



TOWN OF WARNER

PO Box 265

Warner, New Hampshire 03278-0265

Telephone: (603) 456-2298 ex. 7

Warnernh.gov email: landuse@warnernh.gov

Planning Board Work Session Minutes

September 8, 2025, 7:00 PM

Lower Meeting Room, Warner Town Hall, 5 E Main St

I. OPEN MEETING: Chair Karen Coyne called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. ROLL CALL

Planning Board Member	Present	Absent
Karen Coyne, Chair	✓	
James Gaffney	✓	
Pier D'Aprile	✓	
Barak Greene, Vice Chair	✓	
Ian Rogers	✓	
Mike Smith – Select Board	✓	
John Leavitt	✓	
Bob Holmes – Alternate	✓	
Micah Thompson – Alternate		✓

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Conceptual Consultation

Applicant: Natural Playgrounds Shop, LLC

Owner: Persechino Family Trust

Address: Map 03, Lot 040, Warner Rd

District: C-1

Proposed Use: Woodworking/Manufacturing Wholesale

Details: Wants to discuss if proposed operation will require any sort of special exception.

Ethan King, owner of Natural Playground Shop, explained that his company manufactures natural learning and play elements for early childcare. He is interested in a piece of property on Old Warner Road to build a 25,000 to 30,000 square foot manufacturing facility. He stated that the property he is interested in is a 5-acre parcel. Ethan King explained that the company often processes large (24-36 inch) logs with a large log saw outside the facility. He stated that he is considering moving that process indoors. He inquired about a dual use property providing residential property for his employees. He stated that the dual use is not a must, it is just something that he is considering if it is allowed.

Pier D'Aprile asked if there would be painting of the playground equipment. Ethan King stated that there would be minimal painting (inside). Karen Coyne asked about lumber treating. Ethan King explained that they use products called X100 and Logwell and that would be done inside as well.

James Gaffney inquired about the hours of operation. Ethan King explained that the company is flexible with their employees but typically the first group of employees arrive at 6:30 AM who work inside at that time. He stated that the shop closes at 5:00PM Monday through Friday. Ethan King explained that his father is an

architect, and he would design the facility to minimal impact on the road front and try to avoid a warehouse look. James Gaffney stated that Hopkinton would need to be notified as part of the Planning Board's consideration of regional impact. James Gaffney asked about truck traffic. Ethan King explained that shipping would be three days a week and receiving would be one day a week. He stated that they currently have 12 employees and there is a possibility of expanding to 15-18 employees.

Barak Greene addressed the possibility of subdividing the property. He stated that it is not likely and would require a variance because of the requirement of 400 feet of road frontage. Ian Rogers asked where the company is currently located. Ethan King stated they are located in Boscowan. Karen Coyne asked about any industrial waste. Ethan King stated that there is no industrial waste. He stated that there would be some saw dust but it is usually reused. He stated that in the future they would have the saw dust hauled away.

Bob Holmes explained that the state legislature recently passed a new law effective July 2026 allowing residential construction in commercial districts. Barak Greene stated that there are not any fire hydrants in the immediate area. Mike Smith stated that the water would come from Pleasant Lake or Dimond Lake. Ethan King stated that there would be a fire suppression system installed. Karen Coyne explained that would be addressed under site plan review and the need to hear from the Hopkinton fire department.

Karen Coyne explained that the next step is site plan review.

B. Minor Subdivision

Applicant: John Puc

Owner: John Puc

Agent: S & H Land Services, LLC

Address: Map 37, Lot 006, 131 Waterloo Street

District: R-2

Proposed Use: Single-family, residential

Details: Applicant seeks to subdivide the subject property, creating two additional building lots with frontage on Waterloo Street and the Warner River. No new road is proposed.

Rob Degan, surveyor from S&H Land Services, explained that the property is 9.3 acres on Waterloo Street with an existing house. He stated that they are proposing two residential lots. He stated that they are not seeking a variance, but they are seeking waivers for drainage and erosion control.

