Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Swanzey Planning Board
Meeting Minutes – **December 18, 2025**
Whitcomb Hall, Main Street, Swanzey, NH

CALL TO ORDER:
The meeting of the Swanzey Planning Board was called to order at 6pm by Chair Scott Self. The meeting was held at Whitcomb Hall and online for the public. Other members present were Vice Chair Michael York, Victoria Ames, Richard Lane, Mark Scalera, Brandon Self, Alternate Charlie Harbeck, and Selectman's Representative Mark LaBelle. Also present was Town Planner Adam Paquette and Recording Secretary Susan Ells.

The Chair called the roll and read the agenda for the evening. A quorum was present.

Absent: Alternates Stacey Goodale, Jane Johnson

Others Present:
Kai Kraemer with FACT TV, Deborah Sprague, Jeanette Gokey, Sharee Howard, Matthew Tarr, Matt Robinson, John Noonan, Paul Thomas, Katherine and David Jones, Jim Tempesta, Cheri Domina, Bill Hutwelker

MINUTES:
The meeting minutes of **December 4, 2025** were considered. A motion was made by York to approve the meeting minutes as presented. There was a second by B Self**.** All were in favor. With no further discussion, the motion passed.

REGIONAL IMPACT
A Motion was made by York that the Base Hill Road Proposal has a regional impact. There was a second by Lane**.** Chair Self disagreed since this is a for a warrant article. With no further discussion, Lane and York voted for the motion; the others voted against; the motion failed 2-5.

APPLICATIONS AND PUBLIC HEARING(S):
A. **Base Hill Road Rezone Proposal** – Petitioned Zoning Amendment
Chair Self read Amendment as written for the March 2026 warrant.

Sharee Howard presented the SCSA (Seriously Concerned Swanzey Abutters) group's reasons for the proposed amendment to rezone Base Hill Road and asked for the support of the Planning Board. Chair Self said they understand the concerns of the group, but he feels what they are proposing is spot zoning and that it is unfair to the property owner who bought the 7 acres as commercial property as it would restrict what he can do with the property. It would take away his property rights. Chair Self then asked for input from the Board. Victoria Ames thanked the group for the work they put into the proposal; and said she is especially interested in protecting the wetland's preservation and public safety. She is in support. Mark Scalera said it is a unique situation since there are primarily residences. He gives kudos for bringing it forward. It is spot zoning because it must be. He is leaning toward being in favor. Richard Lane said he understands what the petition is for and sympathizes with them, but

with the projected changes with the proposed wetlands article that will be on the warrant it might restrict what might go in there. Chair Self said it would punish the other businesses and restrict them from expanding to change the zone. York said that the owner had bought it for commercial reasons and if it changes to residential, it will reduce the value of the property for that owner.

Matt Robinson is a business owner and owns Lots #1 and #22. Understands what the residents are talking about, but he has concerns about the changes. It will devalue both properties he owns; if he was to sell #22, there would be restrictions that would deter buyers.

Chair Self reminded the group that this article is going on the warrant; this is an opportunity for the public to air their opinions, but the article won't change.

Cheri Domina supports the proposal; she asked Sharee if this is changed from last year's article and was told it is the same and clarified that the 7 acres would be rezoned, and it was confirmed that it is the intent.

Deborah Sprague lived on Base Hill Road for over 50 years and has reported in the past how dangerous that road is with large trucks traveling the road. Chair said the rezoning would not stop the traffic.

Jeanette Gokey spoke about her concerns about a business moving next to her.

Jim Tempesta spoke as a property owner on that road and said he hears the group's issues, but he isn't convinced that rezoning is the answer. He agrees that the traffic is a problem but feels something should be done with the road itself.

David Jones said he thinks the purpose of the proposal is preventative but that it won't cure a problem. This is to prevent further deterioration; Chair Self said its purpose is to prevent the development of one piece of property.

Chair Self closed the Public Hearing at 6:36pm and asked the board for their input. He said they've heard the arguments; he doesn't feel it's fair to that property owner or others that it gets rezoned; he feels this is spot zoning. York agreed and said it is illegal in NH and cited a court case.

York made a motion that the Board will not endorse nor recommend the zoning change article; B Self seconded the motion; 5 voted for the motion; Scalera and Ames were against. The motion passed.

The public hearing reopened at 6:39pm

B. **Amendment #6** – Rezone Proposal
Chair Self read the proposed amendment that would rezone parcels from the Rural/Ag district to Residential. He asked for public input. Matthew Tarr asked why they are rezoning the lots to Residential; Chair Self explained it is so it can be developed for residential use, with smaller lot sizes of 1 acre. Tarr said Map 219 is landlocked; Chair Self explained if it was to be developed, there would need to be road put in, like they did for Marcy Hill. He described the lot he owns and Paquette said it is

currently considered a nonconforming lot, but this change would make it a conforming lot. He offered to schedule a meeting to explain. Chair Self said there are more restrictions in Rural/Ag by size and frontage. If he were to expand it currently, he would need a variance from the Zoning Board, but if it changes to Residential and he wanted to expand, he could without a variance.

John Noonan from Fieldstone Land Consultant represents his client, John Burke, who wants to rezone his lots and the remaining lots are being requested to be rezoned by the Town at the same time to conform to the rest of the lots in that area.

Lane asked if the abutters were notified and Paquette said all the owners of the affected lots were notified by certified letter.

Paquette also pointed out that this supports Master Plan. Ames expressed her concerns about adding more residential use, which has potential for many building lots and wonders if the facilities of the town could support the increase.

