

**Town of Northwood
Planning Board Meeting
December 9, 2021**

DRAFT MINUTES

1 **Cases heard during this meeting:**

2 **CASE: 21-16** Joseph D. Carter

3

4 *Chair Jandebaur called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM*

5

6 **Present:** Chair Tim Jandebaur, Vice Chair Joe McCaffrey, Betty Smith, Lee Baldwin, Duane
7 Curry, and Bob Strobel (Alternate)

8 **Voting Designation:** Chair Tim Jandebaur, Vice Chair Joe McCaffrey, Betty Smith, Lee
9 Baldwin, Duane Curry, and Bob Strobel (Alternate)

10 **Town Staff:** James Burdin, Town Planner, Linda Smith, Land Use Specialist, and Susan
11 Austin, Land Use Assistant.

12 **PUBLIC HEARING: Zoning amendment.**

13 As used in this Ordinance, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

14 Private Campsite: Use of a property not located within a recreational campground or camping
15 park for camping on a seasonal basis between April 15 and October 15. Such use shall be
16 restricted to non-commercial personal use. A private campsite shall consist of one recreational
17 vehicle or temporary structure, or tents or similar equipment in a number reasonable for
18 personal use. A permit is required in accordance with Article V Section B.(5). of this ordinance.

19 The Code Enforcement Officer shall use the following performance criteria to
20 determine if a use is allowed as listed in Table V-1, the Table of Uses, in these
21 regulations. In addition to the criteria listed in Section V(A)(2), the following criteria
22 shall apply to all uses marked with an X in the Column 2 in Table V-1, Table of Uses.

23 (Rev. 3/00) V.B.(5) Private Campsites

24 Purpose. To permit the use of private property for
25 camping while ensuring the adequacy of waste treatment and other facilities
26 necessary for the protection of public health, safety, and general welfare
27 including the protection of water quality. (Rev. 3/22)

28

29 (a) Private Campsite Permitted. A private campsite is permitted on an otherwise, vacant parcel
30 in accordance with the following performance criteria:

31

32 [1] One private campsite per lot is allowed for the period of
33 April 15 to October 15. A private campsite shall consist of 1
34 recreational vehicle or temporary structure, or of tents or
35 similar equipment in a reasonable number for private use.

36

37 [2] A camping permit, issued by the Building Inspector, is
38 required and is valid only during the permitted period of
39 one calendar year. A new application, made on forms
40 available from the Town, shall be made for each calendar
41 year.

42

43 [3] The occupancy of a private campsite for year-round
44 habitation as a residence or dwelling shall be prohibited
45 within the Town of Northwood.

46

47 [4] Placement of any recreational vehicle, temporary structure,
48 or camping equipment on any lot shall conform to the

**Town of Northwood
Planning Board Meeting
December 9, 2021**

DRAFT MINUTES

1 setback requirements for structures contained in Article IV.

2
3 [5] Solid waste and sewerage shall be disposed of in a Sewage
4 Disposal System approved by the NH Department of
5 Environmental Services on site. Any camping vehicle shall
6 be hooked to a Sewage Disposal System approved by the
7 NH Department of Environmental Services on site.

8
9 [6] A parcel owner shall not receive any form of compensation
10 from the use of a private campsite.

11
12 [7] No permanent buildings, including accessory buildings,
13 shall be allowed on private campsites.

14

15 Chair Jandebaur opened the public comment.

16 **Thomas O'Shaughnessy**

17 He asked if he understood that he cannot use my RV on his private property if he wanted to
18 come up for the day? If he wanted to go snowmobiling or ice fishing, he can't use his property?"

19 Chair Jandebaur stated that was correct. That was in the ordinance since 1983.

20 Mr. O'Shaughnessy stated that he pays taxes for the property, taxes for the RV, and he has to
21 pay an additional fee for a permit?

