



TOWN OF WARNER

Housing Committee

DRAFT Meeting Minutes, November 19, 2025

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WarnerNH.gov

CALL TO ORDER at 4:33 pm

PRESENT Committee Members: Connor Sperrn, Bob Holmes, Laura Hallahan, Ellie Brown, and Dana Myskowski; Ian Rogers via Zoom
Central NH Regional Planning Commission Representative: Mike Tardiff and Matt Monahan

ABSENT Ruth Roudiez, UNH Cooperative Extension Representative John Christ

PUBLIC COMMENT None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Reviewed Oct. 14, 2025, minutes. Laura moved to accept; Bob seconded.

ALL APPROVED

HANDOUTS

- Bob handed out comments to the Planning Board by Andy Bodnarik
- Mike handed out paper copies of the short survey and a possible survey introduction with an amended version

SURVEY

Mike: Our staff asked where's this coming from? Boom: we're right into multi-family questions. Instead, we should say why we're asking. Thank the public for their participation in the first survey by the Housing Advisory Committee, point out where to find the results of that survey, note here are the next steps, and then let's start with ADUs first.

Bob: But there's only one question regarding ADUs.

Mike: Well, we can move 5 & 6 up. Or even put #5 upfront, then #6 for later since it refers to both. Because ADUs are already in place.

Ian: Mike had the idea of the introduction and linking it to the work previously done in 2024 with the original survey. Where have we come from and where are we going.

Connor: Think we should add the HOP 2 wording.

Ian: The selectboard referred to Hop 2 at least 70% of the time in their initial meeting to set up this committee.

ALL: Decided "the second Housing Committee, aka the HOP Grant 2 Committee."

Mike: We can make the changes.

Bob: Only thing is, I wonder if everyone knows what an ADU is. Should we call it Granny flat? In-law unit? Secondary housing?

Mike: I think it is more common parlance nowadays. I think it's safe to keep it as ADU like the state statute does.

Bob: Andy Bodnarik gave written comments to the Planning Board such as: "Principal Dwelling Unit" is not defined, but in the state statutes neither is it defined, so I think the town of Warner shouldn't try to define it further. In Number Two, Andy comments that we should mirror the state statute. The only change that would prompt is adding in the last sentence: that the ADU can be constructed at the same time as the principal dwelling unit.

Connor: Perhaps it helps new builds consider adding ADUs?

Dana: We were considering recommending that ADUs be added to build permit, maybe keep sentence to go with that?

Bob: If we add to the build permit, doesn't mean we need to print the statute as is. Don't think we need the last sentence.

ALL: Agreed.

Bob: In 3 & 4, Andy refers to Chapter 197—asking if the chapter applies to existing structures that have been condemned by Warner. Basically, can you add an ADU to a condemned structure?

Connor: So, the answer would be no?

Bob: Right. You cannot add an ADU to a residence that is condemned. So, I don't see any problem here with the wording. Then, in the last note Andy is asking why 1,000 sq ft. I noted during the Planning Board meeting that it's because it's what's in our ordinance now, so we kept it. And Andy thought "living space" should be defined. But I don't think we should be defining things the state has not defined.

Matt: The state puts out some of this and then lets the attorneys figure it out.

Bob: If the state doesn't define it, I don't think we should do so.

Matt: No zoning ordinance is ever done. They are a living document that change with new ordinances and with legal challenges.

Bob: Also, the Planning Board had a question about the table: ADUs and P for permitted in some sections where they wanted it to be SE for special exception. But special exception does not equal permitted. I think I can say to the Planning Board that special exception does not exist anymore.

Mike: Not since the ADU laws were enacted.

Ian: We need to understand how we need to present the information about commercial zones and multifamily because there are some concerns on the Planning Board.

Bob: The multifamily/commercial, we have not yet presented anything to the Planning Board. The survey is giving us some ways to address that. But I do think that we need to bring it back to the Planning Board and point out that ADUs need to be made "P" for Permitted, not "Special Exception."

Mike: We will also need to be ready with an understanding of what infrastructure is.

Matt: NHMA has something about what infrastructure is.

