

Starks Planning Board Meeting November 5, 2025

Present: Gwen Hilton, Ken Lust, Claire Nelson, Joe Hartigan, Tiffany Bellefleur, Phil Cole

Guests: Byrne Wright, Maggie Wright

Chair Gwen Hilton called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and determined that adequate public notice was given of the meeting, a quorum was present, and no conflicts of interest nor bias were reported. The meeting's agenda was approved, and public comments were invited.

Old Business:

The minutes of the October 1, 2025, meeting were approved by unanimous consent.

New Business:

Moratorium Ordinance on Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)

Gwen presented a draft Moratorium Ordinance designed to give the Board more time to adequately research the impact BESS facilities would have on the community to the end of writing a more permanent ordinance for approval by the Town. The Board anticipates approving a draft ordinance at its December meeting after which time Public Hearings will be scheduled. The goal is to present this at the March 2026 Town Meeting.

Implications of recent Housing Legislation on current Ordinances

LD 1829, LD 427, and LD 997 were passed by the 132nd Legislature to address barriers to the creation of multi-family dwelling units in the hopes of making housing both more available and more affordable. The Board reviewed the specifics of the statutes to determine whether our current Ordinances are in compliance with the new legislation. In short, both the Site Plan Review Ordinance and the Subdivision Ordinance will need minor tweaking regarding parking regulations. The statutes do not affect either the Shoreland Zoning or the Building Ordinances.

Large Scale Battery Storage Facilities

Starks' existing Site Plan Review Ordinance will serve as the framework to address concerns and to create safeguards specific to the development of large-scale battery energy storage facilities (BESS). A quick review of the current Ordinance identified areas where language will need to be added that target issues unique to BESS. Those include fire safety, impact on community services, and decommissioning, among others. The Board will begin its work at the December meeting.

Adjourn: 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Claire Nelson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the text "Respectfully submitted,".

Claire Nelson, Secretary