

TOWN OF GOFFSTOWN
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 2, 2026

In attendance: Chair Chet Bowen, Vice Chair Richard Bruno, Charlie Birchmeier, Oscar Arevalo, Darrell Halen, Timothy Searles, Selectmen's Rep Joshua Douglas, and Jo Ann Duffy, Planning & Economic Development Director.

Excused: Samantha Kearns

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/ROLL CALL

Chair Bowen called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ACCEPTANCE/CORRECTION OF MINUTES

The Committee reviewed the draft minutes from the August 5, 2026, meeting. Two corrections were noted: member names required adjustment, and Vice Chair Bruno's name was absent from the attendance list despite his having voted at that meeting. Both corrections were incorporated prior to the vote.

Motion: Vice Chair Bruno motioned to accept August 5, 2026, meeting minutes as presented. Seconded by Oscar Arevalo. VOTE: 5-0-1. Darrell Halen, as a newly appointed member not yet sworn in at the time of that meeting, did not vote on this item. Motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business was raised.

NEW BUSINESS

Welcome Darrell - New Board Member!

The Committee welcomed Darrell Halen as a new board member. The Planning Director administered the oath of office in her capacity as a notary, and Darrell Halen signed the required paperwork. It was noted that a copy of the signed paperwork would be provided to Mr. Halen at the next meeting or transmitted via email attachment.

OTHER BUSINESS

Contact With Commercial Realtors – Lease/578 Mast Rd, Lease/70 Depot St/577 Mast Rd/12-14 Pleasant St - Update

Chair Chet Bowen reported on outreach made to commercial realtors on the Committee's contact list. Key updates were as follows:

578 Mast Road (Parris Auto Body): The Planning Director confirmed she had spoken directly with a potential new tenant. The lessee intends to sell cars from the open lot area, which can

accommodate 20 vehicles, and will use the existing auto body shop in the rear solely for washing vehicles prior to sale. No mechanical or auto-body repair work will be conducted.

70 Depot Street: Chair Chet Bowen reported that half of the space has been leased to a doggy day care business, while the remaining half remains available. The property is managed by Doug Martin, who is also involved with the Rite Aid site and reported making significant progress there. Mr. Martin indicated he would connect the Committee with his business partner and any prospective tenants with interest in Goffstown properties. He also offered to provide property blurbs suitable for posting on the town website or social media. The Planning Director was added to the related email correspondence.

Capital City Realty: Chair Chet Bowen reported that a voicemail was left and that follow-up contact would continue.

It was also noted that Putnam's and Sawyers are now listed for sale, and that their future use, whether as a restaurant or otherwise, remains unknown. Additionally, the Wicked Salon in the co-located roofing company space appears to have been vacated, as the owner closed the business due to illness.

Chair Chet Bowen committed to following up with realtors regarding these newly available spaces.

PLANNING BOARD ACTIVITY

Multi-Family – Henry Bridge Road

The Planning Director provided an update on recent multifamily development activity. She noted a trend of investors seeking variances to increase residential density on existing parcels where the town's zoning definitions do not clearly permit multifamily use.

As background, she referenced a recently approved project on South Mast Road in which a duplex was added to the rear of a single-family property. That applicant received several variances from the Zoning Board and was subsequently approved by the Planning Board prior to this meeting.

A similar application is now before the Planning Board for 40 Henry Bridge Road. The property features a single-family home, described as an old structure from the 1700s, with an accessory dwelling unit that functions more like a two-family residence, to which the applicant seeks to add a new duplex. The applicant received three variances: permission to develop multifamily use, permission to build multifamily served by public water and septic (whereas the town requires both public water and public sewer for multifamily), and a third variance related to use.

The Planning Director observed that both applicants are investors rather than owner-occupants and are effectively increasing residential density through variance requests that work around the existing zoning definition of multifamily. In response to a question from Vice Chair, Bruno confirming this characterization, the Planning Director affirmed that these are "very much" workarounds.

She indicated that staff would be reviewing potential zoning amendments for the following year to address these gaps. Areas under consideration include expanding the definition of lot coverage to encompass impervious surfaces such as pavement, currently the ordinance addresses only building coverage, and drainage requirements. She noted that the town does requires drainage studies for even small projects, which must be reviewed by the town engineer before Planning Board approval.

The Planning Director also observed that while inventory has been limited in recent months, there are currently more homes for sale in town on Zillow than there were just a month or two prior.

Doggie Day/Night Care

The Planning Director clarified that the doggy day care appearing before the Planning Board is located in the former Shaw's Plaza and is distinct from the doggy day care at 70 Depot Street discussed under Other Business. This applicant is returning to the Planning Board to address concerns related to the outdoor area, specifically potential odor issues and drainage impacts on neighboring residential properties. The applicant proposes to remove existing pavement, install permeable pavers, and cover the surface with artificial turf for outdoor dog use. The Planning Director noted that the Department of Environmental Services (DES) has confirmed it does not consider the setup to be a septic system. The applicant is scheduled to return to the Planning Board the following week.

Items For Next Agenda – Date: 10/7/26

The following items were identified for the October 7, 2026, agenda:

Chair Chet Bowen indicated he would return with further updates from outreach to commercial realtors. Oscar Aravolo noted a potential update on the police station ad hoc committee, pending confirmation of meeting schedules. It was also noted that Doug Martin may refer to a prospective business to present to the Committee.

Select Board Vice Chairman Douglas provided additional context on the police station committee process, noting that names have been submitted, that the police chief is aware of the interest and timing concerns, that the budget committee is in the process of selecting a representative with at least one name already put forward, and that the planning board has submitted two names. It was anticipated that Committee members would hear about next steps soon.

Additionally, the topic of the proposed county jail was raised under this agenda item by Vice Chair Bruno, with broader discussion occurring among the Committee. While the matter was acknowledged as primarily a select board-level concern, it was noted as relevant for monitoring from an economic development perspective, particularly with respect to the town's image and the potential for future infrastructure expansion, such as sewer and natural gas service, to support commercial development on county-owned land. Select Board Vice Chairman Douglas clarified that any proposed facility would be a county jail, not a prison, involving short-term inmate stays, and that nothing is scheduled for action or funding this year. He confirmed the Select Board sent

a letter to the county commissioners expressing that the town was not in favor of proceeding without further discussion, and that the town's representatives were similarly opposed to moving forward without broader deliberation. No response from the county had been received as of the meeting date. The Planning Director noted she had reviewed the jail feasibility study and raised concerns regarding acreage requirements (approximately 20 acres), limited highway access due to the Route 114/114A intersection being a limited access highway, the absence of nearby public water and sewer infrastructure, and the lack of public transportation for individuals being released.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Ann Duffy, (prepared with assistance of AI, ClerkMinutes.com)
Planning & Economic Development Director