

**CANDIA PLANNING BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 6th, 2025  
UNAPPROVED MINUTES**

PB Members Present: Tim D’Arcy, Chairman; Mark Chalbeck, Vice Chairman; Brien Brock, BOS Representative; Kevin Coughlin; Linda Carroll; David Labbe

PB Members Absent: Judi Lindsey, Excused; Michael Santa, Alt.

T. D’Arcy called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30PM, followed immediately by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**New Business:**

- **Case #25-006 (MAJOR Site Plan):**

**Applicant:** A-1 Ventures Group, LLC, 43 Lawson Farm Road, Londonderry, NH 03053;

**Owner(s):** A-1 Ventures Group, LLC, 43 Lawson Farm Road, Londonderry, NH 03053;

**Property Location:** Old Candia Rd. Candia, NH 03034, Map 410 Lots 160, 161, & 162;

**Intent:** *Install 1,040 solar panels with a gravel access road and supporting infrastructure.*

Doug McGuire, engineer of record for the plan and representing A-1 Ventures Group, LLC, describes the project site as a relatively undeveloped piece of land across from the Candia First Stoppe. He notes the owners have explored various development options over a long period, and he's been involved for nearly a decade, even before the current ownership, when the land was a paintball facility. He describes the property, noting an upland area with wetland fingers, a previously permitted connection, and a flat area with development potential. He confirms the intent to use a well-maintained existing access and road to the back of the property, leaving the existing access as is. The wetland fingers are inconveniently located within desirable development areas, which significantly impacts the property's layout. He also notes that there is an existing wetland crossing with a culvert on the property from its previous use. While alternative routes through existing woods were considered, they were deemed unsuitable due to grade issues. The proposed route will therefore be a new path, starting from the back of the property. He details the existing gravel area and access, noting that the new gravel road will begin after the crossing, utilizing the existing access and continuing through the gravel area. This new route will utilize a pre-existing pad but will require crossing a wetland finger. McGuire clarifies that while all wetlands are valuable, these wetland fingers are primarily drainage related. He describes the proposed route, explaining that it avoids a wetland crossing by going around a wetland that doesn't have a complete path. Concerns are raised regarding the weight of solar panels and the capacity of the wetlands crossing to support the weight of trucks transporting them. The discussion focuses on ensuring the structural integrity of the wetlands crossing to handle the heavy transport vehicles carrying the solar panels. Doug McGuire confirms that weight considerations are accounted for, and the pipe crossing has sufficient cover and is structurally sound.

Mr. McGuire and Mr. Sobol describe the solar field, which consists of 1,040 panels arranged at an angle to optimize sunlight. Minor grading was done to smooth the area, and supporting infrastructure includes a small detention pond system. The discussion centers on the specifics of the panel height and angle. It's clarified that the panels will be mounted on a racking system, using ground screws, with a low side height of approximately 3-4 feet and a high side of 10-12 feet, creating an angle of 30-35 degrees. Natural screening from existing trees will be utilized, and the combination of the trees and natural slope of the site will make the array barely visible from the road.

Questions arise regarding the electrical connection process for the project. The plan involves installing a pole on the property, running wires underground to a transformer located on a precast concrete pad. A waiver was previously obtained for an aerial connection, but this plan utilizes an underground connection from a pole placed directly on the property, meeting Eversource's preference for a single pole drop. The connection will run from an existing aerial line to the new pole, then underground to the transformer on the site.

The Board turns attention to Stantec's review and list of 57 outstanding issues. Each one is addressed, and many of them are described as small errors or easy fixes. The relevant ones are as follows:

The discussion begins with reviewing approvals needed from the fire and police departments regarding fire safety and site access. A letter from the building inspector and fire chief is confirmed. The need for police department approval is questioned and deemed unnecessary due to the site's location on a state road with existing permitted access and low traffic impact. Concerns about winter plowing are raised but ultimately dismissed as not being a requirement.

A special use permit for wetland impact is required and must be noted on the plans. Doug McGuire confirms the need for a special use permit granted by the Board for wetland crossings for access. He emphasizes the necessity of this crossing point due to the terrain and offers to provide more details at a later time. A state wetland crossing permit will also be necessary. Mr. McGuire confirms they are working with wetland scientist Bruce Gilday. The question arises whether he will have the relevant permits before the next meeting, and Mr. McGuire believes this is unlikely. A note will be added to the plans stating that the permits are pending.

