Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Swanzey Planning Board
Meeting Minutes – **April 23, 2026**
Whitcomb Hall, Main Street, Swanzey, NH

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, and 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: Jane Johnson, Selectboard Representative Alan Gross

Others Present:
Kai Kraemer with FACT TV, Abigail Latique (Abby's Tiny Blessings Home Daycare), Ericka Canales (MEDC); Megan Ulin (Revision Energy); Amanda Palmeria, Rebecca Landry and Brandon Latham (City of Keene), Ryan Cooley (Airport Director)

MINUTES:
The meeting minutes of April 9, 2026, were considered. A motion was made by Scott Self to approve the meeting minutes as presented. There was a second by Richard Lane. Mark Scalera abstained. All others were in favor. With no further discussion, the motion passed.

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.

APPLICATIONS AND PUBLIC HEARING(S):
A. **PB 26-006:** Abigail Latique has submitted a home-based business application to operate a daycare at 157 Eaton Road (Tax Map 218, Lot 27). Under RSA 674:16, VI, home daycares are permitted by right and are exempt from the site plan review process. This application is presented for informational purposes. While any public comments will be entered into the official record, they cannot legally serve as grounds for denial.

   Chair Ames read from the statute regarding home-based childcare businesses that was amended in July 2025 to allow family and group family childcare homes as an accessory use to primary residential properties, preventing these home-based providers from being denied in residential zones. These facilities are exempt from local site plan review and generally cannot be restricted more than regular residential uses.

   Abigail Latique explained that she moved back to Swanzey and is working in childcare. She moved into a home in Swanzey and is renovating it to be able to provide day care. Ericka Canale explained that her role is with the Monadnock Economic Development Corporation; she and Adam Paquette

thought that even though a site plan review is no longer needed, this would be a good opportunity to educate the board on the 'Bring it Home' program that is helping family-based childcare expand in the community by providing grants up to $40,000 for residences to bring childcare into their home. By revising the application, it will be clear that the childcare provider won't need to go through the site plan process and expense which will help to keep them from going under the radar. By being licensed they will be eligible for the subsidy program that helps parents pay for childcare; Abby's Tiny Blessings is the first one in Swanzey and there are a couple in the pipeline. She provided handouts in case anyone on the Board knows of someone who could benefit.

Scott Self asked how to determine the number of children allowed in the home; Ericka said it is based on 35 feet per child; for over 9 children there will be an assistant required which creates another job, thereby helping the economy. The amount granted is on a case-by-case basis depending on the need.

Mark Scalera made a motion to approve the home-based business with the condition of a successful fire department inspection. Brandon Self seconded the motion. With no further discussion, all were in favor and the motion passed.

B. **PB 26-005 (CONTINUED FROM 4/9):** 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.

Chair Ames continued the public hearing; she read the notice and reviewed the process so far. On March 26th the Planning Board approved the requested waivers, determined the application was complete, and opened the public hearing; the public hearing was continued April 9th. The Board received a project summary in response to the questions and issues that had been raised.

Chair Ames pointed out that this case is unusual in that it is submitted by a municipality for another municipality to review. Technically, site plan review is not necessary in this case, and she thanked the City of Keene for the collaboration, care, and thoughtfulness that has gone into responding to the concerns. She expressed that this project represents a big step toward energy independence and an ingenious use of the airport land.

One concern from citizens at the March 26th hearing was regarding glare off the solar panels for pilots; the Board received a letter in the packet from Airport Director Ryan Cooley that concurred with the glare analysis that had been submitted in the original application; he formally stated that the proposed project will not adversely affect pilot vision or airport operations. Chair Ames asked for consensus from Board members whether they were satisfied with the letter. A consensus was reached.

Chair Ames went on to discuss the concern the Planning Board had regarding the City of Keene's plan for eventual decommissioning of the array. The packet included the decommissioning plan

from Brandon Latham, Deputy City Attorney; Chair Ames asked the Board if they needed any further information; Scott Self said he felt the plan made sense. Richard Lane pointed out that there really isn't anything Swanzey can do about it since it's Keene's project. Chair Ames said she was relieved by the plan and felt having it in the file would be important in the future. She asked for consensus whether they were satisfied with the decommissioning plan and all agreed.

