

Starks Planning Board Meeting

October 1, 2025

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

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 September 17, 2025, meeting were approved by unanimous consent.

Update of Permit application by Peter Jacob for construction in Shoreland Zoning and Resource Protection District

It was brought to the Board's attention that the property in question, located at 158 Sandy River Road, is located in a Limited Residential Zone and not in a Resource Protection District as initially determined. The owner therefore does not need Board approval to begin construction. The CEO has issued the necessary Building Permit.

New Business:

Large Scale Battery Storage and Data Storage Facilities

Discussion focused on how the Town might best address the nation's increased demand for the construction of commercial Battery Storage and Data Storage Facilities. Uncertainty related to environmental and safety concerns, fire hazards, impact on limited community resources and any proposed facilities' alignment with principles outlined in the Starks' Comprehensive Plan were all discussed.

Ultimately, it was determined that the Board would propose a Moratorium to allow it more time to research options. A starting point will involve reviewing the Town's current Site Plan Review Ordinance as a possible framework to build upon

given that it already has many relevant protections in place. Gwen will produce a draft for the Board to review at its November meeting.

Inquiry into permitting requirements for solar

Gwen received an email which she initially perceived as a preliminary inquiry into a possible Solar Facility in the Branns Mills Road. Further communication revealed that the inquiry was simply a request for information related to the installation of solar panels on an individual residence. No Board action is required.

Updating the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan was approved by the voters in 2012. It was decided that the Planning Board would spearhead an updating of the Plan and in that regard, Gwen has requested a "Data Package" from the State.

Adjourn: 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Claire Nelson, Secretary