



Town of Hopkinton Planning/Building Department

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HOPKINTON PLANNING BOARD MINUTES APRIL 14, 2026

Members Present: Chair Michael Wilkey, Vice Chair James Fredyma, Ex-Officio Alyssa McKeon, Emily Bouchard, Rob Dapice, Molly Hardenbergh, Jane Bradstreet, and Alternates Sam Durfee, Dean Owens, and Jeff Donohoe. Staff Present: Town Administrator Karen Hambleton.

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL.

Chair Michael Wilkey called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM at the Hopkinton Town Hall, 330 Main Street, Hopkinton, NH. Members, alternates, and staff were introduced, including the Select Board representative. A quorum was confirmed. The Chair noted that while alternates may participate in discussion, voting would be limited to regular members unless a recusal occurred.

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES AND NOTICE OF DECISION.

The Board reviewed the March 17, 2026 meeting minutes. A correction was noted regarding the wording of a member recusal, clarifying that the member left the hearing rather than remaining present.

MOTION was made by Rob Dapice and seconded by Jane Bradstreet to approve the Minutes of March 17, 2026, as amended. Motion carried unanimously (Fredyma, Bouchard, Dapice, Hardenbergh, Bradstreet, McKeon, and Wilkey).

MOTION was made by Rob Dapice and seconded by Jane Bradstreet to approve the Notice of Decision of March 17, 2026, as presented. Motion carried unanimously (Fredyma, Bouchard, Dapice, Hardenbergh, Bradstreet, McKeon, and Wilkey).

III. CONCEPTUAL CONSULTATIONS.

There were no requests for a conceptual consultation.

IV. APPLICATIONS/PUBLIC HEARINGS.

The Chair introduced the application and emphasized that the review was **preliminary** only, with no vote to be taken. The purpose of the review was to allow the Board to hear the proposal, provide feedback, and identify issues for consideration prior to formal application submission. The Chair also indicated that the public would have the opportunity to provide comment and ask questions after the Board's review.

Subject to PB review and approval.

2026-3 Genesis Systems, LLC – Preliminary review of a Conservation subdivision proposing eight (8) residential lots. The property is located at 167 Branch Londonderry Turnpike (Tax Map 266, Lot 62), within the R-3 Zoning District.

The applicant, represented by JR Hoell and Joe Wichert, provided an overview of the project. The property, currently improved with a deteriorated structure proposed for demolition, had previously received approval for a five-lot subdivision that has since expired. The applicant indicated that the current proposal seeks to maximize development potential through use of the Town's conservation subdivision provisions and density bonus incentives tied to workforce or senior housing. The Chair asked whether the applicant meant "affordable housing" as opposed to "workforce housing." The applicant indicated that "affordable housing" was meant.

The applicant explained that, under zoning calculations, the base yield could support six lots, with a density bonus allowing expansion to eight lots if qualifying housing criteria are met. The applicant clarified that the development would comply with either workforce housing or senior housing requirements, with final determination to be established through homeowners' association (HOA) documentation and compliance mechanisms.

The proposed layout was described as an effort to minimize wetland impacts while providing functional building envelopes. The applicant acknowledged the need to revise ADU placement to comply with zoning requirements and indicated a willingness to relocate these structures to the side or rear of principal dwellings.

With respect to roadway design, the applicant noted prior consideration of a gravel road with associated waiver requests but indicated a willingness to construct a paved road if required by the Town.

The applicant further acknowledged that wetland delineation had not yet been updated and confirmed that a field review and updated survey were scheduled. The applicant also discussed stormwater management concepts, including potential placement of a fire pond at a lower elevation near the roadway, subject to further coordination with the Fire Department and engineering analysis.

The Board reviewed the Planning Director's memorandum dated April 7, 2026, which identified areas requiring clarification or revision. The Board also reviewed a memorandum from the surveyor providing a response to the items identified.

Discussion focused on the **density bonus** provisions, with the Board clarifying that the development must comply with either workforce housing or senior housing requirements, but not both. The Board emphasized the need for clear identification of the selected program and supporting documentation demonstrating compliance with applicable state and local requirements.

The Board reviewed **building envelope** placement, noting concerns that certain improvements appeared to extend beyond designated envelopes or into open space areas. The applicant confirmed that this was a drafting issue and agreed to revise plans to ensure all structures, wells, and septic systems remain within building envelopes.

Significant discussion occurred regarding **open space** configuration, particularly that designated open space be contiguous and maintain a minimum width of 100 feet. The applicant asserted that the proposal met this requirement when considered as a continuous system across lot lines; however, the Board expressed concern that portions of the open space appeared fragmented and lacked practical usability. Board members questioned whether the open space provided meaningful value to residents, noting limited accessibility and the presence of wetlands in many areas.

The Board also addressed **wetland impacts and buffers**, emphasizing the need for updated delineation and strict compliance with buffer requirements. Questions were raised regarding roadway shoulders, potential encroachments, and the need to minimize wetland crossings.

With respect to **roadway design**, the Board discussed the implications of gravel versus paved construction, waiver requirements, and long-term maintenance responsibilities. The applicant indicated a preference for clarity on this issue, as it significantly affects project engineering.

Discussion also included **fire protection**, specifically the location of a proposed fire pond within the 100-foot buffer. The applicant indicated that the Fire Chief had expressed support for locating the pond near the roadway for accessibility, though this may conflict with buffer requirements. The Board advised further coordination with staff and the Fire Department.

