

**Ashland Planning Board
Thursday, March 6, 2025
"Booster Club" Building, 99 Main Street
6:30 PM
Meeting Minutes**

CALL TO ORDER: Kendall Hughes, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT Kendall Hughes, Tricia Farris, Chris Janosa, Mardean Badger, Paula Hancock

TOWN ATTORNEY Laura Spector–Morgan

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Linda Barnes, Donna Locurto, Bethany Franz, Andy Fitch

OTHERS PRESENT: Jane Sawyer, Land Use Assistant

CALL TO ORDER

Kendall Hughes called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. and called the roll.

MINUTES

Board members reviewed the February 20 meeting minutes. Trisha Farris moved to approve, which was seconded by Mardean Badger. Chris Janosa Abstained.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Update on the Mill Pond application

- **Updates:**
 - On **2/4/2025**, a revised waiver request letter was resubmitted.
 - On **3/5/2025**, the Town Manager received duplicate plans and conducting a 30-day review, which will end on **3/7/2025**.
 - **Kara LaSalle**, Real Estate Development Director, reported that an impact study was requested, to be completed within two weeks of the next meeting. Efforts are being made to connect with **Fred Welch** and other department heads.

2. Item #1: Road Waiver Request

A waiver request related to the road width on Mill Pond Lane was discussed.

- A waiver was requested. The amount of traffic was initially miscalculated, and the traffic calculations have since been recalculated.
- Mill Pond Road is currently a 20' paved road, with a suggested 18' distance from the center of the road to the center of the ditch. Slope grades were also discussed.
- Mill Pond Development has proposed a closed drainage system with catch basins to reroute water to the river. The system would include gravel wetlands designed to clean the water before releasing it back into the river. It was noted that the **Department of Environmental Services (DES)** would also prefer this drainage system.
- It was confirmed that no closed road sections are proposed, as these are typically used in urban environments with housing situated more closely together.

45 **Kendall Hughes:** The Planning Board would like to hear from the engineer regarding the drainage
46 system.

47 **Kevin Leonard (Mill Pond Development):** Brown Engineering reviewed the drainage system and had
48 no further comments. He welcomed another round of reviews. Brown Engineering is in support of the
49 waiver.

50 **Kendall Hughes:** The Planning Board would like to hear comments from Brown Engineering on the
51 waiver request.

52 **Kevin Leonard:** Requested that the Planning Board vote on the waiver request today. He mentioned
53 that if the waiver is not approved, a redesign will be needed. Brown Engineering produced a letter
54 stating that this is a reasonable request for the Planning Board to consider.

55 **Laura Spector-Morgan (Town Attorney):** The Planning Board is not prepared to vote tonight and is
56 requesting input from Brown Engineering before proceeding.

57 **Kevin Leonard:** Raised a point of confusion regarding road requirements (Article 3) in subdivision
58 regulations. He explained that the waiver request pertains to only one of two separate regulations.

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60 **3. Item #2: Brown Engineering Review - Site Regulations**

61 Mill Pond Development is proposing a future lot with multiple buildings, which led to a discussion
62 regarding site regulations.

- 63 • **Brown Engineering Review #2.4:** Sidewalks will be provided on the remaining tract, running
64 through the site and out to Route 3. It was believed that the site plan regulations have been met
65 with the proposed sidewalks.

66 **Kevin Leonard:** Sought clarification on why the Planning Board believes the current plans do not meet
67 the regulation regarding sidewalks.

68 **Laura Spector-Morgan (Town Attorney):** The Planning Board will review this issue and get back to
69 Mill Pond Development.

70 **Kendall Hughes:** The entire Planning Board has not yet had the opportunity to review the document.

71 **Kevin Leonard:** Mentioned that these concerns were previously raised to the Planning Board.

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73 **4. Item #3: Cul-de-Sac Design Regulations**

74 A modified cul-de-sac design was presented to meet regulations.

- 75 • The design includes a **50-foot access easement**, addressing concerns about large equipment
76 (such as cranes or buses) needing to turn around. The cul-de-sac could either be fully paved or
77 feature a hammerhead (T) design, which would allow a firetruck or bus to turn around. This
78 design meets the **Fire Department's** requirements.

79 **Kendall Hughes:** Requested input from the Fire Chief. Inquired whether powerlines will be
80 underground and if they will run under the road or another location.

81 **Kevin Leonard:** Confirmed that the powerlines will run underground on Mill Pond Lane and into the
82 development. However, he stated that they would follow whatever the electric company requests.

83 **Kendall Hughes:** Asked if the road design will accommodate the underground powerlines.

84 **Kevin Leonard:** Yes, the design already accommodates this.

85 **Mardeen Badger:** Requested further explanation on the hammerhead design.

86 **Kevin Leonard:** The hammerhead will have a sideways T-shape with 60-foot legs in each direction,
87 allowing a bus or firetruck to swing into one direction and turn around in the other.

