Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Swanzey Planning Board
Meeting Minutes – **March 26, 2026**
Whitcomb Hall, Main Street, Swanzey, NH

Note: Draft Minutes are subject to review, correction and approval by the Board. Review and approval of Minutes generally takes place at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board.

CALL TO ORDER:
The meeting of the Swanzey Planning Board was called to order at 6:00pm by Chair Victoria Ames. The meeting was held at Whitcomb Hall and online for the public. Other members present: Vice Chair Scott Self, Michael York, Richard Lane, Mark Scalera, Brandon Self, Alternates Stacey Goodale, Jane Johnson, Charlie Harbeck. 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: Selectmen's representative Alan Gross

Others Present:
Kai Kraemer with FACT TV, Megan Ulin (ReVision Energy), Ryan Cooley (Dillant- Hopkins Airport Manager), Rebecca Landry (City of Keene), Adrian Wood, Brandon Latham (City of Keene), Stephan Ciolino, Bill Hutwelker, Ryan Hadock

MINUTES:
The meeting minutes of March 12, 2026, were considered. A motion was made by Mark Scalera to approve the meeting minutes as presented. There was a second by Scott Self**.** Chair Ames pointed out a correction needed; with no further discussion, the minutes were passed as amended.

REGIONAL IMPACT
A Motion was made by Scott Self that there was no regional impact. There was a second by Richard Lane. All were in favor. With no further discussion, the motion passed.

Chair Ames welcomed the public and informed them of the process for a Planning Board meeting.

APPLICATIONS AND PUBLIC HEARING(S):

A. PB 26-005: ReVision Energy, on behalf of the City of Keene, have submitted a site plan review application for two ground mounted solar arrays on approximately 24 acres of undeveloped land at Dillant-Hopkins Airport. The project site spans both the rural/agricultural and residence districts at Tax Map 205 Lot 1.

The subject parcel encompasses roughly 893 acres. The total limit of disturbance is 24.36 acres. The project includes two primary solar subarrays: Subarray #1 (approx. 5.7 acres), which abuts NH Route 32 between Wheeler Lane and the Inn of the Tartan Fox, and Subarray #2 (approx. 6.1 acres), located directly north of FW Webb and Bell Brothers Trucking. Both received variance approvals on August 18, 2025. The proposed development plans are in compliance with ZBA approval.

Adam Paquette provided feedback from the Town staff on the application to extend the screening north along Route 32 for Subarray #1 and that the Planning Board should discuss future possibilities to utilize this resource, such as a partnership, once the City of Keene reaches 100% renewable energy. He also explained the waivers being requested.

Chair Ames asked the Board if there were any items on the application that they felt were incomplete and found none.

A motion was made by Scott Self that the site plan is complete and ready to go to public hearing. Brandon Self seconded the motion. With no further discussion, all were in favor and the motion passed.

Scalera made a motion to accept the requests for waivers; there was a second by Scott Self. With no further discussion, all were in favor and the motion passed.

Chair Ames opened the public hearing at 6:10pm and read the application to the public. She invited the applicant, represented by Megan Ulin from Revision Energy who is the project developer, to review the application with the Board.

Megan described the proposed project for ground mount solar arrays at the southern end of the airport. The 24-acre project is related to the City of Keene's goal for 100% renewable energy by 2030. This will offset municipal electricity accounts via net metering. She went on to say that the panels will be mounted on aluminum racking with earth screw foundations, standing 12" high at a 30-degree slope. Underground conduits will link the array to inverters and transformers, connecting to the local grid on Route 32. This location was chosen due to existing airport development restrictions and its proximity to 3-phase power. A glare analysis confirmed no hazardous reflections for pilots; FAA 7460 evaluations are currently underway to prevent radio or electrical interference. To safeguard Grasshopper Sparrows, construction will pause from May 1 to August 1, adhering to NH Fish and Game conservation measures.

Megan continued saying that the construction is expected to start in August 2026 and will last 12 – 15 months. Once operational, the system has a projected lifespan of 40+ years with minimal annual maintenance.

Scott Self was curious about the need for a retention pond; Ryan Hadock, the project's civil engineer, explained the requirement for an AOT permit and the retention pond is necessary.

Self then asked about the location of the underground conduit connecting the two and Megan pointed it out on the site plan.