The Chair opened the meeting to **public comment**. The following individuals spoke:

- Taylor Belanger, 166 Branch Londonderry Turnpike, Hopkinton
- Troy Campbell, 135 Branch Londonderry Turnpike, Hopkinton
- Ron Ferrante, 146/148 Hooksett Turnpike, Bow
- John Caruso, 155 Hooksett Turnpike, Bow
- James McKenna, 157 Hooksett Turnpike, Bow
- Diane Doner-Salice, 12 Sagamore Court, Concord

Written comments and photographs were also provided to the Board and included with the preliminary application materials.

Abutters and other commenters provided extensive testimony expressing concerns regarding the proposed development. Several abutters noted that the proposed roadway alignment would result in headlights directly impacting existing homes, particularly due to elevation differences between the proposed road and adjacent residences. Concerns were also raised regarding the poor condition of Branch Londonderry Turnpike, including flooding, potholes, an inadequate base, and ongoing maintenance issues. Abutters and other speakers noted that increased traffic and construction activity would likely worsen these conditions, particularly during periods of seasonal flooding, and questioned the roadway's ability to accommodate construction vehicles and additional traffic. Commenters further questioned whether improvements to the existing roadway would be required and, if so, who would be responsible for the work.

Environmental concerns were discussed by abutters and other commenters, including the presence of wetlands, drainage patterns, and the potential for increased runoff to expand wetland areas onto adjacent properties. Testimony also referenced the presence of wildlife in the area, including deer, bear, fox, and other species, with concerns that the development

could disrupt existing habitat and natural corridors. In addition, questions were raised regarding the proximity of the proposed roadway to an existing leach field and how such infrastructure would be addressed as part of the development.

Traffic safety was a recurring concern raised by abutters and other commenters, who cited excessive vehicle speeds, limited roadway width, and prior incidents, including a fatality, as evidence of existing safety issues. The potential increase in traffic associated with the proposed development was viewed as compounding these concerns. Commenters also raised questions regarding steep driveway grades within the proposed layout and whether such conditions would allow for adequate emergency access by fire and rescue personnel.

Additional concerns included the generation of dust from the existing dirt road, particularly during dry conditions, and how increased traffic would affect air quality and visibility for residents and pedestrians.

Abutters and other commenters further expressed concern that the proposed open space areas were largely wet, inaccessible, and lacking in practical usability, questioning whether the design met the intent of a conservation subdivision to provide meaningful and functional open space. Concerns were also raised regarding loss of privacy, changes to neighborhood character, and the overall density of development relative to existing conditions in the area.

The Chair indicated to the public that the HOA draft had to be submitted to the Board for review and approval by the Board's attorney with the cost borne by the applicant.

Following public comment, the Chair thanked those in attendance for their comments and participation. He noted that the Board would take the input received under advisement and reminded those present that the application is a preliminary review, and no decision would be made at this time. The Chair encouraged continued participation as the application progresses through the formal review process.

V. OTHER BUSINESS/DISCUSSION ITEMS.

Planning Board Work Plan 2026 – Project Updates

Chair Wilkey discussed the status of the 2026 Work Plan, noting that while it has been formally adopted, a placeholder remains for zoning amendments anticipated from the Housing Committee for consideration in the 2027 cycle. Chair Wilkey indicated that, to date, the Planning Board has not received formal written recommendations. Mr. Owens responded that the Housing Committee has been actively working on its recommendations and recently organized its priorities during a prior meeting. He stated that proposed amendments are being drafted and fact-checked prior to submission. Mr. Owens acknowledged the request for formal documentation.

Conservation Subdivision Ordinance

Chair Wilkey turned to the Conservation Subdivision Ordinance and prior efforts to schedule a work session to review potential revisions. He noted that the discussion will instead be placed on a future Planning Board meeting agenda when the Planning Director is present.

Chair Wilkey referenced a prior memorandum prepared by the Planning Director outlining key discussion points and policy questions related to potential amendments to the

ordinance. He noted that the Board will need to address these items before draft ordinance language can be prepared.

The goal of the upcoming discussion is to work through these questions and begin forming consensus so that draft language can be developed.

Committee and Staff Reports

Dean Owens, Planning Board liaison to the **Housing Committee**, reiterated that the Housing Committee has been actively working on proposed zoning amendments for the 2027 cycle. Mr. Owens indicated that a written request on the Housing Committee's ordinance amendments is expected to be submitted by the Board's next meeting.

Alyssa McKeon, **Select Board** ex-officio to the Planning Board, reported on recent Select Board activity stating that:

- The Select Board has recently reorganized with a new board
- They have held their first meeting with the new membership
- There are a number of ongoing projects carried over from the prior year
- Meetings have been lengthy due to the volume of work
- There are no major new initiatives or decisions to report at this time

Annual Election of Officers and Appointments to Committees

Chair Wilkey opened the discussion by noting that officer appointments are typically made at this time each year and invited nominations from the Board.

Ms. Bradstreet nominated Michael Wilkey to serve as **Chair** of the Planning Board. No additional nominations were offered. The nomination was seconded by Mr. Fredyma. Upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Fredyma nominated Rob Dapice to serve as **Vice Chair** of the Planning Board. The nomination was seconded by Ms. Bradstreet. Upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.

The Board did not act on **committee appointments**. This item will be scheduled for the May 12, 2026 meeting.

VI. ADJOURNMENT.

MOTION was made by Jane Bradstreet and seconded by Molly Hardenbergh to adjourn the meeting at 6:47 PM. Motion carried unanimously. The next meeting is scheduled for May 12, 2026, at 5:30 PM, at the Hopkinton Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Robertson
Planning Director