



ZONING BOARD of ADJUSTMENT

Town of Hollis

Seven Monument Square

Hollis, New Hampshire 03049

Tel. (603) 465-2209 FAX (603) 465-3701

Minutes May 28, 2026

The Zoning Board of Adjustment meeting was held in the Community Room, Hollis Town Hall, and was called to order by Chairman Brian Major at 7:01 pm.

MEMBERS OF ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT PRESENT: Brian Major, Chairman; Jim Belanger, Vice Chairman; Regular Members – Cindy Robbins-Tsao, Drew Mason; Alternate Members – Kat McGhee, Bill Moseley, Michael Bishop.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Regular Member - Rick MacMillan; Alternate Member - Stan Swerchesky.

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin Anderson, Town Planner & Environmental Coordinator.

J. Belanger led the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Major said the voting members for the case this evening are as follows: B. Major, J. Belanger, C. Robbins-Tsao, D. Mason, and K. McGhee.

Determination of Regional Impact

By unanimous vote, the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) found no regional impact for case ZBA2026-002.

ZBA2026-002

The application of Joseph Cavallaro, property owner, for a Special Exception to Section XI; paragraph B.4, a non-conforming lot of less than two acres in the Historic District, of the Zoning Ordinance, to allow the construction 5' x 7' chicken coop with a 7' x 5' covered run, 3' from the side property line and 3' from the rear setback, (required 15'), located at 1 Depot Rd., (Map 050, Lot 019) in the Town Center Zone.

Applicant: Joseph Cavallaro, 1 Depot Road. Stated that they are requesting a special exception to place a 5' x 7' chicken coop with an adjacent 7' x 5' covered run in the rear left corner of their lot. That would be within the 15' setback from their neighbors at 3 Depot Road and, in the rear, to 9 Monument Square. He stated that their lot is only 0.2 acres. The house and barn are situated in the center of the lot and take up most of the width of the lot. If they put a chicken coop of any kind in the rear yard it's either going to be in the middle of the yard or within the setback to either side and/or the rear. Putting the coop in the middle of the yard would interrupt functional use of the space – they have gardens, and his children play in the back yard. The coop in the proposed location will be visible instead of one neighbor's shed, and the other neighbor's compost pile.

B. Major asked whether J. Cavallaro has had any contact with the Historic District Commission as yet. J. Cavallaro answered no, because where the coop would be positioned it would not be visible from the street. B. Major stated that his impression is that J. Cavallaro will have to have the HDC look at the application no matter what. J. Cavallaro stated that the Historic District ordinance says that the HDC would only have to review an application if it's going to change the street scape.

B. Major asked to confirm that this would not change the character of the neighborhood. J. Cavallaro stated that it would not at all; he thinks it would be within the character of the neighborhood, given the agricultural nature and history.

B. Major asked to talk about chicken poop, and stated that he would like to discuss what the Applicant's plan is. J. Cavallaro stated that they have two options – they have lots of gardens, and he does have a small compost. The chicken poop can be re-used. Also, they live within two miles of the Town Stump Dump, where it can go along with excess lawn clippings, leaves, and trimmings.

Per a question from M. Bishop, J. Cavallaro stated that they would have four chickens.

B. Major asked what the Applicant would do with chickens. J. Cavallaro responded that there is a precedent of chicken-keeping in the Town Center. These would be egg chickens. They would have pine shavings for the chickens' bedding. Pine shavings are absorbent, and chicken coops are ventilated.

B. Major asked how far the proposed chicken coop would be from any occupied structure. J. Cavallaro replied that it would be closest to his house, and would be about 30-50 feet from it.

Per a question from B. Major, J. Cavallaro stated that he did speak with his abutters about this proposal. One neighbor is excited to receive free eggs. Another neighbor walked the area with J. Cavallaro, and is on board with the project as long as they don't get a rooster – which they do not plan on doing.

B. Major asked whether it would be reasonable for the Board to impose a restriction such that there would be no more than, say, 6 or 8 chickens. J. Cavallaro stated that chickens need about 3-5 square feet per bird; they are not going to have more than 8 birds given the size of the coop. They don't eat that many eggs, and he doesn't want to fund chickens any more than he has to.