Mike: I think first thing is water/sewer. But the NHMA is saying that if you don't have enough playing fields, for instance, then you don't have the necessary infrastructure. I think that if you have the water sewer and no toxic factories present, then you do have the infrastructure. But I think we will need to have that conversation in the committee.

Connor: If you have public water and sewer is that infrastructure. Or is it also that it can be added—a well and septic system?

Mike: I think in July 2026 and beyond we may have developers approaching the town and saying it's legal and you have infrastructure, why can't I build a multifamily structure?

Bob: Well, I will go to the Planning Board and note that P (for permitted) needs to be listed in ADU categories.

Mike: As long as it's a single-family home in a single family permitted zone, we can build an ADU. I'm looking at the charts sent from 11-10-2025; there are "Ps" across the board.

Ian: Yes, that's what I sent. But I see what the confusion is: A chart has an ADU in a commercial zone that needs Special Exception.

Matt: But if you have a variance for a single home, then that home either, whether it's already existing or new by variance, can add an ADU by law.

Mike: "In zones that single family residences are permitted" is the legalese. Can be determined by town council. It seems, because it is a gray area, you can make the concession that an ADU might be SE in those commercial and Intervale zones.

Bob: What if the survey results show that people don't want a certain size multi-family in town.

Connor: I think what we talked about is incentivizing rather than prohibiting.

Mike: Let's wait and see the survey results. There are a lot of tensions since there are laws that go into effect July 1, 2026.

Bob: The Planning Board just approved an 8-unit condo where there's no public water or sewer.

Ian: It was a pretty long process.

Laura: Peacock?

Ian: Yes, the Peacock development. Mike, I like what you say about being proactive. I wish we had more time to have discussions as a committee with the Planning Board. We have a little time; the Planning Board meets Dec. 1 and Dec. 15. Maybe Dec. 1 we can prime the pump. Then really have more of a plan for the Dec. 15 meeting to present the survey results and the legal changes.

Mike: Think you use the introduction from the survey to prime the pump, and then say we'll talk to you more about it on the 15th.

Ian: I think the Planning Board understands these are legal issues, and we are simply helping to keep the town in compliance.

Mike: In Pembroke, 105 people showed up for a discussion about Class VI roads. Everyone who approached me complained about the legislature.

Matt: In Bradford at a Planning Board meeting someone came in complaining about the legislature.

Bob: I'm watching to see if the legislature takes back these laws.

Mike: I don't see that happening. Okay, so we have the survey.

Connor: Do we need to approve the changes to the survey?

Ian: Yes.

Ellie: Wait. In number 6 - I would remove the multifamily language, which doesn't seem to fit, then move that question up to number 2.

ALL: Yes.

Mike: Cut the portion "and multifamily housing in commercial districts specifically."

MOTION: To amend the survey draft to move question five to question one and question six to question two with the amended language cutting "and multifamily housing in commercial districts specifically," and to insert the approved amended introduction to the survey, with the language "second Housing Committee, aka the Hop Grant 2 Committee."

Connor moved. Bob seconded.

ALL APPROVED

Ian: So, three weeks?

Mike: Dec. 12 close it out. And data dump on Monday. How about this: If someone goes aggressively after a person, should we drop the comments?

Ian: Last time I believe we removed the nasty comments calling names of a Planning Board member and of a Selectboard member.

Mike: How about if I connect with the co-chairs and see what they think about any questionable language in the comments?

Ian: Yes.

Connor: Yes.

Ian: I think it's best to be prepared. We did take out the profanity and the nasty comments against people in the last survey.

Mike: Sounds good.

ALL: Agree.

Mike: The staff is doing a dive on site regs and the intervale district, etc. Matt and Steve are doing a lot of the investigation. Intervale and workforce housing are questioned. Workforce housing is structured to be very difficult to accomplish in Warner. But it's a philosophical discussion to have eventually where the town can offer incentives.

Bob: Our town is in litigation now over a workforce housing unit.

Mike: Yes, I understand. I'm not ready yet to go in and talk about this.

Matt: What is the nature of the legal action?

Bob: It's the Catch. There's no rule that forbids the structure, but some couldn't vote for it.

