addition to the amendments discussed above.

** made a motion to adjourn the meeting; ** seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm.