

Town of Harpersfield Planning Board

Minutes: **June 25, 2025**

Present: W. Keller, F. Ciulla, A. Gallagher, D. Cole and D. Darling. Absent D. King
Also present: L. Page, N. Brower, Sue Fortier and Chris Ferla

D. Darling called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The minutes of the April 30, 2025 meeting were approved as presented on a motion by F. Ciulla with a second by W. Keller. Motion carried 5-0

D. Darling said there is nothing to report on the Boyle Excavating project.

N. Brower reported on his recent training session, which is an update on the county's online mapping tool, known as COVIT. There are all sorts of tools and he conducted a one-hour training on how to utilize its features. He said it can be viewed from any computer. The planning board could have it at meeting to bring up a property for discussion. The next training is scheduled for September and will be on the 239 referrals under municipal law. He said people attended both the afternoon and the evening session.

W. Keller again brought up the issue of groundwater recharge and that it is an issue from the standpoint of natural resources. Groundwater is essential for fish and he said solar panels are not impervious. He asked if he could go to the state department to say it is an issue in regard to planning. He asked if he could have someone go to the Department of State to have the state Department of Environmental Conservation look at groundwater. It is a DOS issue because we can't get this resolved. N. Brower said he would look into it from the county level.

Sue Fortier was present to read a statement about the impact of construction and the physical damage to her property from the Weaver Road solar project. She will email her statement for the record.

She said she realizes the planning board has no enforcement authority, but wanted them to be aware of the impact the solar project has had on her property. She cited flooding issues and noise issues.

A. Gallagher said the planning board is restricted in what they can consider which leaves them between a rock and a hard place.

Chris Ferla referred to the information she provide the planning board and said much of their decision is based on conditions that will not exist for some time. She also asked why the planning board would not want to establish rules for set backs and other things that would help to reduce the impacts. Her research found areas where the planning board could go to the town board to establish regulations to avoid some of the things that have happened to Sue Fortier. If you approached the town board they may consider regulations.

S. Fortier said that somewhere along the line we have to fix this.

A. Gallagher questioned what the relationship is with the town board and what they can ask them to do. N. Brower said the feedback from the two women is valuable for the board and it helps them to know and learn about the plans and what actually happened. If there are ways to create laws to help minimize impacts the conversation should continue.

C. Ferla said it is one of the things she brought up in the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and that they were looking at runoff from a seeded and established meadow. She said she provided an example that this is exactly what happens, because it takes years to get the ground to an established growth state and that's why it recently flooded. It is construction and they dug everything up and cut down all the trees. There are problems that are not even considered.

D. Darling said that as a planning board they considered everything. D. Cole said they would take in her considerations and these are things to be considered on other projects.

N. Brower said in terms of the environmental review, these conditions are only temporary.

On a motion by F. Ciulla, with a second by W. Keller, the meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Page,
Recording secretary