



Town Of Durham

Planning Board Minutes

Fire Station Meeting Room, 6:30 pm

October 22, 2025

Ordinance Amendments Information Meeting

1. Roll Call & Determination of a Quorum

In attendance: John Talbot (Chair), Allan Purinton, Brian Lanoie, Brian Stickney, and George Thebarger (Town Planner).

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Informational Presentation on Draft Land Use Ordinance Amendments:

John Talbot gave an overview of the codification project and the process for updates to the Land Use Ordinance.

The Town Planner provided an explanation of the proposed amendments for seven minor policy issues, outlining how those issues are handled currently and the changes recommended by the Planning Board.

1. Back Lots & Private Ways

The provisions for single back lots will be separated from those related to development of multiple lots using a private way. The multi-lot provisions will be moved to the section dealing with approval of roads outside of subdivisions approved by the Planning Board. The Code Officer will approve single back lots and the Planning Board will approve private ways.

Public Input:

Michael Abbott of Gerrish Lane asked questions about how the back lot provisions affect landlocked parcels and what constitutes a road for determining eligibility to establish a back lot.

Heather Roy of Hallowell Road asked for clarification on when private ways are exempt from subdivision review.

Kathy McCosh of Reed Road said that the language of creating a back lot off a 16-ft driveway is confusing.

Planning Board Discussion:

Allan Purinton indicated support for allowing single back lots to use a 16-foot driveway rather than a 20-foot road due to the cost of building the road.

John Talbot stated that the Board has worked with the Fire Department and they are okay with the proposal.

2. Nonconforming Use & Structure Expansions

The regulations for expansion of nonconforming uses and structures will be tailored to fit Durham's large-lot, rural conditions.

Public Input:

No public comment was submitted on this issue.

3. Subdivision Road Buffers

The subdivision regulations currently require developers to maintain or create a 50-foot vegetative buffer between a subdivision and an existing road. The Planning Board will be given authority to require a similar buffer between a new subdivision road and existing homes on abutting property.

Public Input:

No public comment was submitted on this issue.

Planning Board Discussion:

Allan Purinton stated that abutter input will be considered in determining whether to require a road buffer or not.

4. Noise Standards

Standards for agricultural and commercial uses will be added to residential. The measurement standards and procedures will be specified as well as when sound studies conducted by qualified sound engineers will be required.

Public Input:

Kathleen Steinke of Sand Hill Drive asked for clarification of the difference between forestry and agriculture.

Todd Beaulieu pointed out the need for contractors to start earlier than 7 a.m. to avoid high temperatures in summer.

Heather Roy pointed out the need to consider exemption of noise generated by outdoor school activities.

Planning Board Discussion:

John Talbot pointed to the need for added consideration of exemptions for blasting, fireworks, and shooting ranges.

The Board agreed to discuss this further at the next meeting.

5. Fire Protection Water Supplies

The option of using a water cistern (tank) in subdivisions will be removed over Fire Department concern about their reliability and maintenance. Developers will be allowed to use a fire pond, an on-site water source, or residential sprinklers.

Public Input:

Michael Abbott asked if the proposed changes allowed using sprinklers with no other water source and the answer was yes.

Planning Board Discussion:

John Talbot explained that the Fire Department supports these changes as well.

6. Joint Marijuana Growing Facilities

Current State laws have a loophole that may allow a commercial greenhouse to rent space to individuals who are exempt from State licensing for personal use and medical providers. The Town Attorney has recommended that the Ordinance be amended to address this issue.

Public Input:

Rebekah Polster of Meadow Road asked about the taxation of commercial property.

Michael Abbott asked if there are rules for operating such commercial facilities.

Heather Roy asked whether the definition of agriculture needed change to address this issue.

7. Manufactured Housing and Accessory Apartments

Current State law limits the authority of municipalities to regulate manufactured housing and accessory apartments. Tiny homes and other stand-alone units must be allowed wherever a single-family home is permitted. The current Durham mobile home park requirements are not allowed by State law.

Public Input:

Todd Beaulieu of Stackpole Road pointed out that building a 20-foot wide road in a 23-foot wide easement can't happen with ditches.

Heather Roy asked whether the 23-foot right of way maximum would apply to back lots.

Michael Abbott asked for clarification of the definition of an accessory apartment.

Todd Beaulieu asked if tiny homes could be sold on the same lot or needed a septic system.