

Town of Antrim - Planning Board By-Laws
(Adopted January 17, 2008, Amended May 1, 2008, Amended May 2011,
Amended July 21, 2011, Amended July 5, 2012)

Section 1 Authority

These rules of procedure are adopted under the authority of New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated Chapter 676:1.

Section 2 Membership

2.1 The Planning Board shall consist of twelve (12) members: six (6) elected members with the authority to vote, one (1) ex-officio member with the authority to vote who shall be a Selectman designated by the Board of Selectmen, and up to five (5) alternate members with no authority to vote except when filling in for an absent or disqualified elected member.

2.2 Selection, qualification, terms, removal of members, and filling of vacancies shall conform to RSA 673.

2.3 Alternate Board members shall be appointed in accordance with RSA 673:6.

2.4 Whether seated by election or appointment, all members will be required to complete at least 6 hours of training within one (1) year of assuming office for the first time. Training shall be as designed and furnished by the Office of Energy and Planning. The Planning Board Secretary shall maintain a record of training performed by the members.

2.5 Planning Board members serving on other town boards, commissions and committees shall do so in accordance with RSA 673:7.

Section 3 Officers

3.1 The officers of the Board shall be as follows:

a. Chair. The Chair shall preside over all meetings and hearings; shall appoint committees of resident citizens which include one member or alternate member of the Board who shall act as Chair; and shall perform other duties customary to the office. Pursuant to RSA 673:9.II, the ex-officio member shall not serve as Chair.

b. Vice-Chair. The Vice-Chair shall preside in the absence of the Chair and shall have the full powers of the Chair on matters which come before the Board during the absence of the Chair.

c. Chair Pro Tem. In the event that the chair and vice chair are absent, or recused, a chair pro-tem shall be nominated and voted on by the members who are present.

3.2 The officers of the Board shall be elected annually at the second meeting in March, or at the latest, by the first meeting in April, as the first order of business, by a majority vote of the Board. If requested by a majority of those present, voting shall be by written ballot.

3.3 Each newly elected (including re-elected) member shall be sworn in and take an oath of office as required by RSA 42:1.

3.4 The Secretary shall forward to the municipal clerk for recording the election and expiration dates of the terms of each Board member.

Section 4 Board Finances

4.1 The planning staff shall receive all funds on behalf of the Board, issue receipts for same, and see that such funds are properly recorded and transmitted to the Town Administrator.

Section 5 Planning Department Staff

5.1 The Planning Department staff shall consist of a Town Planner and planning support personnel whose duties shall be as listed in the job descriptions for those positions on file in the Planning Department office, and as amended by the Planning Board. One (1) of the Planning Department staff shall be named Secretary of the Board. The Secretary shall set the agenda for the Board's meetings and is responsible for the recording and maintenance of the Board minutes; issue notices of all meetings; record the names of the members present; notify applicants and abutters of hearings; and prepare such correspondence and fulfill such duties as the Chair may specify. The Secretary shall also countersign the Chair's endorsement of the Board's approval on plats and other documents as may be required. In the absence of the Secretary, the Vice-Chair shall act in said endorsement.

Section 6 Standards of Conduct

6.1 The primary obligation of Planning Board members is to serve the public interest, and to conduct themselves so as to maintain public confidence in the Planning Board and the conduct of its business.

6.2 Members shall not directly or indirectly solicit any gifts or accept or receive any gift (whether in money, services, loans, travel, entertainment, hospitality, premises or in some other form), under circumstances in which it could be reasonably inferred that the gift was intended to influence them in the performance of their duties or was intended as a reward for any recommendation or decision on their part.

6.3 To avoid conflict of interest or even the appearance of impropriety, any member who may receive a direct personal or financial gain from a public Planning Board decision on an application must not participate in that decision. In accordance with RSA 673:14,I, no member of the planning board shall participate in deciding or shall sit upon the hearing of any question which the board is to decide in a judicial capacity if that member has a direct personal or pecuniary interest in the outcome which differs from the interest of other citizens. The direct private benefit may constitute a material personal gain or provide an advantage to relatives, friends, groups or associations that hold a significant share of the official's loyalty. An official with a conflict of interest must abstain from voting on the matter, and except as specified below, leave the table or podium area when Board members deliberate and vote on a matter. Further, the Board member may not discuss the matter privately with any other Board member voting on the matter, or otherwise communicate directly or indirectly with Board members, outside of a public meeting or hearing, regarding the matter in question so as to attempt to influence the vote on said question. A recused Board member is permitted to attend public meetings and speak as a citizen during a public hearing.

