Surry Planning Board
1 Village Road
Surry, NH

Minutes: June 18, 2026
Present: Eva Morel, Laryssa Hiller, Ron Profaizer, Laura Barrett

7:00 pm

The minutes of the May meeting were read. Laura explained a couple of corrections to the draft minutes. Eva suggested the inclusion of some comments made at the public hearing that were believed to be personal. After some discussion the motion to include those comments was not seconded. The minutes were approved as corrected. (Laryssa, Ron)

The minutes of the site visit on May 26, 2026 were approved. (Laryssa, Ron)

Mail: A newsletter from SWRPC was discussed.

Ron called our attention to an email sent by the selectmen regarding the Municipal Association's suggestions for taking and preserving meeting minutes. He also said that services of the Municipal Association may be accessed by board chairpersons. Workshop days to address potential zoning amendments will be scheduled when all board members are present.

Bart Cushing from LBJ Landlease, LLC and Wendy Pelletier, surveyor, appeared for a preliminary consultation regarding the removal of earth in anticipation of construction of a building and parking area. Ron pointed to our regulations governing earth excavations which defines the sale of any earth materials from a site as "commercial." The regulations also except excavations exclusively incidental to construction of a building, structure, parking lot and driveway from town permitting after a building permit and state and local permits have been issued. RSA 155-E states the same exception to excavation permitting. Ron does not believe that the excavation is incidental to construction because the material removed is being sold. Mr. Cushing stated that he is selling the material at a loss and that a state official inspected the site and stated that it did not fall under RSA 155-E permitting. Laura made a motion that the LBJ Landlease excavation be considered incidental to construction of a building and parking area and considered exempt under our excavation regulations. Eva seconded. Ron reiterated his opinion that because material is being sold, our regulations require an excavation permit. Mr. Cushing added that he has notified the NH Department of Revenue Administration and paid the tax for materials to be removed. Eva, Laryssa and Laura voted in favor, Ron opposed. Mr. Cushing will return in August to talk about Site Plan Review.

The Tree Agents, LLC

Eva caught us up on The Tree Agents application and explained that this meeting is for deliberation by the planning board. Laura made sure that all members and the applicant had copies of all written comments from the public hearing. Eva then read the statement of purpose from the subdivision regulations and Section IV, A,B, and C, which describes the character of land suitable for development, (it cannot create exceptional danger to health or peril from fire, flood, poor drainage, excessive slope or other hazardous conditions), preservation of existing features, and premature subdivision (it may not create a situation that would involve danger or injury to health, safety, or prosperity by reason of the lack of water supply, sewage disposal, drainage, transportation, schools, fire protection or other public services which necessitate the excessive expenditure of public funds for the supply of such services.

The plans were examined as to required detail, lot dimensions and frontage requirements. All the platting requirements were in order.

It was noted that although the public hearing is closed and no more public testimony will be accepted, dialogue between the board and the applicant will continue through the process. There was a question whether the cistern to be built on lot 3 alters the frontage of that lot. Mr. Chad Branon, for the applicant, stated that the cistern is an easement and does not change the frontage.

Eva asked about legal rights of access over the proposed road. Lots will be sold with easements over the proposed road. The road will be built to town standards with the intention that it become a town road. Elizabeth Bramel, attorney for the developer, stated that once the road is completed it will be put before the selectmen to propose it become a town road, if that fails, then lots will probably be sold with a fractional interest in the common road or a home owners association might be formed for road maintenance. Eva is worried that the maintenance of the new town road will be an excessive expense for the town. It was explained that if the new road is accepted as a town road at Town Meeting, then the town has voted to accept the expense. Ron pointed out that the developer remains responsible for the new road until it is either accepted by the town or handed over to the lot owners. Mr. Branon reiterated that the new road will be built to town specs and will have all new infrastructure.

Similar questions arose regarding the maintenance and expense of the fire protection cistern. Mr. Branon explained that the cistern proposed will be long lasting with low maintenance. It is buried and will not freeze or evaporate. There can be a float indicator above ground to monitor the water level. It will be built by the developer and is typically conveyed to the town and maintained by the fire department so that it can be used for any neighborhood fire. The cistern requirement is not part or the subdivision regulation, but was requested by the fire department.

