Town Of Durham

Planning Board Minutes

Fire Station Meeting Room, 6:30 pm

July 1, 2026

1. Roll Call & Determination of a Quorum

In attendance: Brian Lanoie (Chair), Juliet Caplinger (Vice Chair), Allan Purinton, Brian Stickney, Sunny Du, Daryn Levesque (Alternate), Calvin Beaumier (Code Enforcement Officer/Road Commissioner), and Fire Chief Rob Tripp. (Town Planner George Thebarge was not present).

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Amendments to the Agenda:

Juliet Caplinger requested that the Board move New Business item 7.d, the request for approval of the Marstaller-Pierce-Cook / Fieldstone Lane maintenance agreement for a proposed private road off Meadow Road, ahead of the Pinkham Brook Solar application review. Board members agreed that the solar application would likely require more time.

Motion made by Juliet Caplinger: To amend the agenda to move item 7.d before the Pinkham Brook Solar application review.
Motion seconded by Allan Purinton: Votes to approve: 5-0

4. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes (June 3, 2026)

Board members reviewed the draft June 3, 2026 minutes. Brian Lanoie noted that the minutes should be corrected to show him, rather than Brian Stickney, as the alternate Planning Board representative for the Interim Economic Development Committee. No other corrections were identified.

Motion made by Juliet Caplinger: To accept the June 3, 2026 minutes as amended.
Motion seconded by Brian Stickney: Votes to approve: 5-0

5. Informational Exchange on Non-Agenda Items:

a. Town officials:

The Board reviewed the Town Planner report included in the packet. Allan Purinton and other Board members commented that the report was thorough and appreciated. Juliet Caplinger noted that the report accurately identified the Planning Board representation for the Economic Development Committee.

b. Residents:

None.

c. Non-Residents:

None.

6. Continuing Business: None

7. New Business:

a. Request for Approval of Road Maintenance Agreement for Extension of Cloutier Rd, Map 12, Lot 26B.

Chairman Lanoie announced that public comment would not be taken on the application.

Calvin Beaumier explained that he had been working with the parties on this and another private way matter for several months. He stated that the physical road/layout issues had been reviewed on his end and that the remaining Planning Board issue was approval of the private road maintenance agreement. He noted that the Town Planner had recommended approval subject to conditions addressing the form and completeness of the agreement.

Chairman Lanoie summarized that the Town Planner had identified nine items requiring clarification before the agreement is executed and recorded. Heather Roy appeared on behalf of the parties and provided authorization to represent the landowners, purchaser, and seller. Ms. Roy explained that the agreement format was new and more detailed than the process she had followed in prior road maintenance agreement reviews. She stated that she had addressed almost all items that could be handled before the sale closing and was prepared to work with the CEO/Road Commissioner to complete the remaining items.

The Board discussed the staff conditions, including completion of the exhibits, clarification of the road corridor, ownership and access rights, and the Map 12, Lot 24C / Thomas Bowie issue. Ms. Roy explained that Mr. Bowie's parcel is served by the road but that he declined to be part of the road maintenance agreement. She stated that he would be removed from Exhibit A as a participating owner and retained in Exhibit C as having declined participation. Board members confirmed that this would mean he would have no voting rights and no maintenance cost obligations under the agreement, and Ms. Roy stated that the other parties were aware of and agreed with that approach.

Motion made by Brian Stickney: To approve the Cloutier Road private road maintenance agreement subject to the nine conditions outlined in the Town Planner notes and approval conditions.
Motion seconded by Allan Purinton: Votes to approve: 5-0

b. Request for Approval of Road Maintenance Agreement for a Proposed Private Road off Meadow Road, Map 3, Lots 34, 34A, & 34B.

Because of the approved agenda amendment, the Board next considered the request for approval of the maintenance agreement for the proposed private road off Meadow Road, identified in the application materials as Fieldstone Lane. Chairman Lanoie announced that public comment would not be taken on the application.

Chairman Lanoie asked Mr. Beaumier whether he had reviewed and approved the road from the construction and layout standpoint. Mr. Beaumier indicated that he had reviewed the matter and that the Board had the Town Planner comments. He also noted that this agreement did not appear to involve an owner opting out in the manner discussed for the Cloutier Road agreement.

Marcus Cook of 257 Meadow Road appeared for the family. He explained that he and his wife, his in-laws, and his brother-in-law were among the parties involved with the private road. Mr. Cook stated that most of the identified items appeared to have been addressed in the submitted agreement, but he would work with the CEO/Road Commissioner to confirm and correct any remaining items. The Board discussed that the Town Planner had identified fifteen conditions to be addressed before final acceptance and recording.

Mr. Cook also informed the Board and Town officials that the applicants had received apparent scam emails using the Town and Town Planner names and requesting payment by wire transfer. The Board thanked him for bringing the matter to the Town's attention.

Motion made by Allan Purinton: To approve the Marstaller-Pierce-Cook / Fieldstone Lane private road maintenance agreement subject to the proposed approval conditions.
Motion seconded by Juliet Caplinger: Votes to approve: 5-0

c. Completeness Review of Pinkham Brook GLC Solar Energy System Conditional Use Application, Map 4 Lot 85.

Chairman Lanoie announced that public comment would not be taken on the application. Juliet Caplinger disclosed that she knows Flycatcher and Dave Brenneman from a past working relationship. She stated that she did not believe the relationship would bias her review of the application. Board members indicated they were comfortable with her continued participation.

The Board discussed the completeness checklist and the distinction between the conditional use application and the related site plan submission. Board members noted that this was the first solar project to come before the Board under the Town's new solar ordinance and that the Board wanted to be thorough in its review.

