TOWN OF WARNER
Housing Committee
Meeting Minutes, December 10, 2025

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CALL TO ORDER at 4:38 pm

PRESENT Committee Members: Ruth Roudiez, Bob Holmes, Laura Hallahan, Ellie Brown, Ian Rogers, and Dana Myskowski
Central NH Regional Planning Commission Representative Matt Monahan

ABSENT Connor Spern, UNH Cooperative Extension Representative John Christ, Central NH Regional Planning Commission Representative Mike Tardiff

PUBLIC COMMENT None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Reviewed Nov. 19, 2025, minutes. Bob moved to accept with slight edits; Laura seconded. ALL APPROVED

PLANNING BOARD

Bob: Matt, Bob, and Ian (via Zoom) were there. It seemed like people were trying to find some things to edit. James Gaffney and Barret Greene will edit the ADU proposal.

Ian: The ADU paperwork is in the Planning Board's hands. Suggestions were made to reference just the RSA and not put the wording in our ordinance. But if we have it in our ordinance, it is clearer to people. Mr. Gaffney had issues with Letter F regarding existing nonconforming buildings.

Bob: My understanding is that his suggestions were to cross it off and tell people to go to look at the RSA.

Ian: Shorten the ordinance and leave off some of the information.

Bob: Some discussion about the "permitted" rather than "special exception." Some confusion, and an editorial opinion about prohibiting people from building single family homes.

Ian: It was almost as if some thought Market Basket or McDonald's might build an ADU.

Bob: Disagreements over permitted.

Matt: If you're grandfathered, are you permitted?

Bob: Yes, and James Gaffney did agree that grandfathering permits are permitted. We'll see what is edited.

Ian: We should get the packet tomorrow and can forward it to the committee members.

Matt: I would say broadly, you can't just refer to the RSA.

Bob: In the RSA there are a lot of mays and shalls, so the shalls need to be adopted, whereas the mays need to be defined. But the planning board wasn't attacking the mays.

Laura: Referring to the RSA language is discouraging to many people; it can be a barrier to people who might want to add an ADU.

Matt: And where do you even find the RSA? The NHMA interpreted the RSA and wrote it up.

Ian: Most of the comments were to make the ADU ordinance language shorter. But where it can be confusing, it needs to be spelled out.

Matt: Wherever there is adequate infrastructure, multi residential units are permitted in commercial zones. Need a definition of adequate infrastructure.

Bob: In the past, one person was for clarity, and others were in favor of ambiguity to let the town define it in the future.

Ian: Intentional ambiguity, yes; wondering if they are intentionally making it difficult to understand.

Bob: I think the Planning Board wants to take ownership of it at this point. Let them do so. And if there is a potential problem, we can help correct.

Ian: Yes, I hope we can help correct for factual errors, in particular. Zoning Changes can come from Planning Board, Selectboard, and a citizen's petition.

Matt: In the end, the Planning Board needs to take ownership.

Bob: And today is the last day for petitions. But I think the Selectboard can make changes.

Matt: There are some places the Selectboard can make changes, such as on the flood plain ordinance, if FEMA issues changes.

Ian: Technical timelines: zoning calendar. Today is last day for citizen petitions.

Matt: Zoning changes need to have two public hearings. But if you do not make a change to a proposed zoning ordinance, then only need one public hearing.

Ian: Need to make sure the procedures are followed.

Matt: February second is the deadline to have a second public hearing.

Ian: By January fourth for town meeting.

Bob: Now it's in the Planning Board hands.

Ian: I hope the Planning Board would take it seriously enough to get it through, especially since the RSAs are already in effect.

Bob: I offered to this committee to write a memo to the Planning Board about the parking spaces – when you get into the weeds, it's about a subdivision. And site plan isn't required more than once. And so, arguably, really what my memo should say, is the Planning Board should review their parking. Because the RSA also makes it possible for more parking. I think it "MAY" need to change, rather than "SHALL" change it.

Ian: Central was able to look at our ordinance, and has helped us; can they help with this?

Matt: Yes, we are working on some now. Section XIX B of Warner's Site Plan Ordinance would need to be revised for parking. And nothing in subdivision.

Ian: Site plan can be updated at any time.

SURVEY RESULTS

Matt: Preliminary; how long should we keep it out? Roughly around 100 people have responded. Highlights/quick summary: Open ended reveal a community worried about affordability. Property taxes are concerns. Balance is the bottom line. Affordability and keeping the look and feel of a small, rural town. Mike and I were talking about keeping the survey open to end of the month.

Dana: A request was made by a community member to keep the survey open till midnight on the deadline.

Bob: What about sizes of multifamily?

Matt: Remove restrictions on square footage.

Ian: Agree/disagree?

Matt: One person commented that ADUs should be 1200 to 1250 in size.

Laura: That's quite specific.

Dana: Maybe someone already owns the house plans?

Bob: And the number of units in the Village, at Exit 7, and in the Intervale district?

