Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Swanzey Planning Board
Meeting Minutes – May 14, 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 were Vice Chair Scott Self, Michael York, Richard Lane, Brandon Self, Alternates Stacey Goodale, Charlie Harbeck, and Selectman's Representative Alan Gross. Also present were 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: Mark Scalera, Jane Johnson

SEATING ALTERNATES:
The chair seated Charlie Harbeck for Mark Scalera.

Others Present:
Kai Kraemer with FACT TV, Mary Cook (Eurovia), Paul Crosby, Susan Stacy, John Rowan, G-Ann Rowan, Emily Kerylow, Mike Johnson, John Noonan (Fieldstone Land Consultants), Keith Bell, Jeanne Thieme, Terry Lewis

MINUTES:
The meeting minutes of April 23, 2026 were considered. A motion was made by Scott Self to approve the meeting minutes as presented. There was a second by Richard Lane**.** Alan Gross abstained. All others were in favor and with no further discussion, the motion passed.

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

APPLICATIONS AND PUBLIC HEARING(S):

A. PB 26-007: Bell's Septic Site Plan Review – A Site Plan Review application has been submitted by Fieldstone Land Consultants on behalf of John Rowan to construct a 6,000 square foot building and associated site improvements to operate Bell's Septic Tank Service at 537 Old Homestead Highway. The property is located at Tax Map 224 Lot 21 and is split between the business district and the rural/agricultural district.

Chair Ames read the application summary and then noted that the only item on the checklist that was requested to be waived was #20 because a new septic system is being constructed. A motion was made by Scott Self to grant the waiver as it would not have adverse impact on public health, safety, or abutting properties, and that granting the request is consistent with the intent and purpose of the rules waived. Brandon Self seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Chair Ames next addressed the completeness of the application; Adam Paquette informed the group that the Board can ignore his concern regarding the leach field location because the health officer was able to view the location, and though not ideal, there is no regulation against it. He requested information regarding the 6 parking spaces that are required and would like identification of what surfaces are paved and which are gravel. Architectural plans were not submitted but could be a condition of approval prior to granting the building permit.

He read to the group the comment from the Conservation Commission's Chair which was a suggestion for all exterior lights to be on motion sensors, and/or reduce the number of lights, and/or have them switched off by 9pm to minimize the light pollution which causes disruption of wildlife.

Chair Ames asked the Board if the site plan application contains information that is sufficiently complete to allow the Planning Board to proceed to public hearing. A motion was made by Scott Self that is does; Richard Lane seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Chair Ames opened the public hearing and re-read the application summary.

John Noonan from Fieldstone Consultants discussed the need for a DOT driveway permit and the type of pavement leading up to the building. Noonan added that there are a few striped parking spaces, but much of the parking is non-striped and can accommodate the required number of parking spaces.

Mr. Noonan continued to summarize the zoning board application that had been recently approved and described how the property is split between the business and rural/agricultural districts.

Mr. Noonan stated that the septic system has not been designed by Fieldstone. The current location could move, but the designer found no issue with the location under the gravel.

He went on to explain the lights are LED full cut-off and will have motion sensors to satisfy comments from Conservation Commission. He also explained the setbacks from shoreland and wetlands and showed the proposed development outside of these areas.

Next, he explained the plan for the water to be drawn from the existing well, so an additional well is not expected to be required.

Alan Gross asked about the visibility of the building from the road; Mr. Noonan explained the site has berms which hide much but not all of the view of the building and encouraged the board to drive by to see since not much will be changing in that respect.

Scott Self asked for clarification about the parking spaces which Mr. Noonan pointed out in the plans.

Chair Ames inquired about the parking area's surface at the back of the building, which Mr. Noonan explained will be hard pack gravel; eventually it might be paved. When asked about the leach field, he stated that it is a special design for being placed under the parking lot. He said that in most cases, the pump trucks will be emptied at the sewage treatment plant before being parked at the building. They would wash the outside of the trucks at the building. The building's color will be grey.

Chair Ames then asked if there were questions from the public, there were none.

Scott Self asked if trucks would be parked inside, and Mr. Rowan answered that they would, especially in the winter. Richard Lane asked about the location of propane tank and was shown where the 1000-gallon tank would be placed at the rear northeast corner. Scott Self added that there is also a 1000-gallon holding tank for water drainage from the building which would then be pumped out and emptied at the wastewater treatment plant. Chair Ames asked if there were any more questions and there were none.

Chair Ames closed the public hearing. The Board discussed the plans and what conditions should be added.

