

**Planning Board
Town of Sandwich
PO Box 194
Center Sandwich, NH 03227
Minutes August 6, 2026**

Members Present: Ray Cameron, Alix Coolidge, Julie Dolan, Brewster Lee, Maureen Westrick, *ex officio* Joanne Haight, Alternate Ben Fullerton
Absent with notice: Mike Babcock, Gerry Ives
Also Present: Jim Hambrook, surveyor/agent for case 2026-19; Tom McIlvain for case 2026-16;
Gene Bois, Susan Bryant Kimball, Nancy Walser

Call to Order: Vice Chair Lee called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

New Business: Public Hearings: Case 2026-19: An Application for property in the Rural Residential District owned by DMC Realty Trust, Christian S. Keadjian, Trustee, Tax map 217/lot 22 off Mt. Israel is a request to subdivide the 49.64 acre parcel into three lots creating a 5.58 acre lot, a 5.18 acre lot, and a residual lot of 38.88 acres. Mr. Lee asked if there are any conflicts of interest – No. Voting members: Mr. Cameron, Ms. Coolidge, Ms. Dolan, Mr. Lee, Ms. Westrick, Ms. Haight, and Alternate Mr. Fullerton appointed to vote. Is this a Development of Regional Impact (DRI)? No. Staffer Mr. Cameron stated that the application is complete and **Motioned** to consider it. Ms. Dolan seconded. All in favor. Mr. Cameron **Motioned** to Open the Public Hearing. Ms. Dolan seconded. All in favor. Mr. Cameron presented the staffer report that the property had been walked: markers were found; some wetlands as indicated on the plan; proposed driveway locations marked; two proposed lots about same size; no waivers from the Subdivision Regulations requested.

Agent and surveyor Mr. Hambrook presented the application details: the parcel to be subdivided into three with the two new lots 5+ acres with unrestricted land of 120,000 sq ft and 182,000 sq ft respectively; back lot has frontage; driveway permits received with one driveway intended to be shared with an easement; for driveway to cross wetlands, a NHDES permit for culvert would be required; plan to build on new lots; with setbacks adequate building area ~150 x 75 feet; not required to indicate building area on the larger 38.88 acre residual lot.

With no abutters or public present or further questions for Mr. Hambrook, Ms. Dolan **Motioned** to Close the Public Hearing. Ms. Coolidge seconded. All in favor. Mr. Cameron **Motioned** to approved the application for property in the Rural Residential District owned by DMC Realty Trust, Christian S. Keadjian, Trustee, Tax map 217/lot 22 off Mt. Israel, a request to subdivide the 49.64 acre parcel into three lots creating a 5.58 acre lot, a 5.18 acre lot, and a residual lot of 38.88 acres. Ms. Dolan seconded. All in favor.

Mr. Lee read the 30-day appeal statement. Mr. Cameron left.

Mr. Hambrook was asked whether there has been an uptick in subdivisions in recent years. He replied no and that many are family subdivisions for relatives to build.

Case 2026-16: Home Occupation application form, T. McIlvain, 511 N. Sandwich Road, M/L 210 29 for wedding venue. Mr. McIlvain explained that this venue has been in operation for several years with 3-5 events per year during the summer with 25-150 people in attendance; there is no advertising; some events by local people; most wrap up by 10:30 pm; there is ample parking; some provide tents; porta-potties are the planners' responsibility; charges a nominal fee; there have been no complaints from neighbors; he is on the premises while event is happening.

Discussion on the answers on the form: Number of employees: Mr. McIlvain stated that he does not employ anyone. Workers at the event are with the outside contractors. Hours beyond the 9 pm to 7 am timeframe: Mr. McIlvain responded that the event may go beyond the 10 pm specified in the Noise Ordinance, but there have been no complaints about noise. Property is 120 acres and neighbors are not too close to see or hear activities. He is amenable to adding a 10 pm cut-off to his property rules. Ms. Dolan pointed out that the noise restricting hours are not in the zoning ordinance.

The parameters set for Home Occupation is to ensure there is no negative impact deemed to be offensive to the neighborhood – traffic, parking, noise, activity at all hours – a commercial activity detectable from neighbors' properties. If proposed use is beyond the scope of a home-based occupation, it should have a site plan review as a business. Event venues in particular seem more commercial in nature than an occupation conducted from home. Certainly the scope of the events and frequency need to be considered. Previous cases included a property that will be primarily the business and was granted an approved site plan. The other recent approved case had been in operation for 25 years with 3-4 events a year and were directly managed by the property owners. There has been an uptick in requests for use of properties for events as well as the attempt to get all Home Occupations officially recognized. Events of greater size must take safety and Town emergency services into account – police or fire response or ambulance service.

