

Surry Planning Board
1 Village Road
Surry, NH

Minutes: Public Hearing January 14, 2026

Present: Eva Morel, Matt Goodwin, Laryssa Hiller Ron Profaizer, Laura Barrett

7:00 PM

Laryssa read the notice of public hearing.

There were a large number of residents present from the Mine Ledge Road area, so Matt suggested that we start the hearing with the amendments that are required by new laws passed by the NH Legislature.

The amendment to reduce the required minimum parking spaces for Accessory Dwelling Units was read and discussed.

The amendment to allow multi-family dwellings in Commercial/Industrial Zones was discussed. Bruce Smith would like to see that use only allowed by special exception. The new state law requires that multi-family dwellings be allowed.

The amendment to adopt all of the State Building Code was discussed. Currently Surry's ordinance refers to just part of the state building code.

The amendment to adopt all of the State Fire Code was discussed. Currently Surry has adopted only part of that code.

The amendment to authorize the building inspector to issue building permits and place a limit on the length of validity of the permit was discussed. This ordinance is a rewrite of Article IX B and D to bring it into compliance with state law. Bruce Smith explained that the current practice of the Selectmen issuing building permits arose from a time when there was no building inspector. Gareth Williams stated that the amendment(s) were too long and that the voters would not take the time to read them. Carol Lothrop asked if the Selectmen would continue to be able to issue building permits. The answer was no. Scott Mitchell stated that he had no complaints about working with the building inspector.

The amendment to Article IX B which removes the issuance of building permits from the Selectmen's Office was discussed.

The amendments to rezone the Mine Ledge Road Properties to general zone and to increase lot size and dimensions to 5 acres in the general zone were discussed together. Landowners along Mine Ledge Road had received notice of the hearing in the mail as required by state law. These two amendments were met with great disfavor. Laura explained that the Planning Board was interested in limiting development on steep gravel roads and that with the state opening up class VI roads to development with waivers, there could be significant development on Mine Ledge Road. Scott Mitchell objected to the changes feeling that the changes were unfair, unethical, illegal and spot zoning unless the general zone was applied to the whole town. Bruce Smith read from the recently adopted Master Plan referencing the 1983 and 2001 Master Plans stating that development should be directed to areas with the most serviceable roads. There was concern that larger lots would reduce the potential sale value to the landowner. A letter was read from Arnold and Christine Minimum of Mine Ledge Road stating that although they did not object to the 5-acre lot minimum, they were concerned about some of the uses allowed in the general zone. John Davis

felt that the 5-acre lot size was counterproductive from a conservation standpoint and that it “fractures the land,” “2-acre lots are bad enough.” John would like to see class VI roads discontinued and therefore closed to development. Megan Welnak was concerned that we could be pricing young families out of town. Eva spoke to how the increase of school-aged children that occurs with development also increases taxation costs and the planning board looks at a variety of factors when proposing zoning changes. Lesley Johnson fears that people are cashing in on larger lots and that contiguous areas of open land are being lost. Ken Maynard said the town should approach more landowners about conservation easements. Carol Lothrop was concerned that larger lot size goes against the state government’s efforts to increase affordable housing. Eva spoke about the waiver of services that would be required to build on class VI roads and the need to require insurance on those properties as part of the waiver. Laura said that the large area of steep slopes in the general zone was one of the factors considered in the proposal for 5 acre lots in that zone. The Steep Slope Ordinance does not limit development but aims to protect against erosion and drainage issues through permitting. Tim Small was opposed to curbing development.

The hearing was closed.

Laura made a motion to place all the proposed amendments on the ballot for Town Meeting except the amendment to place properties on Mine Ledge Road in the General Zone and the amendment to increase minimum lot size in the General Zone to 5 acres. Second by Matt. All voted in favor.

Meeting adjourned 9:04 PM
Laura Barrett, Secretary