6.4 A Board member must not disclose or improperly use confidential information obtained in the course of his duties for financial gains or to further a personal interest.

6.5 All Board members share a responsibility to enforce adherence to the standards of conduct herein. If a member believes that one or more members, either by intention or inadvertence, is in violation of these standards, that member shall call that fact to the attention of the Board. In the event of a dispute as to whether a member should or should not participate, or when uncertainty arises, the board shall, upon the request of that member or another member of the board, vote on the question of whether that member should be disqualified, in accordance with RSA 673:14,II. Any such request and vote shall be made prior to or at the commencement of any required public hearing. Such a vote shall be advisory and non-binding, and may not be requested by anyone other than Board members.

Section 7 Meetings

7.1 Regular meetings shall be held on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month and, unless stated differently in a published notice, will be held at the Town Hall Conference Room, at 7:00 p.m.

7.2 Special Meetings and Work Sessions of the Planning Board may be called by the Chair, or at the request of three members of the Board provided public notice and notice to each member is given at least 24 hours in advance of the time of such meeting. The notice shall specify the purpose of the meeting and be posted in two public places.

7.3 Non-Public Sessions shall be held only in accordance with RSA 91-A:3.

7.4 Quorum. The Board membership consists of 6 elected members, one ex-officio member and 5 alternates. Therefore, a quorum for all meetings shall consist of 4 members including alternates sitting in place of regular members. If any regular Board member is absent from a meeting or hearing, or disqualifies himself from sitting on a particular application, the Chair shall designate one of the alternate members to sit in place of the absent or disqualified member, and such alternate shall have all the powers and duties of a regular member in regards to any matter under consideration on which the regular member is unable to act. Pursuant to RSA 673:11, only the alternate designated by the Selectmen for the ex-officio member shall serve in place of that member.

7.5 Disqualification. If any member finds it necessary to disqualify himself/ herself from sitting in a particular case or is unable to act in any particular case pending before the Board, as provided in RSA 673:14, they shall notify the Chair as soon as possible so that an alternate may be designated to sit in their place, as provided in RSA 673:11. The disqualification shall be announced by either the Chair or the member disqualifying himself/ herself before the beginning of the consideration of, or the public hearing on, the application. The member disqualifying himself/ herself shall leave the Board table during all deliberations and the public hearing on the matter. If uncertainty arises as to whether a Board member should disqualify himself/ herself, refer to section 6.5 of these By Laws.

7.6 Order of Business. The order of business shall be as follows:

7:00 PM

- a. Call to order by Chair
- b. Roll call and designation of alternates to sit for absent members

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- c. Minutes of previous meeting
- d. Review of documentation

7:15 PM

- a. Conduct business on the agenda
- b. Report of officers and committees

7.7 All meetings of the Planning Board shall be concluded by 10:30 P.M., with any unfinished business being carried forward to the next regularly scheduled meeting unless a majority of the Board votes to extend the closing time of the subject meeting.