It is necessary to contact the Department of Transportation for clarification on whether a driveway permit update is needed given the infrequent use of the access road. The current higher traffic due to trailers is noted, but a pre-existing driveway permit is in place. Concerns are raised about potential permit requirements for road repaving, even without changes to road use. The recommendation is for Mr. McGuire to either obtain a letter confirming the existing permit's

suitability for the new use or secure a new permit for the changed use. An email or similar correspondence from the relevant authority confirming their approval is deemed appropriate.

Concerns are raised regarding proposed drainage infrastructure directing stormwater towards the historic rail bed, potentially impacting nearby properties. Written correspondence from the State approving the concentrated flow is requested. Mr. McGuire expresses concern that the basin's water volume is being overestimated due to an inaccurate comparison to other projects, such as parking lots. He argues that the existing impervious materials don't create a continuous sheet, unlike a parking lot, and that the soil will absorb a significant amount of water. The first basin will drain into the second, and absorption will occur throughout the system. He discusses water management strategies, explaining how concentrating water flow into pipes and catch basins, then directing it to a pond, can lead to efficient water usage. A water drainage solution is discussed. During rain events, accumulated water will be discharged at a mitigated rate, but initially it goes to the property line. Redirecting the water to a nearby wetland system, a natural collection area, is proposed. This solution addresses the regular overflow. The emergency overflow will likely remain as is. Doug McGuire indicates that water generally flows along the rail bed and under a cattle crossing. He explains that significant issues are unlikely due to the absorption capacity of the land and the relatively high elevation of the rail bed. He notes that moving the water in another direction would utilize natural grade drops.

The Chair announces the board will now hear the waiver requests below:

1. **Section 8.06 (K) & 8.06 (L): Pipe Material & Stormwater Impoundment Adjacent to Roadway:** “To permit use of HDPE pipe in lieu of RCP and stormwater impoundment within 25 feet of a roadway. This application proposes a gravel access drive to provide access to a proposed solar panel field. The gravel access drive is not a public road and has no right-of-way. The intent of this regulation is likely more for public roadways and not site driveways. The solar field access drive is primarily for maintenance purposes and not intended for public use. The HDPE pipe sections are proposed in the detention pond areas and will not be subjected to vehicle loads.”

K. Coughlin: **Motion** to grant waivers. B. Brock: **Second**. All in favor. **Motion passed**.

2. **Section 4.03 (N), 4.05 (C), & Sight Plan Checklist III (23): Landscaping, Test Pits, & Sight Distance:** “The proposed project is not a traditional site plan since there is very limited infrastructure, and the project is not intended to be open to the public. Landscaping would not be appropriate as it would not be visible to the public. The drainage on site consists of basic detention ponds which do not require test pit verification as typically required for treatment best management practices. The proposed solar panel field is not generating runoff which would require the treatment associated with typical site

construction (parking lots, turf lawns, etc). Access to the project is through an existing permitted gravel driveway associated with previous development on the property. The new gravel access driveway to the solar panel field comes off the existing development. Since this proposal will not generate any noticeable new traffic, sight distance profiles are not necessary in this particular case.”

K. Coughlin: **Motion** to grant waivers. M. Chalbeck: **Second**. All in favor. **Motion passed**.

3. **Section 8.06 (Q): Minimum Pipe Diameter:** To permit use of 12-inch diameter outlet culvert instead of the required 15-inch diameter. A 12-inch culvert will be sufficient for this specific, low-impact project. The property owner agrees to increase the pipe size if deemed necessary in the future.

B. Brock: **Motion** to grant waiver. M. Chalbeck: **Second**. All in favor. **Motion passed**.

4. **Section 8.06 (I) & Section 8.06 (W):** To permit detention structures and drainage system to be designed in accordance with NHDES Alteration of Terrain criteria. The applicant argues this is excessive overdesign for this project, citing the low-impact nature of the solar panel installation and the use of a conservative impervious cover calculation. Mr. McGuire states that there is more of a water problem on the property currently than there will be when the project is finished.

M. Chalbeck: **Motion** to grant waivers. L. Carroll: **Second**. All in favor. **Motion passed**.

The Chair states it is now time to vote on the completeness of the application.

M. Chalbeck: **Motion** to accept application as complete. B. Brock: **Second**. All in favor. **Motion passed**.

At 8:00pm T. D’Arcy opens the floor for the public hearing. None of the attendees have questions or concerns. The public hearing closes at 8:00pm

The board decides to approve the Major Site Plan with conditions, stating it is unnecessary to have the applicant come back for another hearing in two weeks. The conditions are as follows:

**Conditions of Approval:**

1. Electrical service to property will be to Eversource requirements.
2. Letter from Department of Transportation stating the existing driveway is acceptable.
3. Correction of all typographical errors, addition of missing information, and required technical changes discussed and approved by Stantec on final plan.