Richard Lane asked whether panels would interfere with the ILS approach system. Megan explained that the FAA will review this as part of the FAA 7460 evaluation. Revision will submit the FAA determination letters and approvals once received.

Ryan Cooley addressed the Board 's concerns regarding feedback regarding the panels. The FAA will issue a letter of determination which will address all safety issues. He also said that the airport planners already took that into consideration when they chose that location so that the array wouldn't cause interference.

Scot Self asked about the existing road on the plan if they are building a new one, but Megan said that existing one on the plan would not be needed and will be removed from the plans.

Michael York asked what Keene buildings will be covered; Megan said that all the electricity will go to the grid and will cover 100% of the city's municipal buildings. York went on to say that he believes this is commercial use and that the Town of Swanzey could charge taxes on the property. Megan responded that the property is tax exempt, and it is still for still for municipal use. Adam Paquette confirmed that the Town's tax assessor has confirmed that the land will be tax exempt. Megan responded the electricity can only be used for municipal use.

Mark Scalera wondered about the blue light effect when birds are flying at night might think it was a pond; she replied that the case she heard of that happening was in the desert in the Southwest, but it might have been an exaggerated internet story. Cooley stressed that aviation safety is his top priority. He can safely assure the Town that the FAA, Airport and City would not be proposing any unsafe conditions. Many airports are installing these because of the limitations of what can be done on airport land.

Jane Johnson asked what this would do to property values. Megan said there have been some studies done and they provided this information to the Zoning board for their criteria. Locally there was a study around NH Electric Co-op's array in Moultonborough which found no impact. There was another one that was proposed in Fitzwilliam, and they did a very in-depth property evaluation which determined it would not have an impact on property values.

Jane then asked what the benefit to Swanzey is. Megan gave the example of benefits of local power generation during peak seasons, having more electricity going to the grid would avoid the more costly supply.

Jane asked if there are any figures or examples of the benefits gained from the other solar array at the airport. Megan doesn't have access to that information, and it is not applicable to this project.

Stacey Goodale asked about road glare. Megan replied that it is not typically a concern based on the angle of the panels and the coating; and the distance from the roadway should not provide glare on the roadway. The panels are designed to absorb light.

Mark Scalera asked about any studies that did have impact on property values. Megan said perhaps in dense residential neighborhoods, but typically not in rural scenarios.

Chair Ames asked about the life span of these panels and how the City feels about decommissioning the arrays and whether the Board should be requesting a bond for the decommissioning. Megan replied that the warranty is 25 years but they typically last 40 years. At the end of life, the City of Keene as the owner can replace components or choose decommissioning. The components are made from recyclable materials. The City of Keene is the owner and feels there is very little risk to the Town of Swanzey.

Chair Ames inquired whether they are asking for approval for all the arrays at this time; Megan described the likely timeline for the project.

Scott Self then explained that the applicant has one year to have active and substantial development otherwise the site plan approval expires. There are certain criteria to meet.

August is starting so there will certainly be active and substantial development in a year.

Chair Ames would like a separate page that provides landscaping and screening. She would like to see the white spruce placed in a staggered line. And would like to work with the conservation commission and grow hedgerow species around the arrays which would benefit Swanzey with pollinators and increase the diversity in that area. Megan said they can stagger the trees; however, the airport must maintain a low-cut area to prevent species that attract raptors which would be a concern for the airport.

Ryan Cooley replied that when it comes to landscaping on the airfield, the FAA is very strict and he quoted the policy that states that landscaping can't attract birds, create or assist in the creation of standing water, or provide a habitat for wild animals. The airport must maintain grass at specific height of about 6 inches.

Chair Ames then inquired about the details of the security fence; Megan replied that it would be a 7 foot chain link fence around the perimeter; inside it is an agricultural fence made of wire mesh elevated about 6 inches above the ground.

Then Chair Ames asked about the 5 utility poles that appear to be in a cluster; Megan said they have about 40 feet between them, and each pole has a different function.

Lane asked who will be responsible for the maintenance once the project is completed and Megan replied that the City of Keene is the owner and is responsible, but that Revision often provides the maintenance for their projects. He then asked whose responsibility it will be to recycle the components and she replied again that the City of Keene is the owner and would be responsible.

Stephen Ciolino expressed his objection to the project, as well as to other projects that have been built along Route 32 in Swanzey. He questioned why Swanzey would approve this project if it won't benefit Swanzey. He brought up health concerns and drainage issues along the road. Chair Ames explained that what the Board has to do is to be sure the site plan has to be consistent with the regulations. Megan cites sources that reinforce that this project is safe.

