



Town of Hopkinton Planning/Building Department

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HOPKINTON PLANNING BOARD MINUTES MAY 12, 2026

Members Present: Chair Michael Wilkey, Vice Chair Rob Dapice, Ex-Officio Alyssa McKeon, Jim Fredyma, Molly Hardenbergh, Jane Bradstreet, and Alternate Dean Owens. Members Absent: Emily Bouchard, and Alternates Sam Durfee and Jeff Donohoe. Staff Present: Planning Director Ms. Robertson

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. A quorum was confirmed.

II. Review of Minutes and Notice of Decision.

MOTION was made by Rob Dapice and seconded by Jane Bradstreet to approve the Minutes of April 14, 2026. Motion carried unanimously (Fredyma, Bradstreet, Dapice, Hardenbergh, McKeon, Owens, and Wilkey).

There were no decisions made at the April 14, 2026 meeting requiring issuance of a Notice of Decision.

III. Conceptual Consultations.

JR Hoell, owner of Genesis Systems, LLC, identified himself and addressed the Board regarding continued preliminary discussion of a proposed subdivision off Branch Londonderry Turnpike. In response, Chair Wilkey stated that a memorandum from Mr. Hoell concerning the previous month's preliminary application had recently been received, the matter was not listed on the agenda, and no notice had been provided to abutters. Chair Wilkey noted that while the Board could discuss conceptual questions concerning ordinance interpretation, discussion concerning specifics of the previously reviewed preliminary application would not be appropriate at that time and would need to be placed on a future agenda.

Mr. Hoell stated that he had not received answers to questions raised during the prior preliminary discussion and explained that the project design team was currently on hold pending guidance from the Board. Chair Wilkey reiterated that questions specific to the application could not be addressed this evening but indicated that general ordinance interpretation questions could potentially be discussed if framed generally. Mr. Hoell then asked for the Board's interpretation of recent changes to the ordinance involving Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), specifically whether ADUs could be used for affordable housing purposes and whether they could count toward density bonuses under the Conservation Subdivision Ordinance.

Subject to PB review and approval.

Ms. Robertson clarified that the primary issue was not whether ADUs could qualify as workforce housing generally, but whether an ADU could be counted toward the density bonus provisions within the Conservation Subdivision Ordinance. She explained that because ADUs are already permitted, the question was whether using an ADU as affordable housing would qualify an applicant for an extra density bonus lot under the conservation subdivision provisions. Chair Wilkey stated that, in his personal opinion, an ADU is subordinate to the principal residence and therefore should not independently qualify toward the density bonus. He emphasized that this was his interpretation and not a formal legal opinion of the Board.

Board members discussed the distinction between workforce housing, affordable housing, and senior housing, as well as the relationship between state statutes concerning ADUs and the Town's Conservation Subdivision Ordinance. Ms. McKeon asked for clarification regarding the differences between workforce housing and affordable housing. Ms. Robertson explained that the Conservation Subdivision Ordinance references affordable housing and senior housing, rather than workforce housing specifically. Discussion followed regarding whether an ADU should be considered a separate housing unit for purposes of density bonuses or whether it should remain tied to the principal residence. Several members noted that ADUs cannot be separately subdivided or sold independently from the primary residence.

Ms. Hardenbergh stated that because ADUs are subordinate to a larger structure and cannot exist independently, she had difficulty viewing them as separate units for purposes of additional density bonuses. Mr. Dapice stated that he struggled with treating ADUs as housing units for purposes of satisfying the Town's fair share housing obligations while simultaneously concluding they should not count for density bonus purposes. Mr. Hoell explained that the project concept had been developed with the understanding that the proposal could potentially satisfy affordable housing percentages through the use of ADUs and indicated that different development approaches remained possible depending on the Board's interpretation.

Ms. Robertson reiterated that the current Conservation Subdivision Ordinance was adopted before statutory changes concerning ADUs and therefore did not expressly contemplate ADUs in relation to density bonuses. Chair Wilkey stated that the matter may ultimately require clarification through future ordinance amendments or legal interpretation. Mr. Hoell asked whether he should return for another preliminary discussion or proceed directly with a formal application. Chair Wilkey responded that the decision was up to the applicant and noted that the Board could consider another preliminary discussion if properly noticed.

IV. Applications/Public Hearings.

V. Other Business/Discussion Items.

A) Voluntary Merger of Preexisting Lots

Planning Board member Dean Owens recused himself.

The Board reviewed a Notice of Voluntary Merger of properties located off Broad Cove Road, identified as Lot 34 on Tax Map 242 and Lot 15 on Tax Map 247, owned by Dean and Elisa Owens.