22 Ms. L. Smith stated that there wasn't a fee for this permit, it was just a form to fill out. Chair
23 Jandebaur stated tat the idea of this is that the town has many little properties in town, and
24 they are having some issues, and the town would like to know who is using these properties,
25 etc. That is the idea of the permit, is to know who is coming and going. Obviously, the town is
26 having issues with sewage, and they are looking to the new ordinance to be clear and concise,
27 so that the Code Enforcement Officer can deal with the problems that they are having. Mr.
28 O'Shaughnessy stated winter camping was allowed at public campgrounds. Ms. L. Smith stated
29 that there weren't year-round campgrounds in the Town of Northwood. She stated that the
30 reason that this ordinance is written or rather what the Board is trying to accomplish here is to
31 create a baseline so that there can be enforcement. Right now, it's written so that if someone
32 was there all summer and not hooked up to any septic, then it becomes a health issue. This is
33 just to create a baseline for new occupancy on small loots where there are issues with septic,
34 which is what prompted the idea of putting this in place. Mr. O'Shaughnessy stated that the
35 septic trucks that come in to empty the septic tanks are not much bigger than a regular pick-
36 up truck. Ms. L. Smith stated that a former code enforcement officer had stated that it was
37 okay as long as the property owner could provide proof of a contract with a company that was
38 emptying their septic tanks on a regular basis. What started happening was that people would
39 show proof of a contract, then cancel it. Then they would end up letting their tanks run out
40 into the yard, causing complaints from the neighbors, even though the majority of people are
41 obviously complying with what needs to be done. Mr. O'Shaughnessy stated that he attended
42 tonight's meeting because he thinks if one or three people do something wrong, it shouldn't be
43 at a cost to all the people. Ms. L. Smith stated that over the last year or so, there has been a
44 dramatic increase in people bringing campers on to small lots. It isn't something that is going
45 to go away, and the town needs a way to enforce that the septic is not going out on to the

**Town of Northwood
Planning Board Meeting
December 9, 2021**

DRAFT MINUTES

1 ground. Mr. O'Shaughnessy asked if they were going to differentiate between a tow behind
2 trailer, and a motorized RV. Mr. Strobel stated that he has a tow behind, so he is familiar with
3 the issues and has given feedback to the Board about this. He stated that his points are
4 consistent with Mr. O'Shaughnessy's. But he also agrees that from an enforcement perspective,
5 Ms. L. Smith's examples are very valid. Speaking just for himself, he would not want to spend
6 the money to put in a holding tank to be able to use it year-round, but that being said, he is
7 going to follow the rules that are in place, and have a contract with a pumping station. Mr.
8 O'Shaughnessy stated that he understands, but how many of these old camps, not campers,
9 have a viable septic system in place? Ms. L. Smith stated that when the Board first started this
10 regulation, it was going to be one season only, and you had to have a NHDES septic system.
11 Mr. Strobel was advocating for other levels of camping in different ways, and that's why weekly
12 permits were added. It does require you to notify the town each week that you are going to be
13 there, and if you're only there for a week, it allows you to use your holding tank. But if you are
14 going to be there all summer, for example, you need something more than the holding tank.
15 Mr. O'Shaughnessy stated that he was going to follow the rules, but he originally bought the
16 property with the idea that it was better than going to a campground. Right now, the way the
17 Board is looking at it, he has more rights in a campground than on his own property, if he
18 understands this correctly.

19 **Kelli Wentzel**

20 Ms. Wentzell stated that she wasn't sure what the actual ordinance that is in place now is. She
21 stated that she has a piece of property with enough setback so she can have a trailer, with a
22 state approved septic system that is installed for that purpose. She stated that her concern was
23 with the comment that was made about an accessory unit along with a trailer on the property.
24 She has a garage on the lot in question.

25 Chair Jandebaur stated that a garage would not be allowed.

26 Ms. L. Smith stated that if this is approved, it would be in the zoning ordinance. Ms. Wentzell
27 could apply for a camping permit, and because you don't meet that you could appeal to the
28 Zoning Board.

29 Ms. Wentzell stated that the town has had multiple building inspectors. Because of that, she
30 has been told multiple different things as she's gone through this process. They tried to build a
31 house; they were denied. They had two state approved septic systems. She sat down with two
32 building inspectors and spent \$20,000 installing a septic system. She put a well in next to the
33 garage. She stated there is still 20 feet of setback with any properties around. It is a brand-new
34 septic system and they are telling her now, when 6 months ago she was told by two different
35 people that she could spend that money and put the septic system in, and now they are taking
36 her right away to put a trailer in. Or, she has to go to the ZBA and ask for forgiveness because
37 she built a garage 5 years ago. The garage that she built was on an empty lot, and this town
38 approved them to spend \$35,000 to put a garage on that property. You are not allowed to put
39 an accessory building on a property without a primary residence. The town allowed it, and then
40 two months later the town isn't letting her put a trailer there. Or she has to go through the ZBA
41 and go through that whole process again.

