

**CANDIA PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 4, 2026
APPROVED MINUTES**

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

PB Members Absent: Michael Santa, Alt.

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

New Business:

Old Business:

Other Business:

- Presentation on GIS Mapping Services by Tim Fountain, Vice President of CAI Technologies

The board is introduced to Tim Fountain, VP and owner of CAI Technologies, a New Hampshire-based GIS mapping company. Their main office is in Littleton, New Hampshire, with approximately 30 full-time staff across the United States, serving about 750 cities, towns, and counties. They currently provide the Town parcel mapping and maintenance services, updating tax maps based on property line changes, subdivisions, boundary line adjustments, and mergers. Today, Mr. Fountain will be demonstrating the company’s GIS services for the Town to consider, as the current GIS system, from Stantec, is not fulfilling expectations.

The AXIS GIS platform is a subscription-based software as a service (SAAS) model that renews annually. There is no software to install; it's accessed via a URL. Pricing is based on population, with Candia falling into the lowest tier (20,000 or under). The platform runs on Amazon Web Services Cloud, where GIS content and layers are stored. The system is designed to start with assessor's parcel data and can expand to include other municipal systems like permitting, asset management, and calls for service. The platform is responsive and accessible on any browser, tablet, or mobile device without needing a separate app. Layers such as water tables and poorly drained soils can also be added to aid in planning and development assessments. CAI Technologies hosts town-specific data like parcel data, zoning maps, and infrastructure data on their servers, while consuming external data layers like contours, flood zones from FEMA, and soil data.

Mr. Fountain proceeds with a demonstration showcasing the AXIS GIS platform. He displays layers such as zoning maps, contour data, flood zones, and imagery, demonstrating how to turn layers on and off and access their legends. The platform allows for measurements, such as

calculating the distance from a building to a flood zone. The discussion also covers the ability to create custom "themes" or templates for different departments or committees, pre-loading specific layers for their use. A search function is demonstrated, allowing users to find properties by owner name, street address, or parcel ID, and to access the Avitar property record card. The capability to perform buffer queries and generate abutter's lists with mailing labels is also shown.

The conversation shifts to the benefits of the GIS system for the Town and its staff. It is highlighted that the system would not change existing property data but would provide tools to make it easier to access. Mr. Fountain clarifies that while the platform would use the Town's current data, the maintenance of that data is crucial. He explains that lot changes, once recorded, should be sent to CAI for updating. There should be a process for annual changes to flow from the Planning Board to the assessor's office, then to CAI for map updates. He clarifies that his responsibility is updating, but it is the Town's responsibility to send him the changes. M. Chalbeck discusses the possibility of including cemetery data. Mr. Fountain confirms that if the Town sends him the data and it aligns with the mapping, it can be incorporated. M. Chalbeck confirms that cemetery data is available online for genealogy purposes, allowing users to see who is in each cemetery, though not down to the plot level.

The discussion shifts to the spatial alignment of the data, specifically how well property lines overlay with what is on the earth. Mr. Fountain explains that the accuracy of the GIS data is dependent on what is currently available. Properties that do not have updated surveys will be skewed. He illustrates a spatial alignment issue where a house appears outside the property line. Once a completed survey is received for a property, that specific property will be plotted correctly. He emphasizes that the results are only as good as the property line data.

Mr. Fountain highlights the extensive functionality of the GIS system, noting its usefulness for Planning Boards, citing Hampton, New Hampshire as an example. He demonstrates printing a quick map, showing an 8.5x11 and 11x17 option for the public. He displays a setback map, explaining that whatever layers are turned on will appear in the print, along with a legend. He also shows how to set the scale for the map print. The system will clear up many questions when applicants come in. The share URL functionality is mentioned, allowing users to send a link to a specific view in their browser. He then showcases various base maps available, including USGS and Google Maps, and discusses the value of overlaying property line data on them. He also demonstrates historical aerial imagery from different years, allowing users to see how a property or intersection looked in the past.