Chair Ames asked how they would be dealing with the drainage on that side. Ryan Hadock described how the AOT process uses a detailed model which is very robust. From the design standpoint, everything within the site is accounted for but they have no jurisdiction across the road. Chair Ames wondered if adding the collection system might improve the existing conditions and Ryan agreed that it might.

Adrian Ward asked how much rain he's accounted for. Ryan said they use an extreme precipitation model for all AOT which is specific to exact coordinates. Chair Ames said she has talked with engineers about this and was told they are consistently updating the numbers based on recent storm events, so the data is up to date.

Adrian Wood expressed concerned about glare on the arrays for pilots. Chair Ames asked if he had read the analysis that was conducted for the project. He had not, so Megan explained that they are diligent about glare; the FAA allows for solar projects at airports and has updated polices over the years with additional

data and no longer considers glare an issue for pilots on final approach. They performed the glare analysis as a matter of diligence and submitted it to the Board. Wood replied that without an air traffic control tower, the pilot could be blinded approaching the runway and he predicts a lawsuit if that happened.

Lane asked if they could give some examples of arrays placed at the approach end of a runway and if any repercussions have occurred; Scott Self said it would likely be difficult to find one similar. Megan reinforced that they followed the FAA regulations which are their guiding rules.

Scalera asked about the possibility of future development of the airport to extend that runway for bigger planes and wondered if the arrays would be in the way. Megan replied that the FAA evaluates future expansion and the runway currently supports the largest aircraft that the airport can serve.

Ryan Cooley said a request has been sent to the FAA to change the land determination from aeronautical to non-aeronautical use. They will look at the runway and if they were to deem that the airport would be limiting their use, they would provide feedback and deny the request.

Scott Self asked if FAA addresses the glare. Megan said it doesn't because there is no air traffic control tower, so the application didn't need it. The concern of glare is for the occupants of the tower.

Chair Ames asked for any other questions from the Board and then suggested continuing the meeting until April 9th. Scalera told the group that the Conservation Commission meets Monday, April 6th at 4pm at Whitcomb Hall.

Scott Self said the City of Keene got a variance from the Zoning Board to have this use on this property; the Planning Board must abide by site plan regulations; it has no jurisdiction over the use.

Lane made a motion to continue the meeting until April 9th and Scalera seconded. Megan asked for a list of concerns to be addressed at that time. Chair Ames listed adding the landscaping page, additional screening planted in a zig zag pattern and for them to review the conservation commission recommendations for the roadside areas. Adam Paquette asked Megan if a representative would be available on April 6 at 4pm to attend the Conservation Commission meeting. Megan said she could attend that meeting but not the Planning Board meeting on April 9th but she could get another representative. No other discussion, all were in favor and the motion carried. **HEARING CONTINUED UNTIL APRIL 9.**

Discussions and Other Business:

A. A&O Canine New Tenant

The Board reviewed the application; Chair Ames asked the Board if they had questions. There were none.

Scalera made a motion to approve the New Tenant Application and Brandon Self seconded the motion. With no further discussion, all were in favor and the motion was approved.

B. Site Plan Review Regulations Discussion

The Board reviewed the Regulations and discussed edits to be made.

There were also discussions about areas of concern that were observed within the Town; Adam informed the Board of the appropriate action to take, which is to report it to the Selectboard or the Code Enforcement Officer.

Chair Ames let the Board know about a workshop available on Tuesday March 31 from 5:30pm to 7:30pm in Stoddard. She plans on attending and invited others to attend.

Scott Self let the Board know that the Wastewater Committee is reviewing a study on the West Swanzey Wastewater Treatment Plant on Thursday at 10am at Whitcomb Hall. The study recommends building a new facility at an estimated cost of 26 million dollars or piping it to Keene for 15 million dollars. He said that there is not much in the study that addresses fixing the plant. He explained changes in regulations and there was a discussion about other possible options.

ADJOURNMENT
A motion to adjourn was made by Scalera. There was a second to the motion by Brandon Self, and with no further discussion. All were in favor and the m*otion passed.* Adjournment occurred at 8:23pm.

Next Meeting: April 9, 2026

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Ells, Recording Secretary

Approved on April 9, 2026