

Town of Gilsum
PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

March 25, 2026

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

Board Absent: **Note:** Bill Whyte and Carol

Also Present: Linda and Dwayne Nettleton; Jason Beaubien Jenny Schmidt

CTO: Tom called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. and provided an overview of the meeting procedure.

I. Procedures

a. Membership

Tom noted that the Board needs to elect a Chair. Bill and Carol are not present, and have not yet taken their oaths of office, so they could not vote in any case.

Heidi nominated Tom as Chair/seconded by Brian, all in favor.

b. Meeting Minutes

Tom distributed the minutes of February 25, 2026 for the Board's review.

On a motion by Brian Bazarnick/seconded by Heidi Bukoskii, the Board voted to approve the minutes of February 25, 2026, with all in favor.

II. Planning

a. Solar Ordinance Updates

Tom reported that the ordinance passed at Town Meeting. Tom noted that the Board worked diligently on this issue, and spent a lot of time working to get this right.

b. Excavation Regulations

The Board continued its review of the Excavation Regulations. Tom explained that the current regulations were adopted in 2003 and based on the Board's experience with a previous excavation application, the Board felt the regulations needed to be reviewed and updated where deemed necessary.

At this point Linda Nettleton produced a document titled "Adverse Impacts of Blasting" which she said appeared to be a training module used by the state. Tom responded that since the Planning Board has not reviewed it, they will not be discussing it tonight.

[Jason Beubien and Jenny Schmidt join the meeting.]

Tom began the review by calling out each section of the Regulation and describing its purpose. The first proposed amendments appear in Section IX. Provisions related to new operations would address blasting and demarcation of the excavation boundaries. Tom asked for comments from the Board and then from the public.

Heidi raised the question of having a specific blasting ordinance, noting that some other towns do, and cited Merrimack in particular. Carol responded that, in her opinion, this would be just another layer of regulation that the planning board is not qualified to evaluate; even with an ordinance in place, the Board would still need to engage a third-party expert to review the plan and offer guidance to the Board.

It was noted that Paragraph B.1.a. referenced “identified abutters,” yet impacts could extend beyond those. Tom suggested changing that to “surrounding properties.”

Heidi stated that potential damage should include damage to wells, including contaminants, turbidity, and water pressure.

Kevin raised the question of how to define the limits of potential impacts. Carol stated that this is another issue that the Board may not be able to determine except on a case-by-case basis, and Tom and Brian noted that the consulting expert should be able to offer advice on that question.

Linda Nettleton stated that the applicant should be required to conduct a geological survey or aquifer study to determine what properties would be affected.

Jason Beaubien said that any damage caused by blasting should be the operator’s responsibility.

There was discussion about the noise issue, and questions as to why noise is not addressed in the Regulation. Carol noted that RSA 155-E does not include noise in the operating standards, and she speculates that is because excavation by its nature is going to generate noise that is above what is customary, and the way regulations generally deal with that is through hours of operation.

Tom then moved to Section XV, where a new subparagraph 2. was added to Paragraph C. Other Information, requiring appropriate measures to clearly depict the excavation and reclamation plans.

Comments on this section noted that the application checklist needs to be updated to reflect the proposed amendments, but did not result in any changes to this section,

The next proposed amendment was in Section XVI – Administration and Enforcement, Paragraph B. Amendments and Renewals, where a sentence is added to make clear that renewals must follow the same process as for an original application.

The last proposed amendment was in Section XVI – Administration and Enforcement, Paragraph C. Inspections, where a provision was added addressing inspection schedules and a designated inspector to conduct the inspections.

The Board discussed what a reasonable inspection schedule should be – perhaps annually or even quarterly, depending on the scope of the project. Also discussed was whether the Planning Board would do the inspections, or a qualified expert, to which it was noted that even if the Board went to the site, it is likely that an expert opinion would still be needed to evaluate conditions.

Tom stated that this concluded the Board’s review of this draft. Final comments had to do with noise. Heidi will do further research into this question.

Tom then asked when the Board would want to have these Regulations in place, and what the timeline for that would be. The Board agreed that it should be as soon as possible. Carol will have a revised draft ready for the next meeting of April 22nd. She felt that this would be a complete enough draft to post for public hearing. Heidi suggested that the Board hold an out-of-order meeting early in May. This will be decided at the April meeting.

Jason raised a question about restitution for damages. Brian stated that this would be a civil matter between the property owner and the operator. Heidi read from an NHMA opinion on a municipality’s immunity from prosecution for carrying out its rightful duties.

III. Regulatory

a. Inquiry regarding the Gilsum Village Store

Tom received a question about the new operators of the store wanting to pave the front of the store to provide two vertical parking spaces. There was also a question about handicap accessibility. Tom reported that he and Carol discussed and felt there was no action for the planning board. The accessibility question is a state issue. As for parking, there has always been parking, and this would not trigger site plan review. The question is whether the proposed parking spaces would extend into the state's ROW.

b. Inquiry from Michelle Harrah

Tom reported on this inquiry from Michelle Harrah who currently lives in Colorada but is planning to retire to Gilsum and build a cabin on property she purchased on High Street. He and Carol had discussed this, and didn't think there was any role for the Planning Board.

Brian stated that he has communicated the following with her: Her driveway permit and culvert will be dealt with by the Road Agent; the culvert will be private and maintained by her. She has applied for a building permit for a pole barn to cover her camper, which she will be allowed to live in for one year while she is building the cabin. Additionally, she tentatively plans to build a tree house as an ADU and perhaps rent it as an Airbnb. He is not certain yet how to deal with that issue.

IV. Informational

a. Citizen Planner Roundtable:

Next meeting March 31 @5:30 P.M. in Stoddard. The topic will be a presentation on the NH Zoning Atlas by Alissa, Director of Saint Anselm's Initiative for Housing Policy and Practice.

b. SWRPC letter

The Town has received a letter regarding NH DOT's draft 10-Year Transportation Plan. The letter summarizes the draft Plan, which has cut numerous previously-obligated projects due to a widening gap between costs and revenue. The southwest region has not been spared, with projects in Swanzey and Marlborough being cut. One solution has been to raise the gas tax, and SWRPC is encouraging its member towns to weigh in on this while the Plan is still in draft form.

c. Other:

i. Brian reported that the Select Board has contracted with SWRPC to map all the paved roads in town and provide a report with road conditions and needed repairs, for a cost of \$4300. For the record, the Planning Board commends the Select Board for being proactive.

ii. Brian reported that the Select Board is installing a video system in the library, and is purchasing a membership for the Zoom service. This will be available for all Town boards and committees, and it will have minute-taking capability.

V. Next Meeting – April 22, 2026 – Draft Agenda Items

- a. Minutes of March 25, 2026**
- b. Review Second Draft of Excavation Regulations**
- c. Review of Site Plan Review application fee**
- d. Master Planning**
- e. Short-Term Rental Ordinance**

On a motion by Brian Bazarnicki/seconded by Heidi Bukoski, the Board voted to adjourn at 9:20 P.M. with all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Carol Ogilvie

Approved , 2026

Kevin Barnes

Brian Bazarnicki

Heidi Bukoski

Tom Julius, Chair

Bill Whyte