Karen Coyne asked the Board to review the application to determine if it is complete. The Planning Board reviewed the abutters list and determined that certified list of abutters is complete with the exception of one (Map 37 Lot 004). James Gaffney asked that that be a condition.

James Gaffney made a motion seconded by Pier that the application is substantially complete. Motion passed unanimously.

Karen Coyne opened the public hearing. Chrissy Almanzar confirmed that all proper notice has been given, and fees have been paid.

James Gaffney made a motion seconded by Mike Smith to accept the waivers submitted.

Discussion on the motion: Pier D'Aprile suggested that it might be premature until they know the difference between the Warner requirements and the DES requirements. Barak Greene stated that the town's requirements are not stricter than the DES requirements. Pier D'Aprile asked to table the motion for further discussion on the Town versus DES requirements and the issue of the wood turtle, James Gaffney agreed.

Pier D'Aprile asked about the impact to the wood turtle as is mentioned in the letter from the Natural Heritage Bureau (NHB). Barak Greene explained that there is a map of the area that does not show findings of the wood turtle in the area. Pier D'Aprile asked if the lot was cleared recently. Jon Puc confirmed that the lot had been cut recently and that he planted 100 fruit trees. The Board did not voice any concerns regarding the town's requirements versus the DES requirements.

Karen Coyne called the question: the motion passed unanimously to accept the waivers as submitted.

Karen Coyne opened the floor to the abutters.

- Janice Storch 112 Willaby Colby Lane stated that she sent a letter outlining her concerns. She does not understand why the Town should grant a waiver for erosion control. She informed the Planning Board that the lot has been cleared recently and she inquired if the appropriate permits were issued for clearing the land. Karen Coyne confirmed that an intent cut has been filed. Janice Storch asked if the subdivision has been reviewed by the LAC as well as the DES. She continued that the LAC is an advisory board to the DES. Janice Storch explained that when she developed her property, her plans were scrutinized, and she would like the same scrutiny for this development. Janice Storch asked about the tax impact to the town. Barak Greene stated that property taxes are not something the Planning Board can consider in their deliberations. Janice Storch asked if the development will have an impact on the future rail trail. Barak Greene believes this would give the rail trail an opportunity to pick up a couple more sections of rail. James Gaffney explained that is not something the Planning Board can consider. He explained that if an application is submitted and it meets the legal requirements for a subdivision the Planning Board is obligated by law to approve it. Barak Greene expanded, noting that the voters of Warner voted on the ordinances that allow the subdivision of this property. Janice Storch asked if there would be an impact on the scenic view that the abutters have. James Gaffney does not believe that is something the Planning Board can consider. Karen Coyne explained that the Planning Board must strictly follow the law and determine if the application meets the legal requirements. She explained that some of Janice's concerns can be addressed when the building permits are issued.

- Bev Howe asked if there has been a site walk. Karen Coyne stated that she had done a site walk, John Leavitt, Mike Smith, Pier D'Aprile have too. Ian Rogers stated that he is familiar with the property. Bev Howe advised the Planning Board that the property is in an historic district. Bev Howe asked what the homes will look like. She asked for assurance that the development will be single family homes. Karen Coyne cautioned that the Planning Board must be careful not to talk about the build. She stressed that currently there is no approval being considered for multi-family or commercial development. Barak Greene added that there is no design overlay or law that requires the development to build in a certain way to match the surrounding homes.

Karen Coyne opened the floor to public comment.

- Nancy Martin Chair of the Conservation Commission asked for more information on the waivers for drainage and erosion. James Gaffney clarified that this is not a site plan review. The waivers were accepted as part of the application. He stated that the purpose of this discussion is to determine if the proposed lots meet the dimensional requirements for a minor subdivision. James Gaffney explained that any drainage or erosion plan would come as part of the building permitting process. Barak Greene explained that some subdivisions require a road to be built and that would change the terrain, but this subdivision does not include a road. He stressed that they are not changing the terrain. He stated that the Planning Board cannot tell the applicant to make it better than what is there now. He stressed that the land is stable. Pier D'Aprile explained that the development is within 250 feet of the water and that will require DES Shoreline Protection Act approval. He reiterated that the Planning Board is currently being asked to approve the subdividing of the land.