J. Belanger asked how far from the well the proposed coop would be. J. Cavallaro responded that the well is about 10 feet from the corner of the house. The house is 30-50 feet from the proposed coop, so the coop would be approximately that distance from the well. Their well is already within 10 feet of the septic system. The leach field is further away, in the front yard, adjacent to the driveway.

J. Belanger asked whether this is going to be a business, to which J. Cavallaro answered no. It is going to be a hobby of backyard chickens. They are not going to sell eggs. Per a further question, J. Cavallaro stated that he does not have experience in raising chickens – but his kids have made it to ages 4 and 1-and-a-half; his family has two cats; he leads college students through one semester at a time; and he is responsible for the well-being of a 1,500-member municipal fire department: so he does ok with taking care of other living creatures.

J. Belanger asked whether there would be any problems with the chickens in winter, to which J. Cavallaro replied no. J. Belanger then asked how they would keep the chickens in the yard, to which J. Cavallaro stated that the run would be fenced in.

K. Anderson stated that the application is dealing with a structure being built within proximity to a side-yard setback. Provisions in the Historic District allow it to be a special exception. He is not aware of any laws or regulations regarding agriculture, and/or livestock or poultry in Town insofar as the number of birds you can have or where you can have them.

In regard to the HDC, K. Anderson stated that he would classify the proposal as an accessory structure, and it would therefore need review by the HDC.

M. Bishop asked whether the chickens would always remain in the coop and the run, and not be roaming in the yard. J. Cavallaro replied that the chickens could also be in the back yard. D. Mason stated that, then, they could theoretically make it to the road. J. Cavallaro responded that the rear yard has a wire fence. Yes, the chickens could make it to the road, but they are primarily concerned about their children making it to the road. The rear yard does have a 4' wire fence surrounding it.

In regard to the look of the coop, J. Cavallaro stated that it is being designed in a similar style to their house and barn.

D. Mason asked what is wrong with the other corner of the Applicant's yard, closer to Monument Square. J. Cavallaro replied that the corner of the house, the rear porch, is closer to the property line there – so there is less distance between the house and the property line. It is more compact, and would be closer to one neighbor's house.

Per a question from D. Mason, it was confirmed that any change of use would have to go back to the ZBA.

No further questions from the Board and none from the floor. The hearing portion of the case was closed.

DELIBERATION AND DECISION

ZBA2026-002

The application of Joseph Cavallaro, property owner, for a Special Exception to Section XI; paragraph B.4, a non-conforming lot of less than two acres in the Historic District, of the Zoning Ordinance, to allow the construction 5' x 7' chicken coop with a 7' x 5' covered run, 3' from the side property line and 3' from the rear setback, (required 15'), located at 1 Depot Rd., (Map 050, Lot 019) in the Town Center Zone.

B. Moseley stated that he thinks this application is cut and dried. K. McGhee concurred.

M. Bishop stated that he thinks it meets all of the ZBA's requirements for a special exception.

B. Major moved to approve the application with the following condition;

- 1. The application shall be subject to the review and approval by the Historic District Commission.*

Seconded by B. Moseley.

Motion unanimously approved.

D. Mason stated that he is concerned about how tight the setback is, but the Applicant has a 2/10 acre lot in the Town Center. He couldn't put up a lemonade stand without violating the setback.

Questions/Special Exception

Question #1 Is the Exception specified in the Ordinance?

Question #2 Are the specified conditions under which the Exception may be granted present?

Question #3 Should the Exception be granted with the specified conditions and restrictions?

Board Member	Question #1	Question #2	Question #3	Total-Yes	Total-No
B. Major	Yes	Yes	Yes	3	0
J. Belanger	Yes	Yes	Yes	3	0

C. Robbins-Tsao	Yes	Yes	Yes	3	0
D. Mason	Yes	Yes	Yes	3	0
K. McGhee	Yes	Yes	Yes	3	0

THEREFORE, THE SPECIAL EXCEPTION WAS GRANTED WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITION;

- 1. THE APPLICATION SHALL BE SUBJECT TO THE REVIEW AND APPROVAL BY THE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION.**

Review of Minutes

J. Belanger moved to approve the minutes of March 26, 2026.

Seconded by M. Bishop.

Motion unanimously approved.

Meeting Adjourned

The ZBA meeting adjourned at 7:41 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Donna Lee Setaro, Building and Land Use Coordinator,
and Aurelia Perry, Recording Secretary.