A motion was made by Brandon Self to approve the site plan application with the subsequent conditions of achievement of the DOT driveway permit, inclusion of the architectural plans in the site plan, and achieving the NH DES septic permit. Michael York seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Discussions and Other Business:

A. Excavation Permit Renewals – Mary Cook from Eurovia Atlantic Coast LLC

a. Tax Map 238 Lots 1 & 2
b. Tax Map 236 Lot 76

Mary Cook from Eurovia Atlantic Coast LLC explained to the Board that their Town permit has expired and while no excavation has occurred in the past 5 years, they would like to renew the permit in case they do need to excavate in the future. NH DES requires an alteration of terrain permit and a progress report every 5 years; the Town requires a permit renewal every 5 years.

A motion was made by Scott Self to renew the Cold River Materials application for an excavation permit for Tax Map 238 Lots 1 & 2 with the current conditions, for a 5-year period, expiring on May 14, 2031. There was a discussion regarding a bridge on the property. Mr. Crosby stated it is a metal bridge, and it is in good shape. Richard Lane expressed concern for the river; the group discussed the reclamation plan and bond. There was a second by Brandon Self; with no further discussion, all were in favor and the motion carried.

Next the Board reviewed the request for renewal of the permit for the Tax Map 236 Lot 76. Mary Cook explained that this has a similar situation where they haven't excavated but would like to keep it permitted and ready, in case they need it in the future. Alan Gross inquired about the gravel shortage; Mary Cook explained the shortage and Adam confirmed he had read about a town posting this concern.

A motion was made by Scott Self to renew the Cold River Materials application for an excavation permit for Tax Map 236 Lot 65 with the current conditions, for a 5-year period, expiring on May 14, 2031. Alan Gross seconded the motion; all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

B. Future of Excavation Permits – Discussion

Chair Ames explained that this conversation would be a non-binding exchange of ideas. Emily Kerylow is a neighbor and close friend of Mike Johnson who owns a gravel pit at 56 Cory Pond Road; she explained that they learned that the Town is undergoing a project to create an inventory of the town's gravel pits to be sure they are all properly permitted when Adam Paquette had reached out to Mr. Johnson to notify him that he did not have an excavation permit for his gravel pit and would need to acquire one within the next year. This caused confusion because Mr. Johnson has filled out his Intent to Excavate form each year. The pit has been operated by his family since the 1950s; he became owner in 2011 and was not aware of the

requirement of an excavation permit. The process of applying for the permit will take resources he does not have; he is 87 and still farms his land; he depends on the income from the gravel pit. Ms. Kerylow is hoping for a deferment to the permitting process to give Mr. Johnson time to comply, such as 5 years.

Adam Paquette explained that when an Intent to Excavate is filed, he will check for a valid permit. If there is none in the file, a letter will be sent to explain to the gravel pit owner that a permit is needed. He said this is a project that has been overlooked by the Town for decades, but that it is imperative that the Town assure all gravel pits are properly permitted with a reclamation plan and bond.

After considerable discussion, the Board considered a non-public hearing with the Board of Selectmen to discuss this further, if necessary. Adam apologized to Mr. Johnson for the confusion and assured him that the Board wants to work this out with him.

C. Terry Lewis - 69 James Road

Terry Lewis explained that she and Adam met 2 weeks ago regarding her plan to hold large events on her property; she has questions about filling out a site plan application and is seeking advice. Scott Self explained that this conversation with the Board would be a preliminary conceptual consultation but that she is welcome to get more advice from the Town Planner. She asked whether she could draw her own site plan and was told she could; she asked about how to complete the checklist, etc. and was given advice. Adam invited her to meet with him again at the Town Hall if she has more questions before she needs to submit the application for the June 28th meeting.

D. Victoria Ames - Commercial/Industrial Growth and Property Tax Burden

Chair Ames presented to the Board the results of research she has been compiling since February regarding various statistics from 2014 to 2026 that pertained to the Town of Swanzey in relation to other towns in Cheshire County.

The research included demographics such as Swanzey's population, median age, density, growth in housing valuation, commercial/industrial growth, tax rate over time and number of acres in current use.

Chair Ames concluded that the numbers suggest that we may be making a false promise by promoting commercial/industrial development as a way to lower the residential property taxes. Rather, commercial/industrial development offers many other benefits, like local jobs. Ames added her opinion that the numbers argue for carefully balancing commercial/industrial development with protecting qualities of high value to Swanzey's residential property taxpayers, such as rural character and natural resources.

E. SWRPC Commissioner

Adam Paquette explained that there is a need for someone to serve a 2-year term as a Southwest Regional Commissioner on one of 4 committees; Victoria Ames volunteered. Her name will be presented to the Selectboard for their nomination.

Adam then informed the Board that public notice will be going out regarding a public hearing about the changes to the site plan review regulations which will be finalized at the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Brandon Self. There was a second by Charlie Harbeck with no further discussion. All were in favor and the m*otion passed.* Adjournment occurred at 8:30pm.

Next Meeting: May 28, 2026

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Ells, Recording Secretary

Approved on May 28, 2026