Section 8 Parliamentary Rules of Procedure

8.1 The Chair never makes motions or seconds motions.

8.2 The Chair is free to vote on all motions.

8.3 Majority votes of the quorum present are required in order to pass a motion.

8.4 The following governs Motions:

- a. Main Motion: Made by a member on business of the board for the purpose of taking action. Must be seconded by a member. Once seconded, the Chair calls for discussion. Once discussion is complete, the Chair repeats the motion and then calls for a voice vote, or if requested by one member of the Board, a roll call vote.
- b. Amendments to Motions: When a Motion has been made and duly Seconded, it is open for amendment as to language or content. A Motion to Amend a Motion must be duly seconded before it is open to discussion. The Motion to Amend must be voted on before the Chair allows another Motion to Amend.
- c. Point of Order or Parliamentary Inquiry: A Call to the attention of the Chair regarding a violation of the rules; can be made only by a member of the Board; and can only be made at the time of disagreement. The Chair must rule on the Point of Order.
- d. Point of Information: Used to formally ask for permission to ask another member of the Board a question.
- e. Orders of the day (Agenda): A call to adhere to the agenda (a deviation from the agenda requires agreement from the Board to do so).
- f. Divide the Question: Divides a motion into two or more separate motions (must be able to stand on their own).
- g. Withdraw/Modify Motion: Applies only after Motion is made and Seconded, but not voted on. Mover can accept an amendment (assuming individual Seconding agreed). This is a so-called “friendly amendment”.
- h. Commit/Refer/Recommit to Committee: State the committee to receive the question or resolution; if no committee exists include size of committee desired and method of selecting the members (election or appointment).
- i. Move the Question/Close Debate: Ends debate on the Motion before the Board if the Motion to Close Debate is successful.
- j. Extend Debate: Applies only to the immediately pending question; extends until a certain time or for a certain period of time.
- k. Limit Debate: Closing debate at a certain time, or limiting to a certain period of time.

- l. Postpone to a Certain Time: State the time the motion or agenda item will be resumed.
- m. Lay on the Table: Temporarily suspends further consideration/action on pending question; may be made after motion to close debate has carried or is pending or the original motion is pending.
- n. Take from the Table: Resumes consideration of item previously "laid on the table" if the Motion to take from the table passes.
- o. Reconsider: Motion to Reconsider (re-visit) a previously passed Motion must be made by a member who was present and voted on that Motion.
- p. Appeal Decision of the Chair: Appeal for the Board to decide- must be made before other business is resumed. This Motion is not debatable if relates to violation of rules or order of business.
- q. Suspend the Rules: Allows a violation of the Board's own rules; the object of the suspension must be specified. The decision to Suspend the Rules stands only for the issue at hand and does not permanently alter the rules.

8.5 Non-Motion issues:

- a. No member can speak twice to the same issue until everyone else wishing to speak has spoken to it once.
- b. All remarks must be directed to the Chair. Remarks must be courteous and respectful in language. Personal attacks on a member of the Board are not permitted.
- c. Once a Motion has carried by a majority of the Board, the Chair, regardless of whether he or she voted or not, shall support and advocate to carry out the motion.

Section 9 Applications

9.1 Applications for hearings before the Board shall be made on forms provided by the Planning Department and shall be presented to the planning staff, which shall sign and record the date of receipt. Applications shall be brought before the Board for their determination of completeness within 30 days of delivery to the planning staff.

9.2 At each regular meeting, the planning staff shall present to the Board only applications received at least fifteen days before the date of the meeting and having had proper notice.

9.3 The Board shall disapprove, not accept, or when necessary table, all applications not properly completed or partially completed, if it deems there is not sufficient information to allow the Board to begin deliberation on the matter, in accordance with RSA 676:4,I and Section IV (Procedure) of the Town of Antrim Subdivision and Site Plan Review Regulations. Upon determining that an application is incomplete, the Board shall notify the applicant of the decision in accordance with RSA 676:3, which shall describe the information, procedure, or other requirement necessary for the application to be complete.

Section 10 Agenda Management

10.1 The planning staff shall maintain a file for applications received for Planning Board consideration, kept in sequence of the time at which an application is received in the office.

10.2 Pursuant to RSA 676:4, I (c)(1), an application may only be "accepted" or "not accepted" by the Planning Board at a public meeting held by the Board.

10.3 Requests by an applicant to be placed on an agenda, other than a new application, must be received not less than fifteen days prior to the date of the meeting.

10.4 Information regarding an application pending before the Board must be submitted to the planning staff one week prior to the scheduled meeting at which the information is to be considered, unless waived by a majority vote of the Board.

Section 11 Forms

11.1 All forms prescribed herein and revisions thereof shall be adopted by resolution of the Board and shall become part of these rules of procedure.