Next discussed was the subject of screening measures for the solar array project. The Board had requested landscaping and vegetation be planted to block the view of the arrays from the road. Ryan Cooley provided a detailed explanation regarding FAA regulations and wildlife hazard considerations. Chair Ames said this helped her better understand the requirements and asked the Board if anyone wanted additional information. Richard repeated his opinion that any additional information is moot; Stacey Goodale asked about the existing trees and whether they would be removed and Megan Ulin replied that it was outside of the scope of this project. Chair Ames asked if there was a consensus; Charlie Harbeck expressed his unhappiness with the lack of screening; others agreed with him; Scott said he felt they answered in detail and had always wondered why spruce trees were planted years ago; they would need to be cut at some point and was satisfied with the answer.

Megan replied that she understands the concerns of the Board members but that they are doing their best to meet the screening regulations. Ryan Cooley remarked that while it would be nice to screen it off as an industrial project, he reiterated what he put in the memo that they must meet FAA regulations. They will be starting a process this summer to evaluate the existing trees and are hoping to trim or remove obstructions. He expressed that it is important to preemptively not put something there which would need to be removed later. Ryan went on to explain that the space protected by the FAA is greater than the airport borders, adding that there is one end of the airport where pilots can't use visual navigation aids to land during inclement weather due to the trees.

Mark Scalera asked about trees outside of the fencing and wondered if that would really be an obstruction. Ryan explained that the fences need to be regularly inspected for safety and security issues, therefore the fences need to be clear. He reminded the Board that they proposed adding slats into the chain link fence to obstruct the view but emphasized they would not be introducing vegetation. The suggestion for adding slats to the fencing was made after consulting with FAA and NHDOT and they concurred that there can be no vegetation can be introduced.

Ryan stated that the FAA still needs to give their determination for the construction on the airport.

Chair Ames expressed appreciated the alternative suggestion by adding slats to the fencing along Route 32; there was a long discussion regarding the color and the esthetics of the slats. Chair Ames asked if the decision could be postponed regarding the slats in the fencing until the arrays have been installed. Rebecca Landry remarked that they are trying to be a good neighbor and if the Town decides when the time comes that they don't want the slats, they won't install them. They do try to support the environment, but they must follow FAA guidelines in this project. They simply

can't encourage birds that might fly into the path of an airplane or animals on the runway or taxiway.

Chair Ames asked if there were final questions. Scott said he felt the slats won't make that much difference and that the solar panels will be visible regardless. The chair asked if they could have another review after the arrays have been installed. Adam felt this should be the last meeting the applicant should need to attend. Rebecca said that if the Town decides to not add the slats, they won't install them. Adam did not recommend it being added as a condition. Chair Ames suggested they could request slats, and then, near the end of the project they could make the decision about whether to install the slats or to leave them off.

Scott then asked about the retention ponds and Megan explained the plan which requires the pond to drain within 48 hours.

A motion was made by Scott Self to approve the application with the condition that they receive the Alteration of Terrain permit, and NH DOT driveway permit on Route 32, and FAA and EPA permits and to have the option of slats in fence included; York seconded the motion. With no further discussion, all approved and the motion carried.

The Chair closed the public hearing at 7:02pm.

Discussions and Other Business:
Adam reported that Attorney Cordell Johnson will be looking at the amended site plan reviews regulations which will be discussed at the next meeting. Bells Septic Service site plan will be at 5/14 meeting – they received a variance approval from the zoning board. The Conditional use permit is up and running. Scott asked if day care centers should be changed to be a home occupation instead of a home business. This will be reviewed with the ordinance audit.

Adam and Stephon are suggesting a joint workshop to discuss the ordinance audit on June 4th for Planning, Zoning, Conservation Commission, EDAC. Adam will send a poll to determine what time is best. A quorum for all boards is needed. After this he will start planning the round tables and outreach for the community to attend.

Chair Ames told the Board the Energy committee is working on a solar ordinance which will be submitted as a draft soon.

Scott gave an update regarding the Sewer and Water Advisory Committee. After touring the treatment plant today, the committee voted to recommend to the selectmen that the Town should pump the sewage into Keene along Route 10 which might take 2 stations. If this happens, that will provide an opportunity for industrial development because Swanzey's ordinance doesn't accept industrial waste, but Keene does. This wouldn't happen until 2030 or 2031 to coordinate with Keene's plan to reconstruct Winchester Street. The committee also must look at sewer rates; the Town has never raised rates.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Mark Scalera. There was a second to the motion by Brandon Self with no further discussion. All were in favor and the motion passed. Adjournment occurred at 7:25pm.

Next Meeting: May 14, 2026

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Ells, Recording Secretary

Approved on May 14, 2026