The discussion confirms that the GIS system can display layers such as wetlands, aquifers, bedrock geology, cell towers, conservation areas, contours, land cover, and DOT roads, provided the data is available. Mr. Fountain explains that the buffer feature, demonstrated on parcels, also works on other layers. He gives an example of buffering areas within a certain distance of a wetland to generate a list for sending notices. He recalls a map from Southern New Hampshire

Planning showing aquifer and water table data, suggesting such public data can be incorporated. While other maps contain this information, they are not easily accessible, unlike the proposed GIS system.

The cost structure for the GIS system is outlined: a \$3,000 setup fee and a \$3,000 annual hosting and support fee. The first year would cost \$6,000, with subsequent years costing \$3,000 annually. He clarifies that this base cost covers the data processor and assessor's office functionality for ownership and land record data. He explains that add-on capabilities, such as department views (themes), are included in the setup. More advanced tools for self-editing, data security, running link error lists, large format printing, or downloading layers are considered add-ons and incur additional costs. It is confirmed that all functionalities demonstrated tonight are included. The board members discuss potential savings for the Town in terms of hours and efficiency, and express excitement about the new GIS system, noting that it will significantly improve their work. They discuss the ease of access via tablets or phones and the potential for increased efficiency.

A formal proposal with functionalities, screenshots, and a one-page agreement that includes setup and annual hosting, with an auto-renew clause and cancellation option, will be sent to the Town once a decision has been made. Additionally, holding a public meeting is suggested to showcase the new GIS system, offering a full demonstration of all tools and capabilities to the town representatives before public release, akin to a training workshop.

L. Carroll: **Motion** to accept CAI Technologies for our GIS System. J. Lindsey: **Second**. All in favor. **Motion passed**.

- Alternate Member Application Interview

John Adams introduces himself, stating he has been a Candia resident for over 40 years and has worked in the architectural field for over 30 years. He expresses his interest in the Town's progress, aesthetics, and his desire to participate and contribute to the Planning Board. He highlights his experience in public safety design, including police and fire stations, and his work with various towns. He reviews his resume, confirming his primary experience is in civic projects. The board members discuss his qualifications and express their positive reception to his application. A motion is made and seconded to accept John Adams as an alternate member of the planning board, with all members voting in favor. T. D'Arcy offers a cautionary note about the Board's chemistry and asks Mr. Adams to respect their process, emphasizing the importance of respecting differing opinions on the board, even when disagreements arise. Having diverse opinions is a strength of the Board. Mr. Adams acknowledges this, stating he will express his opinions based on his experience, understanding of Town regulations, and merits. He reiterates that his primary contribution to the Board will be focusing on the Town's aesthetics and upholding its rural character. He reflects on how the Town has changed since he was in seventh grade and believes the direction is positive for the Town's benefit.

K. Coughlin: **Motion** to accept John Adams as an alternate member of the Candia Planning Board. L. Carroll: **Second**. All in favor. **Motion passed**.

- Review of Draft Regulatory Audit from Southern NH Planning Commission

T. D'Arcy expresses disappointment that the HOP grant, which is behind schedule, has yet to secure an engineering review of the ordinances and regulations. He explains that he had signed an agreement with Stantec for this review, but they never did anything and terminated the agreement. He plans to approach Steve Keach because Southern Hampshire Planning is looking at ordinances to make them more development-friendly, but he believes a technical perspective is also needed to identify inconsistencies, lax areas, and outdated standards, especially since they were created gradually over time.