Paquette said that it is not dense development that 1 acre lots are not dense and it would take decades for it to be developed.

Lane asked at what point they would address density and Chair Self said the Planning board would address it during sub-division.

Domina asked which area was Rural/Ag and why wasn't the Conservation Commission contacted; Paquette said he dropped the ball, but it is zoning, not site plans; it's just changing possible uses. Paquette said there are no wetlands. York said he used to live on Marcy Hill and there are no wetlands.

Chair Self closed public hearing at 6:59pm. Chair asked the board if they support the plan to go onto the warrant.

A motion was made by B Self to put Amendment #6 onto the 2026 warrant. York seconded the motion. With no other discussion, all were in favor and the motion passed.

C. PB 25-019: Subdivision and Boundary Line Adjustment Application – Fieldstone Land Consultants have submitted a 3-lot Subdivision and Boundary Line Adjustment Application on behalf of Paul Thomas. The property is located at Tax Map 220, Lots 171 & 173 in the Business District.

John Noonan from Fieldstone Land Consultants reviewed the application with the Board. Chair Self asked the board if they feel it is complete enough to go to a public hearing.

Scalera made a motion that the application is complete, LaBelle seconded. Lane asked about the items that were not completed; Chair Self explained that the items would need to be approved by the State so the application is complete enough to go to a public hearing. With no further discussion All approved. Motion passed.

The public hearing was opened at 7:09pm.

John Noonan explained the plan for the subdivision. Chair Self said the new lot which isn't a full acre for a contiguous lot for that site which doesn't meet the zoning regulations. However, it would make it more conforming than it is now, and he feels it is a good plan. The consensus of the board is that it is a good plan.

Chair Self closed public hearing at 7:15pm.

York made a motion to approved it because it will make it a more conforming lot with the condition of a perk test and showing where a 4000 sq foot area for a leech field on the property will be. Scalera seconded; all were in favor and the motion passed.

D. PB 25-017: Site Plan Review Application – Fieldstone Land Consultants have submitted a Site Plan Review Application on behalf of Paul Thomas to expand the gravel parking lot at Twinkle Town. The property is located at Tax Map 220, Lot 191 in the Business District.

Chair Self informed John Noonan that these proposals were submitted after a change in zoning to the wetlands had been presented to the Planning Board. If the Board approves the plat at this meeting and the voters don't approve the change in zoning to wetlands, then they are all set. However, if the voters do approve it, then the applicant would need to come back to the Planning Board to apply for a conditional use permit. If that was not approved, the applicant would need to come back with an updated site plan. Noonan said he was aware and knows the Conservation Commission has not reviewed the plan yet, so the applicant would like to review the application for completeness at this meeting.

Chair Self read the summary of the site plan review application and John Noonan reviewed the checklist.

York made a motion that the application is complete. Scalera seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion passed.

Chair Self opened the public hearing at 7:28pm.

John Noonan is asking that this hearing be continued to the next meeting; he then reviewed the plans for expanding the parking lot which will be hard packed gravel. He explained the request for a waiver for landscaping since it doesn't face a public way, and they will be leaving the existing trees. Chair Self asked for a consensus from the Board. Lane said he was not sure; Ames would like a site visit and would like to defer her decision. The others felt leaving the trees was sufficient. Paquette said the primary concern is there needs to be one ADA accessible parking space. Noonan said the grade is ADA compliant. They feel this parking lot would not be used by a wheelchair, but more likely would prefer to park near the building. Paquette also said there needs to be an ADA compliant walkway to the building. Ames asked questions about the existing parking spaces which she would like to see on the plan. Paul Thomas said the plan already showed additional parking and people park there now. Lane

asked if there was an ADA designated spot near the building and was told there was none currently. Noonan said there will be one near the building and one in rear. Domina would be interested in site visit.

York made a motion to continue the public hearing until the January 8, 2026 meeting; Lane seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Ames made a motion for a Site visit scheduled on Monday, January 5, 2026 at 2pm; York seconded; all in favor. The motion passed.

E. PB 25-018: Site Plan Review Application – Fieldstone Land Consultants have submitted a Site Plan Review Application on behalf of Paul Thomas for an accessory storage structure measuring 5,000 square feet. The property is located at Tax Map 220, Lots 171 & 173 in the Business District.

Chair Self read the Site Plan review application; John Noonan reviewed the checklist which the board reviewed for completeness.

Scalera made a motion that the application is complete to proceed to public hearing. B Self seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion passed.

Public hearing opened at 7:52pm

John Noonan is proposing a 5,000-foot storage unit with 3 parking spaces. The use will be for storage of equipment and maintenance items for the business the applicant owns across the street.

A motion was made by B Self to continue the public hearing until the January 8, 2025 meeting; Lane seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Lane made a motion for a site visit on January 5, 2026 at 2pm; LaBelle seconded; all were in favor and the motion passed.

Discussions and Other Business:

1) Approve Schedule for 2026

Lane made a motion to approve the Planning Board schedule for 2026 about meeting dates and application dates. B Self seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion passed.

2) York reported that CIP and Governance made their recommendations to the BOS. He has copies if anyone wants to schedule a meeting with him to discuss.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by LaBelle. There was a second to the motion by B. Self with no further discussion. All were in favor and the m*otion passed.* Adjournment occurred at 8:04pm.

Next Meeting: January 8, 2026

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Ells, Recording Secretary

Approved on January 8, 2026