

**Planning Board
Town of Sandwich
PO Box 194
Center Sandwich, NH 03227
Minutes September 3, 2026**

Members Present: Mike Babcock, Ray Cameron, Alix Coolidge, Julie Dolan, Brewster Lee, Maureen Westrick, *ex officio* Joanne Haight, Alternate Ben Fullerton

Also Present: Susan Bryant Kimball, Chip Kimball, Scott Kraus, Rebecca Upham, Nancy Walser

Call to Order: Chair Mr. Babcock called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Minutes of August 20, 2026: Ms. Dolan **Motioned** to approve as written. Mr. Fullerton seconded. 7 in favor, 1 abstained. **Nonpublic Minutes of August 20, 2026:** Ms. Dolan **Motioned** to approve as written. Ms. Coolidge seconded. All in favor. Sealed for 90 days (Nov. 19, 2026).

Master Plan Next step: Mr. Babcock proposed that the Planning Board now formulate a “Mission Statement”, Rules of Procedure, and guidance on process for the next subcommittee. Ms. Dolan has drafted a mission statement to distribute for review next meeting. The actual process the Implementation Committee would follow to be determined by that committee along with spreadsheet or other tools to use. The Board will recruit members by advertising and outreach after guidelines are established. Ms. Dolan has offered to be on this committee for continuity.

Proposed lot size and setback ZO amendments: It was agreed to start by reviewing Mr. Lee’s Guidance Memo as the summary of proposed amendments for lot size and setbacks. Comments had been received from Tom Carr, a SSSNNE board member and Conservation Commission on Monday and from LRPC this afternoon. Based on feedback from surveyor Jim Hambrook and soil scientist Greg Howard it was proposed to: 1. exclude Soil Groups 5 and 6 as they are already unbuildable jurisdictional wetlands; 2. To simplify by keeping the minimum lot size as 100,000 square feet and establish minimum buildable area as contiguous unrestricted 50,000 square feet.

Question on whether to set maximum lot coverage based a percentage ratio of the total parcel taking restricted areas into consideration: This is applied in the shoreland overlay under state requirements to address amount of impervious surface and runoff issues. Beyond aesthetics, coverage in any lot not in the shoreland overlay may create runoff issues. This could be managed with Stormwater Management requirements which can be done in Site Plan Reviews for commercial, but residential building is managed through the Building Permit process, so some standards would have to be in the zoning.

In draft memo B, in proposed amendment for § 150-31 A (2) the scaling of multi-unit lot sizes was miscalculated, so disregard those numbers. NHDES septic approvals do address adjusting setbacks when scaling up systems. The current ZO setbacks for multi-unit should remain. Existing § 150-31(D) says a Multiple-Unit Structure’s “minimum area per unit” shall be specified in § 150-10 — but no such per-unit figure currently exists anywhere in § 150-10. Consensus was this amendment should simply delete § 150-31(D) as an orphaned, never-completed cross-reference.

In C, Road Frontage, question was to define a “flag-lot” (not defined in ZO): A flag lot is a parcel of land where the main buildable area sits behind another property and connects to the

street through a long, narrow strip of land—resembling a flag on a pole. This narrow “pole” provides the only street access, while the larger “flag” portion contains the usable lot area.

It was decided to defer on working on an amended frontage requirement.

D. Squam Lakes watershed premium (open item): It was decided not to pursue this for an amendment in 2027 warrant.

IV. Setbacks: Discussion on the distinction between principal and accessory structures (waste-producing and nonwaste-producing) to have different setbacks. “Waste-producing” is not defined in the ZO and generally understood as septic systems. First setbacks discussed were from wetlands and waterbodies recognized as “protected” (public waters) or “unprotected”. Conservation Commission letter proposed unprotected should be regarded with the same setback of a minimum of 100 feet as all wetlands are important regardless of size.

Discussion on difference in protection with 75-foot setback for septic fields, 100 feet for a dwelling, and 50 feet for an accessory structure and whether to make all the same:

Points: 1. Properly working leach fields are safe; 2. Problem with dwellings may be initial construction, then use on the property such as fertilizer and pesticide use runoff; 3. Accessory structures don’t have septic systems but may house petroleum products, pesticides, animal manure, etc. 4. Some debate on NHDES classifying all wetlands the same versus differently based on size and type to require different permitting and allowable actions (crossings, dredging, etc.); 5. Would add more confusion to change to increased setbacks and make some existing structures nonconforming; 6. Would need to be delineated by a soil scientist even for simple accessory structures; 7. Point that no action is taken on complaints of noncompliance, the Wetlands Bureau was defended as being responsive; 8. Septic setbacks should follow NHDES – side and back is 10 feet for leach fields and 5 feet for tanks – wording should refer to follow the current NHDES Administrative Rules.

The idea endorsed by soil scientists consulted to set no-disturbance buffers was proposed to apply to all wetlands and waterbodies with 15,000 sq ft and under also considered. Vernal pools were mentioned with Mr. Fullerton stating that NHDES permitting does take them into account with Ms. Walser not agreeing and stating she would look into it.

The Board has seven more meetings to finalize what amendments to put forth, so what to focus on for 2027 ballot? Define what the amendments are to achieve and focus on priorities. Consensus on memo B., updating septic and well to conform with NHDES and delete well radius in the ZO and add references to appropriate NHDES Administrative Rules; work on adding buffer requirements; amend buildable (restricted) requirements on a 100,000 sq ft minimum lot. Mr. Lee will revise memos with bracketing unresolved issues for next meeting.

Other: Revised Scenic Tree Cut deferred.

Mr. Babcock extended invitation to September 10 Housing Conference in Ossipee (LUS forwarded information)

Adjournment: 8:03 pm

Scheduled Meetings: September 17, 2026 work session: Regular meeting October 1, 2026

Respectfully submitted,
Susan MacLeod, Land Use Secretary