Jessie Hutchinson of Flycatcher LLC introduced herself and stated that Flycatcher was acting as the agent and environmental consultant for Pinkham Brook GLC Solar, LLC, a company under Norwich Technologies. Jeff Martin of Norwich Technologies introduced Norwich as a vertically integrated solar company based in White River Junction, Vermont, with experience developing, installing, operating, and maintaining solar projects in Maine. Rachel Chicoine of Norwich Technologies participated by phone and introduced herself. Dave Brenneman of Flycatcher also introduced himself and described Flycatcher as a Yarmouth-based land use consulting firm assisting with permitting.

Board members asked whether the application involved one project or more than one project. Ms. Hutchinson clarified that the project is one 600 kW-AC solar project, and that the applicant had submitted both conditional use and site plan materials. Board members also asked about the Fire/public safety package, a signature on the application, the status of Norwich's ownership of the project, equipment specifications, Army Corps permitting, the MaineDOT entrance permit, floodplain review, project taxes, financial capacity, and whether a cost estimate should be provided.

Fire Chief Rob Tripp stated that he had spoken with the applicant team multiple times regarding the emergency access plan and had met with Flycatcher. He stated that the discussions included entrance access, internal access, turnaround, gate access, Knox Box, emergency shutoffs, signage, contacts, water supply, vegetation and brush fire risk, snow removal, pre-incident planning, training, and maintenance obligations. He stated that he had no remaining fire or emergency-action concerns at this stage.

The Board discussed supplemental items that should be provided before final action, including permit status documentation, fire/emergency response materials, floodplain and bridge-crossing documentation, wetland and stream impact information, financial-capacity cost estimate, decommissioning information, clarification of project capacity, final plan revisions, tax information, and equipment specifications.

Motion made by Brian Stickney: To find the Pinkham Brook GLC Solar, LLC conditional use application for a proposed 600 kW-AC ground-mounted solar energy generation facility at 360 Pinkham Brook Road, Map 4 Lot 85, substantially complete for purposes of commencing substantive conditional use review, subject to the applicant providing the supplemental information identified by staff, including permit status documentation, fire/emergency response materials, floodplain and bridge-crossing documentation, wetland/stream impact summary, financial-capacity cost estimate, decommissioning information, clarification of project capacity, final plan revisions, tax information, and equipment specifications before final Board action.
Motion seconded by Allan Purinton: Votes to approve: 5-0

The Board reviewed the calendar and selected July 20, 2026 for the Planning Board site walk and next meeting/public hearing for the Pinkham Brook Solar application.

d. Substantive Review of Pinkham Brook GLC Solar Energy System Conditional Use Application, Map 4, Lot 85.

Following the completeness determination, the Board began an initial substantive review of the Pinkham Brook GLC Solar conditional use application. Ms. Hutchinson, Mr. Martin, and Ms. Chicoine presented the proposed project and responded to Board questions. Ms. Hutchinson stated that the proposed 600 kW-AC ground-mounted solar facility would be located on approximately 11.1 acres of a larger 94-acre parcel at 360 Pinkham Brook Road. She explained that the project includes a gravel access drive from Pinkham Brook Road, a span bridge crossing of Pinkham Brook, security fencing around the solar panels, an equipment pad with transformer and inverter equipment, and overhead and underground utility lines connecting to the interconnection point on Pinkham Brook Road.

The applicant stated that the facility would be remotely operated after construction, with limited operational traffic. Construction traffic would be staged rather than concentrated all at once. The applicant stated that Pinkham Brook Road is a State road and that a MaineDOT entrance permit would be obtained.

Board members and the Code Officer asked questions regarding construction time limits, traffic, pedestrian safety, Fire Department access, the proposed bridge span, the timing of state and federal permits, possible seasonal restrictions including bat season, intensity and scale of the use in a forested/rural area, noise, buffering except along the access road, ownership and financial information, an old utility line shown on the survey, decommissioning, construction entrance maintenance to prevent mud tracking, the difference between the lease area and the project area, a possible CMP easement, project signage, the 100-foot stream setback, the floodplain boundary, the stream crossing, the choice of forested land rather than field area, possible peer review of the bridge/floodplain issue, erosion controls and stockpiles, fencing, CMP approval, the proposed bridge rather than box culverts, road plowing and Fire Department access, the turnaround, invasive species, ownership documentation, vernal pool survey currency, wetland mapping and survey extent, possible unmapped wetlands, possible future expansion, decommissioning bonding, future transfer or sale to another operator, and the need for the project area to be staked or flagged before the site walk.

The applicant responded that the bridge was designed as a span crossing to avoid in-stream work, that engineering review had been performed for the floodplain crossing, that the project location reflected the desire to preserve farmland and reduce public views, that the equipment and decommissioning materials were included in the site plan materials, that the project had CMP approval, that the fence would be approximately eight feet high with wildlife clearance, and that the applicants could stake or flag the access road centerline, bridge location, and solar panel or fence locations before the site walk.

The Board agreed that no final findings or decision would be made at this meeting and that further review should be tabled pending the site walk, site walk summary, public hearing, applicant responses, and preparation of findings and conclusions.

Motion made by Allan Purinton: To table further review of the Pinkham Brook GLC Solar, LLC conditional use application pending the Planning Board site walk, preparation of a site walk summary, public hearing, applicant responses to Board and staff questions, and preparation of findings and conclusions for subsequent Board action.
Motion seconded by Brian Stickney: Votes to approve: 5-0

8. Other Business: None

9. Adjournment

Motion made by Allan Purinton: To adjourn the meeting.
Motion seconded by Juliet Caplinger: Motion carried: 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.