88 **Kendall Hughes:** Asked if there is sufficient space for snow removal.

89 **Kevin Leonard:** The right-of-way will be adjusted appropriately for snow removal. The design meets
90 regulations as currently drawn but can be adjusted if needed.

91 **Kevin Leonard:** The dam operator has requested that existing overhead utilities near the dam not be
92 disrupted. Therefore, all utilities will be placed underground.

93 **Kevin Leonard:** Welcomed additional comments or questions.

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95 **5. Public Comments**

96 **Kendall Hughes** asked for further public comments.

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- **Don Stoppe (Ashland Taxpayer):**

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- Asked if a waiver for the road width requires a variable.

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- Inquired whether the Planning Board will address this waiver in April.

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- Expressed concerns about children accessing the pond and the snowmobile trail, which is not listed in the plans.

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- **Kendall Hughes:** Confirmed that the waiver will be addressed in April and suggested sending an email to **Jane Sawyer** at the Land Use and Planning Board to inquire about the snowmobile trail.

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- **Kara LaSalle:** Clarified that the current property owners do not allow snowmobiles. The trail was relocated without the owner's permission.

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- **Don Stoppe:** Mentioned that the snowmobile trail is a state corridor.

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- **Harry Ashland Electric:** Inquired if the conduit will be under the road and if it must be vaulted.

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- **Kevin Leonard:** Confirmed the conduit will be under the sidewalk, not the road. He is willing to comply with any requirements.

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- **Sarah Stoppe (Ashland Taxpayer):** Read a letter expressing concerns about potential negative effects of the project, including environmental hazards.

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- **Bob Letourneau (69 Thompson Street):** Raised concerns about previous issues on the roads and asked whether these had been addressed in the plans.

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- **Yvonne Downs (6 Mill Pond Lane):**

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- Reported that a recent survey showed her home is 4 feet from the road, with two sheds near the road.

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- She expressed concerns about environmental hazards and the impact of the construction on her property.

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- **Yvonne Downs:** Stated that the current ordinances on the Ashland Town website would likely be violated, as there are no setbacks for access to her property, and she believes there is not enough room for a sidewalk in this area.

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- **Sara Stoppe:**

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- Asked whether phase two of the project includes a soil pollution study.

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- **Kendall Hughes:** Confirmed that the study is ongoing but not yet complete.

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- **Sara Stoppe:** Voiced concerns about pollution, chemicals, and the potential for children to access the area.

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- **Kara LaSalle:** Assured that the proposed plan would clean up the site and cover any hazardous materials, preventing access by children.

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- **Matt Angel (8 Memory Lane):**

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- Mentioned that the deed previously stated that no digging should occur due to overlaid waste and expressed concerns about unsophisticated buyers who might not be aware of these issues.

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- **Kara LaSalle:** Clarified that there is an activity use restriction in the deed.

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- **Harry (Electric Company):** Suggested that soil contamination would occur regardless of any overlay because the land was previously used as a paper mill, which may contain hazardous materials like mercury.
 - **Laura Spector-Morgan (Town Attorney):** Clarified that the town can only regulate what is included in the documents. The **Department of Environmental Services (DES)** will also be involved. However, the Planning Board cannot directly address these concerns.
 - **Rich Grinley (14 Mill Pond Lane):** Expressed concern that sections of the 20-foot road on Mill Pond Lane do not meet the required width and asked for clarification on how sidewalks will be added in these areas.
 - **Kevin Leonard:** Explained that the road is intentionally designed to hug the north side of the river, with a 50-foot wide strip of land for road expansion and proper drainage to minimize environmental impact.
 - **Rich Grinley:** Disagreed with the proposed road width and stated that he has lived in the area for 30 years and knows the existing road width.
 - **Kendall Hughes:** Announced that the Planning Board would conduct a site walk to review these issues.
 - **Kevin Leonard:** Requested that the site walk be scheduled before the next meeting.
 - **Kendall Hughes:** Agreed to schedule the site walk for **Sunday, March 23rd at 12:00 PM,** meeting at the entrance to Mill Pond Road.
 - **Matt Angel:** Inquired about how **Environmental Services** would be involved in reviewing these concerns.
 - **Kendall Hughes:** Confirmed that **Environmental Services** is already involved.
 - **Mrs. Angel (Ashland Taxpayer):** Asked if the **Environmental Services** reports are publicly accessible.
 - **Kara LaSalle:** Confirmed that all environmental reports have been submitted and are available on the **DES** website.
 - **Mrs. Angel:** Asked how the public could express concerns.
 - **Kendall Hughes:** Suggested emailing **DES** with any concerns.
 - **Matt Angel:** Asked for clarification on how school buses would turn around within the development, particularly concerning students with IEPs.
 - **Kevin Leonard:** Explained that the road system is designed to accommodate trucks, and there is a loop for buses to turn around, though it may require backing up.
 - **Matt Angel:** Raised concerns about the safety of buses backing up.
 - **Kevin Leonard:** Confirmed that the system would require buses to back up but will be designed safely.
 - **Kendall Hughes:** Noted that the schools will assess this issue. The situation is similar to **Ledgewood Estates.**