Matt: Question three—Village District—had strong support for ground floor businesses/residential on top, moderate support for townhomes, and less support for bigger apartments. Exit 7 similar support of mixed use, up to five units had

moderate support, and less support for larger, but slightly more at Exit 7 than downtown village district. Intervale: same support for mixed use, moderate for smaller, and less support for larger.

Bob: Question number six?

Matt: Majority support for the New England farm look, others want flexibility in design. There are concerns about authenticity and cost. More favor usability than design – yes, 70%, 19% not sure, other are no.

Ian: keep survey open. We have some quantifiable numbers to show the smaller and mixed-use support.

Matt: Yes, we have a summary paragraph from AI that can be used. Someone in our office went through to check it for ground truths.

MULTIFAMILY

Ian: What could language look like to incentivize mixed use?

Matt: The developer wants residential units, town wants business. Maybe it's an extra unit, expedited permitting, more square footage.

Bob: Are there any towns that have developed mixed use incentives?

Matt: Allenstown has a greater density and a mill redevelopment incentive geared toward infill, mixed use. There are more examples out there.

Bob: Maybe we can reach out to some housing folks and ask if they have examples of ordinances with incentives.

Ian: What about townhouses and looks; could townhouses be that easier sell?

Matt: Yes, you need less land for townhouses rather than five single family homes, and so maybe there's density incentives for townhomes too.

Ian: Density incentive is to give extra unit and/or smaller lot.

Matt: Similar to clustering, but simpler overall.

Ian: Simple is better for developers, and for the Planning Board and the public. Now ordinance says that you need more land.

Bob: Our restriction is only one structure per lot.

Matt: Variance vs special exception. Variance is not allowed by zoning. Special Exception is allowed IF you meet the guidelines. The thing is that you still need to go to another board. Conditional permits can be used.

Bob: Shall allow is what it says in the statute. But states need to have adequate infrastructure.

Laura: Mine says must allow.

Bob: But the RSA itself says shall allow.

Ian: So right now, our multifamily is a special exception. But it should be a shall allow?

Matt and Bob: Correct.

Bob: Adequate infrastructure. What is that?

Ian: Defines infrastructure as water and sewer. That would mean, exit nine Intervale counts.

Dana: water and sewer as public works? Or septic and well?

Bob: Public works.

Ian: Yes, public works is municipal.

Matt: HMA suggested it.

Ian: Easier to understand for Warner: Exit 7 does not have public water and sewer. Intervale does.

Bob: Not quite sure where the water lines extend.

Matt left at 5:44 pm.

Ian: This is a complicated discussion. But smaller is better. Mixed use is preferred by town's people. Shall allow means permitted, not special exception. Nuance of size and extra units. Conditional use permits can be a useful tool.

Bob: Conditional use can be quite long.

Ian: Can have nuances.

Bob: Can make it easier to deny it.

Ian: Defining infrastructure is going to be needed. If we can incentivize smaller buildings, that might be an easier sell. More conducive to what people want.

Bob: At some point we need to understand what a builder or a developer wants to build.

Laura: The Representatives who brought these RSAs to the floor say there are now challenges to each of them in the legislature. Also, some incentives for smaller lots were talked about, but need to incentivize building smaller home sizes. Portsmouth made smaller lot sizes, but developers built same size huge homes that sold for $800K. So, need to incentivize both smaller lot and smaller home.

Ruth: What is the process for the ADU ordinance in the Planning Board?

Ian: I think the Planning Board will likely come up with shorter language and "refer to the RSA." I will argue that we post it in accordance with the requirements.

Bob: I think it won't make the March meeting. Revisions. See edits to the revisions.

Laura: State Senator Tara Reardon noted that in towns with difficult Planning Boards, it is tougher to see the RSAs adopted.

Bob: Some people think the ordinances don't need to be changed.

Ian: Right, which is in contrast to how Mike and Matt talk about it being a living document. Does someone want to make a motion regarding keeping the survey open?

Motion to keep survey open to January 2, 2026, made by Bob. Laura seconded. All Approved.

Ellie: Can the survey link be on the Town homepage?

Ian: I will ask Dan Watts.

MEETING TIMELINE

Ian: Maybe once a month on Wednesdays. Second or Third Wednesday, maybe.

Ellie: Third Wednesday would be preferable.

Laura: Yes, agree.

Meeting January 21, 2026. At 5 p.m.

Bob: Off topic, or back to an earlier topic: While there's enough water in our public system to support growth, there's not enough land. We have capacity for water and sewer, but not enough available lots.

Ellie: Make existing homes into duplexes, maybe?

Ian: I will get these meetings on the Town Hall Calendar for January, February, March: third Wednesday of the month at 5 pm. Dana will check with the library to see if the meeting room is free then.

ADJOURN: Laura moved to adjourn; Ruth second. Meeting adjourned at 6:17 pm. NO OBJECTIONS

NEXT MEETING: January 21, 2026, 5 p.m. at the Pillsbury Free Library meeting room.

2025.12.10 Housing_Minutes_FINAL
Noted by Dana Myskowski