

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

Monday, June 23, 2025

6:30 PM

**Council Chambers,
City Hall**

Members Present:

Harold Farrington, Chair
Roberta Mastrogiovanni, Vice Chair
Mayor Jay V. Kahn
Sarah Vezzani
Kenneth Kost
Michael Hoefer, Alternate

Staff Present:

Paul Andrus, Community Development
Director
Megan Fortson, Planner

Members Not Present:

Councilor Michael Remy
Ryan Clancy
Armando Rangel
Tammy Adams, Alternate
Stephon Mehu, Alternate
Randyn Markelon, Alternate

1) Call to Order – Roll Call

Chair Farrington called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM and a roll call was taken. Mr. Hoefer was invited to join the session as a voting member.

2) Minutes of Previous Meeting – May 27, 2025

A motion was made by Roberta Mastrogiovanni that the Planning Board accept the May 27, 2025 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Sarah Vezzani and was unanimously approved.

3) Final Vote on Conditional Approvals

Chair Farrington stated that as a matter of practice, the Board will now issue a final vote on all conditionally approved plans after all of the “conditions precedent” have been met. This final vote will be the final approval and will start the 30-day appeal clock.

The Chair asked whether there were any items ready tonight for a final vote. Megan Fortson, Planner, stated there were no items for final vote tonight.

4) **Public Hearing**

a) Change of Governmental Land Use – RSA 674:54 regarding the proposed use of the 2.67-ac parcel at 0 West St (TMP# 577-047-000) for temporary construction material storage during the Island Street Infrastructure project. This site will be used in addition to the storage area at 0 Island St (TMP# 583-018-000) that was presented to the Board in May of 2024. The property is owned by PSNH (dba Eversource) and is in the Commerce District.

Ms. Foston stated this type of application is different in the sense that it is a notification to the Planning Board that there is going to be governmental use on a piece of private property. She stated there is no completeness vote. This item is for staff to come before the Board and describe the project. The Board can then ask questions and, after that, the Board will provide non-binding recommendations in the form of a motion.

Mr. TJ O'Brien, Infrastructure Project Manager for the City, addressed the Board. Mr. O'Brien explained that on Island Street, the infrastructure is being redone, starting at the bridge through West Street as part of the Upper Winchester Street project to tie into the Island Street Bridge. He stated the area they had when they completed the work in May 2024 was not large nor was it safe for the contractor.

Ms. Vezzani noted usually there is a fence or some sort of safety precaution that goes around areas such as this. Mr. O'Brien stated the contractor will be using silt fencing to prevent any wash off from the work that is happening, but no fencing has been planned for visual purposes. He stated they are planning on installing a double silt fence and wood chip berms to make sure that none of the material ends up in the Ashuelot River, which is at close proximity to this site.

Chair Farrington clarified that the site in discussion is north of West Street. Mr. O'Brien answered in the affirmative. Mr. Kost clarified the red square on the map is the area being discussed for storage. Mr. O'Brien stated the red square is the area they are looking to store materials for the duration of the construction project, not the entire lot. Mr. O'Brien clarified the rest of the lot is not going to be touched for this purpose.

Vice-Chair Mastrogiovanni asked how long this staging area is going to be used for. Mr. O'Brien stated it should not be any longer than November. Work in the spring would consist of final paving, but material would no longer need to be stored at that time.

Mayor Kahn noted this was a great location for kayakers to enter the water. Mr. O'Brien stated he was not sure there was a kayak launch, but he will make sure nothing is hindering people using this as a kayak launch if it exists.

The Mayor stressed communication needs to be clear regarding this entrance. Mr. O'Brien agreed but noted this was not City property and wasn't sure how to regulate people using this site as a kayak entrance. He added the City is using it for staging material but wasn't sure about other activities that are happening. The Mayor stated that as the project manager, he would like for Mr. O'Brien to investigate what the alternative location the public could use. Ms. Vezzani stated she

agrees with what the Mayor stated and added there is a small walkway off the corner of that property, which is the only location people need to access. Mr. O'Brien stated this can be added as part of their press release, especially if there is an event planned.

Mr. O'Brien noted a silt fence is not a safety fence; a silt fence is used to make sure debris does not end up in the water. He stated if he notices there needs to be more safety fencing installed, he will make sure that that happens.

A motion was made by Roberta Mastrogiovanni that the following recommendations be shared with the City of Keene Public Works Department regarding the proposed use of the parcel at 0 West Street (TMP #577-047-000) for temporary construction material storage with the following recommendations:

1. To install a double row of silt fencing in the area adjacent to the Ashuelot River.
2. To cover the piles of construction materials when not in use.
3. To ensure access to non-motorized recreational boating to the area.

The motion was seconded by Mayor Kahn.

Mr. Hoefer asked whether this was a PSNH property and whether boat launching was a permitted use on this property. Ms. Fortson stated the Board does not have many aquatic uses that are defined in the Land Development Code. She stated this was an incidental use to the main use of the property by Eversource. She added, given that this is a governmental land use, it is appropriate to make recommendations as they are non-binding.

The motion was unanimously approved.

5) Master Plan Update (KeeneMasterPlan.com)

Ms. Fortson stated at this time, the consultant team is working on updating the draft plan that was sent to the Master Plan Steering Committee with comments Steering Committee members submitted. Staff hope to see an updated plan by July 1, and then Staff will send it back to the Steering Committee by July 2. The hope for the next steps of the adoption process is that by the July 15 meeting, the Master Plan Steering Committee will be able to provide a recommendation to the Planning Board that the plan be adopted and endorsed by City Council.

6) Staff Updates

Ms. Fortson reminded Board members to provide comments on the site plan review thresholds.

7) New Business

Chair Farrington stated the State Office of Planning & Development, under the NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs, provide different types of training. The Chair stated he recently went through some training and is now State certified as a Planning Board person. He encouraged Board members to look at the trainings being offered.

Ms. Fortson reminded the Board about an email she recently sent regarding the Office of Planning & Development, who recently conducted their 2025 Spring Planning and Zoning Conference. There were three different tracks: Planning Board, Zoning Board, and Historic Preservation. She indicated video recordings of that training are available on their YouTube channel. She felt this was a good resource for members as well as a handbook she can forward to the Board.

8) Upcoming Dates of Interest

- Joint Committee of the Planning Board and PLD – July 14, 6:30 PM
- Planning Board Steering Committee – July 15, 12:00 PM
- Planning Board Site Visit – July 23, 8:00 AM – To Be Confirmed
- Planning Board Meeting – July 28, 6:30 PM

The Chairman stated the Southwest Regional Planning Commission has their quarterly roundtable scheduled for June 26 at 5:30 PM at the Chesterfield Old Town Hall.

9) Adjournment

There being no further business, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Krishni Pahl, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Emily Duseau, Planning Technician