

**Town of Gilsum
PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

June 12, 2025

Board Present: Tom Julius, Chair; Heidi Bukoski, Member; Kevin Barnes, Member; Brian Bazarnicki, *Ex Officio*; and Carol Ogilvie, Alternate Member

Over Telephone: Bill Whyte

Other: Frank Richter, Clean Energy NH/SolSmart

CTO: Tom called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M.

I. Procedures

a. Meeting Minutes

The May 8, 2025 minutes were distributed and reviewed by the Board.

On a motion by Heidi Bukoski/seconded by Brian Bazarnicki, the minutes of May 8, 2025 were approved, with all in favor.

b. NH DOT Driveway Permit.

Tom stated that the DOT permit application has been posted to the Town's website.

II. Planning

a. Solar Ordinance

Frank Richter was present to discuss the SolSmart program with the Board. Before beginning this discussion Tom asked the Board members to introduce themselves, state how long they have lived in Gilsum, and on a scale of 1 to 5, how much they know about solar panels.

Brian: He is the *ex officio* Select Board member to the Planning Board; has lived in town for 20 years; and rates his knowledge at a 3.

Carol: She has lived in Gilsum for 24 years; she has more knowledge of solar ordinances than of the technology, so perhaps a 2 out of 5.

Heidi: She has lived in town for 6 years; she doesn't know a lot about solar, so a 1-2 out of 5.

Kevin: He has lived in town for 6 years; he would also rate his knowledge at 1-2 out of 5.

Tom: He is the Chair of the Board; he has lived in Gilsum for 37 years; and rates his knowledge at 1-2 out of 5.

Frank introduced himself as working for Clean Energy NH, which is a nonprofit organization that works to advance clean energy in New Hampshire through policy advocacy, education, outreach, and technical support. Part of that technical support is working with towns to help develop zoning ordinances for solar installations. For this work, they have partnered with SolSmart, which is a national program that helps municipalities expand energy use. They are the technical experts for developing solar ordinances.

As for background, Frank has served on his planning board and has worked as a building inspector, so he is very familiar with the planning process. He is currently working with six towns in this region to develop a solar ordinance; statewide there are currently 36 towns that are involved in this program.

Tom recognized Mike Klein, who had a question for Frank. Mike is a representative to the Planning Commission for Gilsum, and has lived in town for 38 years. His question had to do with the technology regarding converters, to which Frank stated that he is not familiar with that level of technology.

Tom then referred everyone to the materials in the packet that were provided by SolSmart; the three documents are:

1. An explanation of a Zoning Review that is conducted by SolSmart.
2. An explanation of the Baseline Assessment of Gilsum's current land use regulations relative to solar.
3. Results of the review of Gilsum's Zoning Ordinance.

In sum, the results note that Gilsum does not have provisions in its ordinance relative to solar systems, and provides suggested language that the town could adopt toward this purpose.

Frank pointed out that SolSmart is in the process of developing a model ordinance for all towns in New Hampshire, and thinks it could be available within a few weeks.

At this point Bill Whyte joined the meeting by telephone. He introduced himself and briefly described his experience with installing solar at his business.

Frank described the next steps for the Board: Step 1 has already been accomplished, and that is Heidi having signed the Zoning Review and submitted it to SolSmart. Next, the Board needs to review and discuss the results and decide what action to take that is relevant to Gilsum; the model ordinance should make that process much easier.

Tom noted that the steps are spelled out on Page 1 of the Zoning Review. He then pointed to the four sections of the Review and Frank briefly described each of them: Definitions; Roof-Mounted (Accessory Use) Solar; Ground-Mounted (Accessory Use) Solar; and Ground-Mounted Primary Solar Use.

Bill said he wished there were a "Cliff Notes" version of an ordinance for towns of Gilsum's size because even in a small town there could be a large-scale development.

Tom noted that the definitions for #'s 4, 5, and 6 relate to the following sections, but there is not a section for community scale projects. Frank stated that these would fall under primary use.

Heidi questioned which category the potential Loki project would be, where would the energy go, and would Gilsum benefit. Frank responded that typically Loki leases the land and they sell the power to any interested customer. If they produce more than a megawatt, by state law the power must go into the grid. Frank mentioned that battery storage is a growing factor with these systems, so an ordinance may need to take that into account. At this point the model ordinance does not address battery storage.

Frank also referred to the training video and checklist for building inspectors, and strongly recommended that Gilsum's building inspector watch the video and familiarize himself with the checklist. He noted as well that it is important to involve other boards and commissions in the development of the ordinance. The next and last training session is scheduled for June 26th from 12 – 1:30 P.M.

Tom then reviewed the sequence of next steps. Once the Board has the model ordinance, they will review it and make any revisions appropriate for Gilsum. The Board will then submit their draft to SolSmart for review and comment, after which the Board will organize a joint meeting with other boards and commissions to get their input on the draft. The hope is that with full participation in the process there will be consensus on the draft ordinance before putting it on the ballot.

The Board thanked Frank for coming in to speak to the Board. At 8:45 P.M. Tom closed this section of the meeting.

III. Regulatory

No regulatory matters at this time.

IV. Informational

a. NH Office of Planning & Development

i. May 10, 2025 Planning and Zoning Conference

Carol stated that she attended and was on a panel for one session, but had nothing of substance to report.

a. Zoom Account

The Board discussed keeping the Zoom account. Heidi will take over management of the account for the time being, which Vicki has been managing.

b. Land Auction

Brian reported that the Planning Board may have some lot line adjustments resulting from the tax-deeded lots that are being auctioned on Saturday, June 14. There has been quite a bit of interest, and many of the lots would not be usable unless they are merged with an abutting lot.

c. Handbook

ii. Appendix G: How to Be a Good Board Member.

iii. Appendix F: Procedure for Application Review

Tom asked if anyone had any questions about either of these documents. He thinks it is helpful to review on an annual basis and/or when there is a new member. For him, Appendix G #6 is a good reminder to avoid discussing a case when not in a meeting. Brian noted that it seems to be difficult for people to distinguish between the Planning Board role and the Select Board. Heidi expressed that #8 – Remain Impartial, is an important point; and Tom mentioned #33 as also being important: making sure everyone can see what the board is looking at.

d. June 26 Peer to Peer Planners Roundtable @ 5:30 P.M. in Chesterfield. If you plan to attend, please [fill out this RSVP form](#).

V. Other Business No other business

VI. Next Meeting – July 10, 2025 – Draft Agenda Items

a. Minutes of June 12, 2025

b. Report on June 26 Peer to Peer Planners Roundtable

On a motion by Heidi Bukoski/seconded by Brian Bazarnicki, the Board voted to adjourn at 9:10 P.M. with all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Carol Ogilvie

Approved , 2025

Kevin Barnes

Brian Bazarnicki

Heidi Bukoski

Tom Julius, Chair

Bill Whyte

Carol Ogilvie, Alternate