Section 12 Notice

12.1 Public Notice of the submission of, and public hearings on, each application shall be given by posting not less than ten (10) days prior to the date fixed for submission and consideration of the application, not including the date of posting or the date of the hearing, at the following locations:

Town Hall Indoor Bulletin Board
Town Hall Outdoor Bulletin Board
US Post Office Bulletin Board
Town web site

12.2 Personal notice shall be made by certified, return receipt mail to the applicant, agents of the applicant, all abutters, and holders of conservation, preservation, or agricultural preservation restrictions in accordance with RSA 676:4, I (d), not less than ten (10) days prior to the date fixed for submission of the application to the Board, not including the date of posting or date of the hearing.

12.3 A second Public Hearing shall be given by posting, as described above, not less than 14 days following the initial hearing.

Section 13 Public Meetings

13.1 The Chair shall call the meeting into session. He shall introduce the Board, request that applicants, abutters and all parties present sign the attendance sheet, and outline the procedures for conducting the public meeting and public hearings. The following protocol is to be followed:

- a. Members of the Board may ask questions through the Chair at any point during the presentation by the applicant or his/ her agent.
- b. Any party to the matter who desires to ask a question of another party to the matter must address the question to the Chair.
- c. Each person who wishes to speak shall state their name, address, and indicate whether they are a party to the matter or an agent or counsel to a party to the matter.

13.2 The following procedure for a public meeting shall be followed:

- a. The Secretary shall be asked to read the public notice

- b. The Secretary shall state the date of publication, notification to abutters and other parties and their response
- c. The Planning Board will receive the submitted application.
- d. The planning staff will report if the application is sufficiently complete to consider acceptance.
- e. The Board shall review the application for completeness.
- f. The Board shall take a roll call vote to accept, not accept, or table the application.
- g. If the application is accepted, the Chair will declare the public hearing on the matter open.
- h. Upon completion of the taking of public input, the Chair shall declare the public hearing closed and reconvene the public meeting for the board to deliberate the merits of the application. Additional public input during the public meeting is permitted only at the discretion of the Chair.
- i. Upon completion of the deliberation, the board shall take a roll call vote to approve, conditionally approve or disapprove the application.

Section 14 Public Hearings

14.1 The conduct of public hearings shall be governed by the following rules:

- a. The Chair shall call the hearing in session.
- b. The applicant will make a presentation of the proposal and take questions from the Board.
- c. The Chair shall ask if there are any abutters who wish to speak in favor of the application.
- d. The Chair shall ask if there are any abutters who wish to speak in opposition to the application.
- e. The Chair shall ask if there are other interested parties who wish to speak either in favor or in opposition to the application.
- f. The Chair shall ask the applicant if he/she wishes to rebut comments of the abutters or other parties.
- g. Upon completion of comments from abutters and other parties, the Chair shall close the public hearing and reconvene the public meeting on the application.
- h. If the hearing is adjourned pending the submission of additional material or information, or the correction of noted deficiencies, all parties with an interest in the application will be allowed to present their comments on the additional material, information or corrections, in person or in writing, at the date, time, and place of the continuation made known at the time of adjournment, at the discretion of the Chair.
- i. If an agent is appearing before the Board and the applicant is not present at the meeting, the Board must have written authorization from the applicant stating that the agent has been appointed to represent the applicant at the hearing. If neither the owner of record, the applicant, nor a properly authorized agent is present at the hearing, the Board may vote to dismiss the application without prejudice, not to be refilled with the Board for a period of six (6) months.
- j. Applications are presented in the order in which they are listed in the public notice for the hearing; however, the Board, in its discretion, may decide by majority vote to hear, and deliberate upon and/or decide applications in a different order.

Section 15 Decisions

15.1 In accordance with RSA 676:4, I (c) (1), upon determination that the application is complete according to the Board's Subdivision and Site Plan Review Regulations, the Board shall act to approve, disapprove, or conditionally approve the application within sixty-five (65) days of the date the application is determined to be complete, subject to extension or waiver as provided in RSA 676:4, I (f). As specified by RSA 676:4, I (f), the Board may apply to the Selectmen for an extension not to exceed an additional ninety (90) days before acting to approve or disapprove an application. The applicant may waive the requirement for Board action within the time periods specified by RSA 676:4.I.(c) and consent to such extension as may be mutually agreeable.

15.2 Notice of the decision will be made available for public inspection within 5 business days after the decision is made, as required in RSA 676:3.

