

**Starks Planning Board Meeting
April 1, 2026**

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

Guests: Byrne Wright, Maggie Wright, Paul Frederic, Katrina Waite, Jason Coomes

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

Old Business:

The minutes of the January 7, 2026 meeting were approved by unanimous consent.

New Business:

Public Input & Comments

Community member Katrina Waite indicated that she was researching areas in Starks that provide public access and/or easements to local waters. She floated the idea of drafting an opinion survey to gauge community interest in pursuing the matter further. Paul indicated areas where the Town currently owned properties that provided access to the Sandy River. The matter of a survey was deferred to be discussed as part of the agenda item on the update of the Comprehensive Plan.

Starks Holding LLC

As a courtesy, Ken sent a letter to Nate Niles reminding him that the current Letter of Credit will expire on April 30, 2026 and must be renewed. A brief discussion followed about potential alternative methods for providing sureties. Responsibility for enforcement rests with the select board.

Maine Rivers Dam Removal update

The need for a Floodplain Permit will require Maine Rivers to obtain an engineering study to determine river flow after dam removal in addition to a minor permit issued by the CEO. The town's Floodplain Ordinance will subsequently need to be updated to reflect these changes. The Board expects to see an application for permits under both Shoreland Zoning and Floodplain Ordinance permits in the fall.

Battery Energy Storage and Data Center Facilities

The Moratorium on BESS facilities was approved by voters at the March Annual Town Meeting giving the Board time to further research how best to address safety and other concerns should an application be submitted. The current plan is to fold language into the existing Site Plan Review Ordinance and to also include amendments that address the impact of Data Centers on community resources.

Comprehensive Plan

The current Comprehensive Plan is dated and in need of update. A discussion took place about how best to proceed and who should spearhead the effort. The Planning Board's final recommendation is that there be a committee of Starks residents appointed by the select board to manage the process. As a first step, recommendation is made that the select board hold a public hearing/town hall meeting to (1) solicit further suggestions and (2) solicit volunteers to serve on such a committee. The committee, which should be appointed by the select board and operate under the direction of the select board, may then wish to conduct a survey of residents to aid in the effort. The select board also has the option of delegating the process to the Planning Board to manage.

Planning Board election of Officers

In accordance with Section IV, A (Organization) of its by-Laws, the Board elected officers for the upcoming year. Motions were made and carried to re-elect the existing slate of officers.

Chair: Gwen Hilton

Vice Chair: Ken Lust

Secretary: Claire Nelson

Adjourn 8:05

Respectfully Submitted,

Claire Nelson, Secretary