4. All required state and other permits to be approved and provided to the Town and listed on the plan coversheet.

K. Coughlin: **Motion** to grant the special use permit and approve the plans with conditions discussed. M. Chalbeck: **Second**. All in favor. **Motion passed**.

The board moves to the next item on the agenda.

### **New Business:**

- **Informational Hearing**

**Applicant:** James Logan, 273 Currier Road, Candia, NH 03034; **Owner(s):** London Bridge South, Inc., 273 Currier Road, Candia, NH 03034; **Property Location:** 438, 466, & 476 High Street, Candia, NH 03034 Map 405 Lots 28, 29, & 30; **Intent:** *To develop the property into a 48-unit elderly housing condominium.*

Chad Brannon, a civil engineer representing London Bridge South Inc., presents a conceptual plan for a 48-unit elderly housing condominium on High Street. James Logan, the applicant, is also present. The project, named "Farms of Candia," aims to provide housing while preserving the rural character and natural features of the property. A key goal is to place approximately 70% of the land into permanent conservation. The development seeks to incorporate an agricultural element, respecting the history of the land and existing buildings and creating a unique community. Mr. Brannon notes that the project has evolved since a previous presentation to the board, primarily due to Mr. Logan acquiring additional surrounding properties. Significant time has been spent evaluating the land to create a plan that respects the rural character and natural features. The project aims to provide much-needed housing while conserving 70% of the land. The development's layout preserves the rural character and natural features, incorporating an agricultural dimension and community amenities. The goal is to create a development compatible with the existing rural community, attracting residents who desire that lifestyle. The name "Farms of Candia" reflects the historical agricultural component of the existing properties. The proposed layout positions homes farther back from High Street, preserving the rural setting and buffering adjacent properties. The existing residence at 466 High Street will be utilized as a clubhouse, with amenities like a pool and accessory buildings. Mr. Logan highlights unique community features, including a horse paddock and the potential for residents to bring their horses. He also mentions the possibility of renting out the second floor of the clubhouse as a short-term rental for residents' families. The board discusses the feasibility and regulatory implications of this idea.

Mr. Brannon also discusses zoning relief the project has already received for design standards, including two-story homes and reduced roadway widths. He also mentions an approved request for a variance to minimize lighting, aiming to preserve the rural setting and stargazing

opportunities. He and the applicant expect to need further variances and waivers, along with wetland permits from the State in order to move forward.

The board discusses the project's potential impact on town infrastructure, including fire and ambulance services. The Fire Chief states that the impact on the Town's ambulance service will not be significant. T. D'Arcy agrees, stating that this development seems to have the lowest impact on infrastructure compared to other recent developments in town. However, the Board acknowledges the need to consider the potential strain on infrastructure. Overall, the Board praises the idea and Mr. Brannon and Mr. Logan are encouraged to move forward and come back with their formal application.

### **Other Business:**

- **Town Planning:**

- Discussion of Town Impact Fees with Nate Miller of Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission

Mr. Miller provides an update on Town impact fees, confirming that the next steps involve updating the school and solid waste impact fees. The goal is to have a meeting to review a draft of the new fees in the fall, with an effective date of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026.

He also notes the need to update the town's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and coordinate with the school and assessing departments for information regarding education needs and historic grants. The CIP, last updated in March 2024, will be a key resource for developing the impact fees. While the CIP is relatively recent, it is recommended to update it regularly, ideally within two years, to ensure accuracy. The necessary forms and processes are already in place, allowing for potential independent updates with assistance from town staff as needed. The board discusses the timeline for adopting the new impact fees, targeting an effective date in March 2026.

- Revision and adoption of Planning Board fees and policies to reflect rising third-party costs.

The Board agrees to continue this discussion to the next meeting due to time constraints.

- **Approval of Minutes: 7.18.25**

L. Carroll addresses the need to change "adjacent" to "nearby" on line 71, as the property mentioned is not actually adjacent, it is across the street on a different road. T. D'Arcy states a typographical error on line 77: Route 27 is typed as 127.

K. Coughlin: **Motion** to approve the minutes of 7.18.25 as amended. L. Carroll: **Second**. D. Labbe: **Abstains**. All else in favor. **Motion passed**.

The Chair entertains a motion to adjourn.

D. Labbe: **Motion** to adjourn. L. Carroll: **Second**. All in favor. **Motion passed**. The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Megan Ross

Land Use Coordinator

cc: file