- Ben Frost via Zoom advised the Planning Board that they are legally obliged to seek comment from the Local Advisory Committee. He referenced RSA 676:4 which states that any development proposed with 500 feet of a bank requires first class mail notice to the DES at the same time as the notices to the abutters.

James Gaffney recapped that this would need to be continued to seek comment from the Warner River Local Advisory Committee (WRLAC), reparative notice to the DES, and allow time for the WRLAC and the DES to respond.

Karen Coyne read two letters into the record from Duane and Lori Souder of 132 Waterloo Street and Janice and Leo Storch of 112 Willaby Colby Lane.

James Gaffney made a motion seconded by Barak Greene to continue this to October 6, 2025, and to notice DES and the Warner River Local Advisory Committee. Motion passed unanimously.

Mike Smith was excused at 8:31 PM, he continued to participate via Zoom.

Karen Coyne explained that Peacock Hill LLC had originally requested to continue tonight's meeting but they are waiting for a decision from the ZBA which is not happening until their next meeting. She explained that the official request was included in the Planning Board packet to continue this until September 22, 2025.

James Gaffney made a motion seconded by Pier D'Aprile to continue the Peacock Hill LLC application to September 22, 2025. Motion passed, John Leavitt voted in the negative.

Discussion on the motion: John Leavitt stated the letter from Peacock is dated today, making it too late to accept. Karen Coyne explained that information can be received up to 12:00 PM. Barak Greene stated that he cannot fathom a reason why the Planning Board would not grant the continuance, he explained that this is a reasonable request from an applicant who is waiting for an answer from another town board.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Site Plan Amendment Proposal from 7-21-2025

Barak Greene explained that he is attempting to streamline the process and close the hole that allows for the ability to go get a building permit. He stated that this proposal has been worded to bring that back to the Planning Board requiring the Board to review changes to a site plan. James Gaffney expressed his concern that between process and costs the property owners are burdened. He is struggling with removing certain circumstances where someone does not need to come to the Planning Board, assuming it is clear cut. He struggles with making property owners come in. Barak Greene explained that not everyone will be required to come in. Karen Coyne stated that current document is not clear, and it should be clarified. James Gaffney stated that he is also struggling with the Planning Board increasing the number of instances where an applicant is required to make a payment to the Town. Barak Greene stated that an applicant can request a conceptual consultation and if the recommendations that the Planning Board make are satisfied in their application that would negate the need for paying for an application, provided that it is minimal. James Gaffney suggested an avenue that allows the property owner to submit something in writing (email or letter) outlining the project and the Planning Board can respond. Barak Greene stressed that he is not ruling out introducing an amendment to the rules and procedures that allow the Planning Board the ability to address a conceptual consultation by letter. James Gaffney stated that the applicant who came in tonight for a conceptual consultation is a good example of how this could have been addressed in a well written letter.

Ian Rogers asked for clarification on Section 5A, first paragraph, does that allow the applicant to decide if they want to be present. Barak Greene explained that the applicant should be present to answer the Planning Board's questions. He added if they are not present that will stretch out the process for the applicant.

Bob Holmes found the rewrite piggybacked off the existing site plan ordinance. He explained that if an existing home in subdivision wants to add a 200 sq. ft. sunroom and they meet all the setbacks they should not be required to come before the Planning Board for a site plan review. He stated this is very ambiguous and does not read well. Barak Greene stressed that the current language is not written well, he feels that the document should be written in a way that everyone can read and understand it. Bob Holmes spoke about the need to clarify for applicants when they are required to come before the Planning Board. Barak Greene agreed. James Gaffney suggested the Planning Board review the entire document for context and then make revisions. Barak Greene reiterated that he is attempting to fill a void because no other part of the document references the exception rule. Ian Rogers questioned if the Planning Board should be added to the language after Land Use office and Town Administrator as another option. John Leavitt stated that in the past problems have occurred when the decision was left to one person.