42 Ms. L. Smith stated that tonight's hearing is not about trying to understand the specifics of
43 anyone's particular lot. The reason the rules about stand alone accessory structures was added
44 into the regulation was because part of the problem that they are dealing with is that people

**Town of Northwood
Planning Board Meeting
December 9, 2021**

DRAFT MINUTES

1 are adding sheds to their properties and then all of the sudden they turn into bunk houses
2 “rustic camps” that people are living in all summer.

3 Ms. Wentzell stated that she suffers because the town does not hire full time building
4 inspectors. They only work a few hours a day. It’s always been that way. Instead of following up
5 on complaints and charging homeowners fees for breaking these ordinances, you are going to
6 take away people’s rights?

7 Ms. L. Smith stated that no one was saying that she can’t use her property.

8 Ms. Wentzell stated that they were telling her she needed to go in front of the ZBA, which then
9 means that they could deny her appeal.

10 Ms. L. Smith stated that they don’t need to get into the specifics of her cases, but she was very
11 familiar with what Ms. Wentzell has gone through.

12 **Letter from the public**

13 *Thank you for speaking with me today. As you suggested I have compiled a few of my concerns*
14 *that can be shared at the public hearing this evening.*

15
16 *We are property owners on Jenness Pond. We have owned this double lot for 26 years and have*
17 *a camper that has been in place for more than 10 years. The camper is hooked to a state*
18 *approved septic system and a town approved well. We have 2 small sheds that have been*
19 *permitted and on which we pay taxes. DESPITE complying with the stipulations outlined in this*
20 *proposed "campsite zoning" change, we have the following concerns:*

21
22 *1) we would like assurances that these changes will not negatively impact the continued use of*
23 *our property as we have enjoyed for the last 26 years.*

24
25 *2) we would like assurances that the use of our property will not be restricted to the April 15th to*
26 *October 15th time frame that this ordinance assigns.*

27
28 *3) the two small sheds on the property are existing, permitted, and taxed, therefore we would like*
29 *assurances that they remain in place despite this zoning ordinance that allows for only one.*

30
31 *4) our well and septic system has been state and town approved (for a two bedroom home)*
32 *therefore we would like assurances that there will be no need for a yearly permit or inspection.*

33
34 *We hope that responsible property owners with campers are allowed to continue the enjoyment of*
35 *their private property.*

36
37 *It is our hope that offending parties be held responsible but not by passing this ordinance as*
38 *written.*

39
40 *Sincerely,*
41 *Janet Bliss*

42 Chair Jandebaur closed the public hearing

43 Discussion ensued about making changes to the ordinance.

**Town of Northwood
Planning Board Meeting
December 9, 2021**

DRAFT MINUTES

1 **Ms. B. Smith made a motion to make the changes to the Camp Lots Zoning Ordinance as**
2 **discussed. Ms. Baldwin seconded. Motion carried 6/0.**

3 **Ms. B. Smith made a motion to hold a public hearing on January 6, 2022 at 6:30. Ms.**
4 **Baldwin seconded. Motion carried 6/0.**

5 **Continued Case:**

6 **CASE: 21-16** Joseph D. Carter, Route 4 and Harmony Road Map 222 Lot 54. The
7 applicant proposes to build 2 office buildings, and is requesting a Minimal Impact
8 Review.

9
10 Mr. Burdin stated that they have received a request to continue this case.

11
12 **Mr. Strobel made a motion to continue Case 21-16 until January 6, 2022. Mr.**
13 **McCaffrey seconded. Motion carried 6/0.**
14

15 **Adjournment**

16 **Ms. B. Smith made a motion to adjourn at 9:20 pm. Selectman Kreider seconded. Motion**
17 **carried 6/0.**

18 ***Respectfully Submitted,***
19 ***Land Use Staff***