Mr. McIlvain stated that there are clear exit signs and barriers for safety, no smoking, and fire extinguishers. The barn is insured as an event space, an assembly permit from FD has been obtained, there is adequate parking on $\frac{3}{4}$ acre, and he provides rules of operation to event holders. He would shut down if neighbors complained.

Other points brought up were the definition of "resident" for a home occupation or business, and if the business rides with the property or the owner granted the approval to operate.

Ms. Dolan Motioned to approve the Home Occupation as presented. Ms. Coolidge seconded. All in favor. Mr. McIlvain was thanked for contributing to the discussion. There is work to do in clarifying this type of activity in defining the scope of events.

Proposed lot size and setback ZO amendments: Mr. Hambrook commented on the proposed changes: for soil-based, Groups 5 and 6 are jurisdictional wetland soils and already excluded as restricted. He consulted with soil scientist Greg Howard who is willing to come to a meeting. For surveys, instead of High Intensity Soil Surveys, he suggested "site specific soil surveys" as used in NHDES Alteration of Terrain as the more complete tool. It is the same amount of work at about the same cost.

On lot size, he felt the 100,000 square feet should remain as the minimum with reducing the interior unrestricted requirement. NHDES has a formula for a minimum buildable lot based on septic and well radius subtracted. Town is mostly Group 3 soils which equates to 38, 672 sq ft buildable footprint. Mr. Hambrook suggested 50,000 sq ft usable land as a buildable envelope. He preferred not to use the term "building envelope" that uses setbacks but instead use unrestricted contiguous land. NHDES does not consider locally determined setbacks but bases on soils and topography for supporting a septic system. It does not consider a house footprint. Creating a lot less than five acres requires NHDES septic approval to subdivide. An example of having to meet the current 100,000 sq ft of unrestricted land was the recent subdivision of an 8.25 acre parcel where in order for a lot to be minimum size, a boundary line adjustment with an abutter to add 0.66 acres was needed.

Recommended to add surveyor to the list of "a report of a licensed engineer or certified soil scientist demonstrating that the lot contains sufficient contiguous unrestricted area". Also delete

“The demonstration shall also account for well locations on adjacent parcels that may constrain ISDS placement” since it does not apply.

On setbacks: Mr. Hambrook expressed that the setbacks should not be reduced and standards for “unprotected shorelines” should be the same as “protected shorelines” – stay with the 100 ft from lakes and ponds. Best to follow NHDES standards – take the well radius of 75 ft out of the ordinance.

There was discussion on setback of 75 feet from wetlands for leach fields and 100 feet for primary dwellings. Ms. Walser volunteered to forward research on pollution from structures for the Board to review. Mr. Lee had sent the memos to consultants for feedback and further discussion will be in the September meetings.

Minutes of July 16, 2026: Ms. Dolan Motioned to approve as written. Mr. Lee seconded. 4 in favor, 3 abstained.

Master Plan draft to schedule for Public Hearing: One comment was regarding a sentence in the Natural Resources chapter that cited the 2023 Housing Needs Survey. Discussion was on whether the data backed up the sentence as written. Several people had pointed out this one statement as inconsistent with statements throughout the Plan. It had been discussed at the subcommittee meeting yesterday and determined it would be appropriate to be an editorial decision made in this meeting. The outcome was to take it out. The Implementation Guide was recently drafted and a newer version as a spreadsheet template was submitted yesterday to be included in the draft for the Public Hearing. A working spreadsheet will be used by the Implementation Committee to track and report progress. The Board unanimously decided to schedule the public hearing to adopt the Master Plan on Thursday, August 20, 2026 at 6 pm. Should there be a need for a second hearing, it is scheduled September 3, 2026.

Other: Revised Home Occupation Form approved.

After resolving the confusion of applicant Eversource for the recent scenic tree cuts, Mr. Babcock is drafting a revised application.

Adjournment: 8:17 pm

Scheduled Meetings: August 20, 2026 Public Hearing and work session:
Regular meeting September 3, 2026

Respectfully submitted,

Susan MacLeod, Land Use Secretary