MOTION was made by Jane Bradstreet, seconded by Jim Fredyma, acknowledging receipt of the Notice of Voluntary Merger and finding that it complied with RSA 674:39-a. Motion carried unanimously (Fredyma, Bradstreet, Dapice, Hardenbergh, McKeon, Owens, and Wilkey).

During discussion, Dean Owens commented that the lots had previously been joined and subdivided and were now being merged.

Mr. Owens rejoined the Board for the remainder of meeting.

B) Planning Board Work Plan 2026 – Project Updates

1) Housing Committee’s Recommended Zoning Amendments 2027

Ms. Robertson advised that Jack Ruderman, Chair of the Housing Committee, had submitted a memorandum concerning three proposed zoning amendments recommended by the Housing Committee. She stated that Mr. Ruderman will attend the June meeting to answer questions after Board members have had an opportunity to review the memorandum.

2) Conservation Subdivision Ordinance

Ms. Robertson next discussed potential revisions to the Conservation Subdivision Ordinance and referenced her February 20 memorandum requesting guidance from the Board before drafting revisions. She raised the possibility of replacing the existing yield plan approach with a formula-based approach that would deduct wetlands, steep slopes, and other constrained lands from the gross acreage to determine allowable lot yield.

Board members discussed the purpose of conservation subdivisions, open space preservation, wildlife corridors, housing density, affordability, and the visual appearance of subdivisions. Dean Owens stated that he believed conservation land should ideally provide meaningful public or conservation value rather than simply consisting of land unsuitable for development. Chair Wilkey stated that contiguous open space and wildlife corridors were important considerations. Ms. Robertson explained that under the current ordinance, 50 percent of a development parcel must remain as open space and that up to half of that open space may consist of wetlands, steep slopes, or similarly constrained lands.

Jane Bradstreet discussed the original purpose of cluster or conservation development and stated that she believed the ordinance was intended to preserve rural character by reducing frontage development and clustering homes in less visible areas. She expressed concern that some developments continued to appear visually similar to conventional subdivisions despite being processed as conservation subdivisions. She stated that while she supported additional housing opportunities, she also believed the ordinance should continue to preserve the Town’s rural appearance and avoid development patterns where homes lined roadways in a suburban fashion.

Ms. Hardenbergh stated that yield plans often created confusion for abutters because the conceptual yield plan shown to the public frequently differed significantly from the final conservation subdivision layout ultimately proposed. Mr. Dapice stated that the discussion concerning the overall policy goals of the ordinance was separate from the narrower question of whether the Board preferred a formula approach or a yield plan approach for determining allowable density. Ms. Robertson clarified that, at that stage, she was primarily seeking guidance concerning which procedural approach the Board preferred so she could begin drafting revisions.

The Board then returned to discussion concerning whether a formula approach would be simpler and more transparent than the existing yield plan process. Board members

discussed concerns regarding verification of wetlands and constrained lands, the importance of requiring certifications from qualified professionals, and balancing development flexibility with preservation of rural character and open space. Ms. Robertson suggested that applicants could be required to submit letters or certifications from surveyors and wetland scientists verifying constrained land calculations used in the formula approach.

Toward the end of the discussion, Alyssa McKeon stated that it appeared the Board could support use of a formula approach while separately continuing to address broader ordinance revisions involving subdivision design, open space configuration, and preservation of rural character. She suggested that Board members should consider what the “worst-case scenario” development layout could look like under the existing ordinance and then determine what revisions would be needed to prevent undesirable outcomes. Discussion followed concerning how certain subdivision layouts could technically comply with the ordinance while still resulting in development patterns inconsistent with the Board’s vision for conservation subdivisions.

Molly Hardenbergh stated that she had no objection to applicants still preparing yield plans internally if necessary, but she believed the plans being presented publicly and circulated to abutters should more accurately reflect the actual development proposal likely to be constructed. Additional discussion occurred concerning whether the ordinance should better regulate development layout, visibility of homes, road design, clustering, and open space configuration in order to preserve rural character while also allowing additional housing opportunities and reducing infrastructure costs.

The discussion concluded with Board members supportive of Ms. Robertson proceeding with drafting possible revisions using a simplified formula approach while also exploring potential revisions involving constrained lands, open space configuration, contiguous open space, verification procedures, private roads, and related conservation subdivision standards for future Board review and discussion.

3) Committee and Staff Reports

There were no committee or staff updates.

VI. ADJOURNMENT.

MOTION was made by Rob Dapice and seconded by Jane Bradstreet to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 PM. Motion carried unanimously (Fredyma, Bradstreet, Dapice, Hardenbergh, McKeon, Owens, and Wilkey). The next meeting is scheduled for June 9, 2026, at 5:30 PM, at the Hopkinton Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Robertson
Planning Director