Mr. Branon asked to discuss some new ideas for drainage and stormwater management. He presented a new plan showing some changes to drainage along Joslin Road. Drainage is a complex issue and he listened to the questions raised at the public hearing and at the site visit. Our regulations refer to an outdated guide for drainage and stormwater management. The standard required for the alteration of terrain permit is much more stringent. The plan presented is designed to meet today's standards using the extreme storm standard of 25, 50 and 100-year storms. The alteration of terrain permit will be examined by licensed professionals, engineers and wildlife biologists. The state wants all runoff from impervious surfaces to be handled by the stormwater drainage plan. The amended plan channels all stormwater that was initially to be treated in a swale along Joslin Road to an area at the northerly part of the property. There is enough grade to create a two-foot wide, 18-inch-deep swale at a 1% grade along the easterly line of the property over lots 3,4 and 5. The evaluation of the project by the state during the alteration of terrain permitting process will act as a third-party review that the planning board was concerned about. Members of the planning board liked the amended drainage plan as it would move water away from Joslin Road and address concerns of the public about saturation of soil along an area near the old landslide, it would reduce flow through problematic culverts and not increase runoff into Merriam Brook.

The discussion moved on to Joslin Road and the traffic study and whether the development constitutes scattered and premature development. Mr. Chad Branon pointed out that Joslin Road is a class V road and that the traffic study that the planning board requested shows that the road is adequate for all seasons based on NH standards. The 11 new lots would not add enough traffic, which is estimated to increase by 95 trips per day, to require improvements in Joslin Road. He believes that the engineer who produced the study visited the site. Ron cited the town's radar speed sign data showing that current traffic averages 23 trips per day. The data was collected near the development site on the paved portion of the road. Mr. Branon suggested that the low volume of current traffic shows that the road is easily able to handle

increased traffic. Ron responded that the relatively low existing traffic volume is one of the reasons the current roadway conditions have remained manageable despite the physical limitations of the unpaved portion of Joslin Road. He expressed concern that a significant increase in traffic would change those conditions and increase transportation and public safety concerns. Ron distributed photographs of the unpaved portion of Joslin Road because the board had been unable to travel that section during the site visit due to storm-related road repairs. He explained that the photographs illustrated the roadway width, centerline travel patterns, vehicles meeting in opposing directions, limited shoulder area, restricted sight distance at a hill crest, existing pedestrian use by schoolchildren walking to the bus stop, and roadway maintenance issues associated with vehicles leaving the traveled portion of the roadway. Ron felt that it was a valid assumption that half of the traffic leaving the subdivision would use the dirt portion of the road and half would use the paved section. Chad responded that conditions of the gravel road, make people drive slower. Ron expressed concern about opposing traffic, pedestrians, cyclists and the potential long-term maintenance impacts associated with increased use of the unpaved portion of Joslin Road. Although during construction the town would like to require construction vehicles to use the paved section of the road, once homes are occupied there will no control over owners' use of the dirt portion of the road. Gravel roads cost more for the town to maintain. Ron also stated that we must consider the full development potential of the lots including construction of duplexes and accessory dwelling units which could double the traffic numbers. Eva read the potential uses of properties in the general zone, including businesses. Chad responded that the proposal is for a residential subdivision. Mr. Bramel asked that if the road is dangerous, why hasn't it been dealt with by the town? Ron responded that it is because of low traffic volume. Laura had recently traveled Joslin Road and acknowledged that the dirt portion was narrow and steep and problematic, but the paved portion felt safe and wide enough although there is a steep section. Mr. Branon stated that the argument that the development is premature and scattered is not viable. There are houses in the area including recently subdivided lots and the traffic study shows that no additional off-site improvements are required.

Mr. Bramel pointed out that although Mr. Branon works for him, Mr. Branon must adhere to his oath as an engineer licensed by the State of NH. Eva indicated that we should not rely solely on Mr. Branon because he speaks on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Branon is willing to provide any reports as the process proceeds.

Mr. Bramel asked if Ron could judge this proposal fairly since one of the written comments submitted at the public hearing was marked from the selectmen and Ron is a selectman. Ron answered that the written comment was from Jay Croteau personally. It was unsigned and Laura thought it was from the selectmen when she received it and marked as such. She will correct that. Ron said that he is the ex-officio member of the planning board and would review the proposal fairly without conflict of interest.

Laryssa asked if the Municipal Association would give us any guidance. Ron responded that their guidance is very general and probably not going to be helpful.

Ron reported that the speed limit on all dirt roads in town is 25 mph, the Joslin Road is 30 mph but in light of the speeds reported by the radar speed sign the selectmen may consider reducing that to meet state guidelines. He also stated that the Joslin Road has not been closed lately, there is cyclist traffic, and that he doesn't think that the development will increase the cost of maintaining the paved portion of the road but will increase the cost of maintaining the dirt portion. The gravel part of the road has had multiple repairs.

Laura made a motion to continue the deliberative discussion of The Tree Agents subdivision at the July 15 meeting, Laryssa seconded. All voted in favor.

Motion to adjourn. (Laura, Laryssa) 10:00 pm.

Laura Barrett
Secretary