Barak Greene explained that his intention was to fill the void in the current document. He spoke about the challenges of finding a solution that still meets the needs of the town and expedites the process. He stated that the Board can reduce the number of conceptual consults and get to the core of issue and complete it faster for the applicant that would be better for everyone. Barak Greene recapped the changes he is proposing and why.

There was a discussion regarding the need for improved communication between the building permitting process and the Planning Board and possibly adding conditions to avoid repeating issues. They discussed how to improve notifications to the Planning Board (permits, intent to cut etc.). The Planning Board discussed creating an internal checklist and the need for posting of all permits for everyone to see. The Planning Board agreed to provide Barak Greene with any additional edits and continue the discussion on September 22, 2025.

B. Bonds Conversation from 7-21-2025

Tabled

C. Input for the Central NH Regional Plan

1. What are the key local issues to address in the plan?

Community outreach, specific tools for small towns for problem solving (technology improvements to automate records, website improvements, training for officials, town operating software) and recruitment of volunteers.

2. What are the most important planning, housing, transportation, natural resource, and land use issues for the Town?

The future of the school system, proactive measures to address weather events, gravel resources, and protection of rural character for small towns. Karen Coyne stated that this will be tabled for now and this list will be sent the members for additional suggestions to be considered at the next meeting.

VI. REVIEW MINUTES July 21, 2025, and August 18, 2025

July 21, 2025

James Gaffney made a motion seconded by Barak Greene to accept the July 21, 2025, Planning Board meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

August 18, 2025

Pier D'Aprile made a motion seconded by Ian Rogers to approve the August 18, 2025, Planning Board meeting minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS

Andy Bodnarik apologized for the late submission of his correspondence to the Planning Board. He advised the Planning Board that he has sent them the Stratford Regional Planning Commission toolkit addressing planning, zoning and house bills for 2025. Andy Bodnarik encouraged the Planning Board to review the document. He stressed the importance of cross-referencing relation changes with other town ordinances to avoid any conflicts and state law. Andy Bodnarik stated that he also sent information from the BEA spring conference relative to potential changes to the zoning ordinance. Karen Coyne would like the Planning Board to study the published toolkit and be ready to discuss what needs to be changed. Barak Greene suggested the Board focus on the "as enacted" version of the legislative changes.

VIII. REPORTS

Chair's Report- Chair, Karen Coyne

None

Select Board – Michael J. Smith

None

Regional Planning Commission - Ben Frost, Barb Marty

Ben Frost encouraged the Board to read the Regional Plan statute RSA 36.

Economic Development Advisory Committee – James Sherman

None

Agricultural Commission - James Gaffney

None

Regional Transportation Advisory Committee – Tim Blagden

None

Hop II Update – Bob Holmes

Bob Holmes advised that the HOP II committee has met twice, and the minutes have been posted. He recapped the discussions in the first two meetings.

-The first meeting: election of two co-chairs (Connor Sperrin and Ian Rogers) and a vice-chair (Lauren Hallahan)

-The second meeting: discussion on accessory housing, building on class 6 roads, site plan requirements for multi-family and residential building in commercial zones. The Board discussed the changes needed to be made to the Town's ordinances to incorporate the changes made by the State. Karen Coyne asked Bob Holmes to bring any information he receives to the Planning Board.

Barak Greene stated that the EDAC should provide updates to the Planning Board on a consistent basis. He spoke about the EDAC's problems with communication and not meeting on a regular schedule. James Gaffney stated that the Planning Board should have a representative on EDAC. Ian Rogers will reach out to the EDAC for an update.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

X. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM

Respectfully submitted by Tracy Doherty