Matt: There needs to be a denial tied to an ordinance. For comparison, there's another town that had a proposed development come up on a Class VI Road, and the developer was going to improve the road, but they were turned down. They came back with a bigger development with a work around to the objectives.

Mike: Steve said why aren't these special exceptions under conditional use at the Zoning Board. I don't understand what is being discussed. Should have been a Conditional Use Permit.

Ian: What could a Planning Board do?

Mike: You lay out your conditions: Traffic siting, how do you address schools, etc.

Matt: You have Conditional Use Permit that gives the Planning Board room to do things traditionally done by ZBA. The ordinance will say that the Planning Board will allow a Conditional Use Permit in this area and this area.

Mike: So, might be used for providing open space, senior housing, workforce housing. Maybe that's a topic for town meeting 2028. Sutton is now offering small incentives for cluster housing. With the C.U.P. there's more ability to get what you want for the town. Steve has some notes on subdivision and site plans; it may help starting fresh. We'll lay it out, and we have room in this agreement to combine them. The idea is you don't have to change the standards, but be confident in what you have and want, and then fashion the rules so they are more easily understood.

Matt: Site plan regs and subdivision regs - over time can move apart, but they should be the same.

Mike: We started talking about this project. Is the Planning Board ready to have this conversation?

Ian: I don't think most of the Planning Board members understand that this tool of the C.U.P. can help them with their goals. I'd like to talk with the Vice Chair talk about it, because I believe he understands about Conditional Use Permits. Then we can discuss it with the Planning Board.

Mike: It's hard to get through the process sometimes, as Matt can attest since he has shepherded several planning boards through the rules and regs. I think it's helpful to have clarity.

Bob: There are people who say we shouldn't go too fast, make too many changes.

Mike: We will go as fast or as slow as necessary. We have time. This HOP 2 grant ends in September 2026, so we want to get you ready with plenty of materials for the 2027 town meeting.

Bob: Parking changes are coming, for instance.

Mike: Also, we should discuss infrastructure.

Laura: The parking is in effect now, as of Sept 13, 2025.

Ian: So that's good. Parking is good low hanging fruit. Maybe if they see this change and make it, they may start to see this as a living document with ongoing changes.

Connor left at 6:00 pm.

Mike: Yes, let's just clarify the subdivision and site plan regs are the same and repeatable for the town staff. Maybe after first of year we have that conversation with the Planning Board.

Ian: Yes, maybe after the next town meeting. I think one thing that Barak is interested in is standardizing procedures.

Mike: That would be good. There would have to be Planning Board participation.

Bob: So, when?

Ian: I think this is a spring conversation.

Mike: I think perhaps there may also be a gap between when they get the info ready and town meeting.

Ian: Yes, perhaps there is some downtime then to have that discussion.

Bob: 500 sq feet, 300 is ours. The egress to the staircase design. You may need sprinklers though. Warner's building code is null and void, and people wanted me to check on that. Called the state fire Marshall. Yes, the Warner building code is null and void: because in 2019 legislation put a requirement within 18 months to go before the board to get an enforceable building code. And the legislature made more edits that in 2026 you cannot make any more changes.

Mike: So, they need to have a state building code.

Bob: Correct. They have already done that and made the state building code the only enforceable code. And anything more restrictive cannot be enforced. I want to have this discussion with the selectboard. Should I do that?

Mike: I think so.

Bob: Manchester, Keene, Concord—all these cities do not have a building code.

Matt: What is it, like about four towns that have building codes now?

Bob: Yes, something like that.

Laura: Back to the stairs discussion: Up to four floors above grade only need to have one stairway, crafted in conjunction with the Fire Marshall.

Bob: So, if I do it now, I can just let them know that we no longer have a building code. I think there are things in the code that outlines having a building inspector. It comes into effect July 2026. Should I send a memo to the selectboard?

Ian: I think this is good to have on their radar, but they are slammed now so, what's another month?

Bob: Or another year.

Mike: I think this is all we have.

ADJOURN Motion to adjourn, Laura; Bob seconded.

NONE OBJECTED

Meeting adjourned 6:10 pm.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, December 10 at 4:30 pm, at Pillsbury Free Library Meeting Room.

2025.11.19 Housing_Minutes_DRAFT
Noted by Dana Myskowski