6. Concerns Regarding Restrictions on the Property

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- **Mr. Welch (Ashland Town Manager):** Reported that the state and federal government have requested all plans for the project. They are concerned about old restrictions on the property, including two cemeteries and possible unrecorded bodies. There is also a history of hazardous materials on the site.
 - **Kendall Hughes:** Requested that the plans be sent to the Planning Board.
 - **Mr. Welch:** Suggested that no digging be done until **DES** investigates the site further.

- 180 • **Mardean Badger:** Asked whether the plans Mr. Welch shared with **Kevin Leonard** would be
181 provided to the Planning Board.
182 ○ **Kendall Hughes:** Agreed.
183 • **Jane Sawyer:** Raised a concern about whether the height of Mill Pond could be raised according
184 to the deed.
185 ○ **Kevin Leonard:** Confirmed there is ongoing discussion with **Mario of Brown**
186 **Engineering** and that the deed states the pond's elevation cannot exceed 3.3 feet relative
187 to the foundation.
188 • **Kendall Hughes:** Asked for clarification regarding the elevation and the road's foundation.
189 ○ **Kevin Leonard:** Assumed a datum of 500 feet above sea level and clarified that the
190 surveyors would provide a professional opinion after further data collection.
191 • **Jane Sawyer:** Asked if the road would become a public street.
192 ○ **Kevin Leonard:** Confirmed that Mill Pond has been designated as a public street.
193 • **Laura Spector-Morgan (Town Attorney):** Clarified that Mill Pond is not yet a public street,
194 and a waiver would be needed for the acceptance process.
195 • **Don Stoppe:** Suggested that a Level 2 site assessment be completed before any plans or waivers
196 are approved, especially regarding the narrow right-of-way.
197 • **Kendall Hughes:** Acknowledged the suggestion.
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198 199 7. Final Public Comments

- 200 • **Tony Guyette:** Asked **Kevin Leonard** whether Mill Pond Associates had made him aware of a
201 survey completed by the property owners, which reports dumps on the property.
202 ○ **Kevin Leonard:** Stated that he had not read the survey.
203 • **Tony:** Asked who the owner of Mill Pond is and expressed concern about the extent of the
204 contamination.
205 ○ **Laura Spector-Morgan:** Stated that this concern is outside the scope of the Planning
206 Board's responsibilities.
207 • **Mr. Marsh:** Mentioned a report from **Jurkowski Engineering** about possible issues on the
208 property, which was submitted to the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen. He suggested that
209 the board review this report to better understand the situation.
210 • **Kevin Leonard:** Confirmed that the **Jurkowski report** was included in the documents provided
211 to the Planning Board.
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212 213 8. Adjournment and Next Meeting

- 214 • **Kendall Hughes:** Proposed the next meeting date for **April 3rd at 6:00 PM.**
215 ○ **Mardean Badger** motioned to adjourn, seconded by **Paula Hancock.** The motion passed
216 unanimously.
217 • **Laura Spector-Morgan (Town Attorney):** Clarified that the site walk will allow members of
218 the public to attend but not speak. Public members can write down questions to bring to the
219 meeting on **April 3rd.**
220 • **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at **7:40 PM.**

221 222 Meeting Adjournment:

223 The next meeting will be held on March 20th at Collins Street. During this session, the planning
224 board will review plans and aims to address any outstanding questions. The zoning board will also
225 discuss elections in March, and the master plan will be a topic of conversation.

226 **Jane Sawyer** requested an additional \$10,000 from escrow to cover Brown’s services. The invoice
227 has been sent, and she confirmed that the check is on its way.

228 **Kendall Hughes** mentioned that Brown had already received the payment, and Jane will follow up
229 on this.

230 Regarding the roadway, **Jane Sawyer** stated there are restrictions on its use other than for
231 recreational purposes. Attorneys are currently looking into this.

232 **Mardean Badger** pointed out that the restriction dates were unclear and would like to see the
233 specific dates. She believes they are outdated.

234 **Jane Sawyer** confirmed that the restrictions will remain in place.

235 **Kendall Hughes** added that, similar to the beach area, these restrictions date back to the 1950s. If
236 possible, we’ll gather the relevant dates. Jane will follow up with McCormick from Wicked Skating.

237 **Public Comment:**

238 Frank from Mill Pond Habitat asked about the requirements for posting the meeting minutes.

239 **Kendall Hughes** explained that a draft version will be posted, and addressed the challenges the
240 board has faced in getting the minutes out promptly.

241 A motion to adjourn was made by Trisha and seconded by Chris. The meeting is now adjourned.

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