15.3 Written notice of the Board's decision to approve or disapprove the application will be issued to the applicant. If the application is disapproved, the Board shall provide the applicant with written reasons for the disapproval.

Section 16 Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance

16.1 Any proposed amendment to the Zoning Ordinance shall be submitted to the voters in accordance with RSA 675:3.

16.2 At least one public hearing shall be held on the proposed amendment(s) prior to submission to the voters at Town Meeting.

16.3 After the public hearing, the planning board shall, by vote, determine the final form of the amendment(s) to be presented to the town which may include editorial revisions and textual modifications resulting from the proceedings of that hearing.

16.4 An additional public hearing shall be held if the proposal is substantially altered by the planning board after public hearing. (Typographical, grammatical and punctuation corrections shall not be considered to be substantial alterations).

16.5 Subsequent public hearings shall be held at least 14 days after the prior public hearing and with the notice given at least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing as required by RSA 675:7.

Section 17 Records

17.1 The records of the Board shall be kept at the Planning Department office and shall be made available for public inspection at the Town Hall as required by RSA 91-A:4.

17.2 Minutes of all meetings including the names of Board members, persons appearing before the Board and a brief description of the subject matter shall be open to public inspection within 144 hours of the public meeting as required in RSA 91-A:2,II.

Section 18 Joint Meetings and Hearings

18.1 RSA 676:2 provides that the Planning Board may hold joint meetings and hearings with other "Land Use Boards" including the Board of Adjustment, the Historic District Commission, The Conservation Commission, the Zoning Board of Adjustment, and the Building Inspector, and each Board shall have the discretion as to whether or not to hold such joint meeting or hearing.

18.2 Joint business meetings with another local land use board may be held at any time when called jointly by the Chair of the respective boards, or by petition of an applicant seeking a local permit as provided in RSA 676:2.

18.3 A joint public hearing must be a formal public hearing when the subject matter of the hearing is within the responsibilities of the boards convened.

18.4 The Planning Board Chair shall chair all joint meetings and public hearings when the subject matter involves the Planning Board.

18.5 The rules of procedure for joint meetings and hearings, the subject matter of which involves the Planning Board, shall be the same as these rules of procedure except that the order of business shall be as follows:

- a. Call to order by Chair
- b. Introduction of members of both boards by the Chair;
- c. Explanation of reason for joint meeting/hearing by the Chair;
- d. In the case of a public hearing relative to a requested permit or an application for a plat approval, or both, the applicant shall be called to present his proposal.
- e. Public input
- f. Adjournment.

18.6 Each board involved in a joint public hearing shall make its own decision, based upon its criteria for the particular matter, in accordance with RSA 676:2, III.

Section 19 Site Walks

19.1 A "site walk" is defined as a visit by the Board, or a member of the Board, and representatives of Town departments and other Town Boards and Commissions who have an interest in the proposal, to a location which is the subject of an application before the Board, where the visit is in the company of the owner, applicant, and/or their agents or employees and involves going onto the property or visiting areas which are not customarily available for public inspection. (This does not include a view of a site from adjoining public highways or other observations that can be made without entering on the property.)

19.2 When the Board deems it necessary for the adequate consideration of an application; the Board shall request the applicant to allow a site walk by the Board.

19.3 When the Board schedules a site walk for Board membership, it shall be posted as a meeting of the Board in accordance with RSA 91-A, and meeting minutes will be completed.

19.4 Attendance at site walks by members of the general public shall be with the property owner's permission only.

Section 20 Amendment

20.1 These rules of procedure may be amended by a majority vote of the members of the Board provided that such amendment is adopted at a regular meeting of the board. Amendments to the Rules of Procedure shall be placed on file with the Town Clerk.

20.2 These rules of procedure shall be reviewed twice a year to note changes made by the NH Office of Energy and Planning (NH OEP). The Chair shall appoint two members at the first Planning board meeting after Town Meeting to review and report to the Planning Board with any potential revisions.

Section 21 Severability Clause

21.1 If any provision herein shall be held to be invalid, for any reason, by a court of law, such holding shall not invalidate any other provisions contained in these Rules of Procedure.

Section 22 Waiver Clause

22.1 The Planning Board may, by a majority vote of its members present, waive any portion of these Rules of Procedure.