The auditor found many aspects of the Town's ordinances to be well done, such as the three-acre zoning in residential districts. The Board discusses the auditor's mention of "definition gaps" in the ordinances and the need to address townhouses, live-work units, and cottage clusters, though concerns are expressed that these might not pass if proposed as amendments due to negative public reaction to terms like "cluster." The auditor also mentioned that the Town's road specification of a 60-foot right-of-way and 22-foot road is the same regardless of the number of houses, making it more expensive for smaller developments. However, the Town and Road Agent likely don't want new roads built to a lower standard due to maintenance and plowing concerns, as well as the potential for further development in the future. The discussion then shifts to the 30,000-gallon cistern requirement. It is clarified that the water comes from surface water, not groundwater, and the fire department is responsible for maintaining and filling it. The threshold affects the feasibility of smaller multifamily developments, as a 10-house development would have the same requirement as a 27-house development. However, the Board generally defers to the Fire Chief's recommendations. In recent cases, the Chief preferred enhancing existing fire retention ponds over cisterns.

Next, the Board members discuss the density formulas that showcase limitations on development. Tier two notes that the Town has a maximum of six units per structure for multifamily housing and limits one building per lot. This means even on a 20-acre lot, only six units can be built. An interesting statistic, mentioned twice in the audit, states that 38% of existing homes in Candia are on lots under three acres, with 25% under two acres and 11% under one acre, particularly in East Candia. The auditor's point is that the three-acre zoning doesn't align with Candia's historical development, which included mills and small lots for workers in the village. He acknowledges that current regulations require setbacks, which don't fit older developments. The auditor also repeatedly suggests allowing medium-density housing with conservation land around it. The town lacks housing diversity, and current zoning requires expensive houses on large lots. The cost of land, septic, and wells makes it difficult to build affordable housing. T. D'Arcy agrees with the idea of condensed developments with protected

lands around them, allowing for wildlife habitats. There is much support for this concept, emphasizing the need to protect natural resources like vernal pools.

It is mentioned that Hooksett has a zoning area specifically for medium-density housing, which could be considered for Candia to concentrate such housing in certain areas rather than scattered throughout the town. The Board discusses such development, viewing it as a great idea, but expresses concerns about current construction costs making affordable housing for young buyers very difficult, citing examples of 55+ townhouses selling for \$600,000-\$700,000. It is difficult for contractors to build for low-income housing due to costs. A main concern is the younger generations of Candia families being forced to move out of town because of the lack of starter homes in the area. Ultimately, any changes must be voted on by the townspeople.

D. Labbe mentions a potential tiny home development in Chester, similar to one in Dover, that seems promising. K. Coughlin also recounts tiny homes in Connecticut that were affordable and attractive, though he doubts the feasibility of an ordinance allowing such developments to be passed in Candia. He believes the Town needs to educate residents and listen to their desires regarding housing options. T. D'Arcy plans to reach out to Southern NH Planning to see what can be done to initiate outreach sessions with the community. J. Lindsey shares her experience visiting Dover tiny homes, describing it as a well-done project on an eight-acre parcel where 20 houses were built on four acres, leaving four acres undeveloped. These houses are mainly for nurses, teachers, and professionals, fostering a sense of community. She also mentions that the project involved talking to abutters and there were strict rules for residents, with non-compliant individuals being asked to leave. The development had no negative impact on the school system. She also highlights the efficient construction method, where every piece of board was precisely cut to avoid waste.

Lastly, the Board discusses "manufactured homes", suggesting the need for a new term or definition to avoid negative reactions from residents. It is clarified that modern manufactured homes differ significantly from those when the "manufactured housing zone" was created in the 1980s, originally intended for trailer parks. Today's manufactured houses are built in factories with advanced tools and are full-sized, comparable to stick-built houses, and can even have foundations and multiple stories. These factory-built homes are cheaper due to efficient production and reduced build time, which aligns with the goal of introducing affordable housing in Candia.

- Approval of Minutes 2.4.26

D. Labbe: **Motion** to approve the minutes of 2.4.26 as presented. J. Lindsey: **Second**. All in favor. **Motion passed.**

J. Lindsey: **Motion** to adjourn. K. Coughlin: **Second**. All in favor. **Motion passed.** The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:23pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Megan Ross

Land Use Coordinator

cc: file