

Meeting of the Strafford Commissioners & EDD
Friday, August 15, 2025 9:00 – 10:30 AM
Hybrid Meeting (Conference Rm 1A, SRPC Office & via Zoom)

1. Introductions

At 9:07 A.M., Chair Paul Rasmussen called the meeting to order and asked for introductions.

Commissioners present: Paul Rasmussen, Durham; Peter Nelson, Newmarket; Joe Boudreau, Rochester; Barbara Holstein, Rochester; Steve Stencil, Wakefield; Michael Bobinsky, Somersworth; Mark Richardson, Somersworth; Rick Healy; Sarah Wrightsman, Newmarket; Don Manter, Northwood; Kate Buzard, Middleton; Kevin Sullivan, Rochester; Rick Healy, Rochester; Lee Howlett, Milton; Chris Kinville, Brookfield

Staff present: Michael Polizzotti, Jen Czysz, Colin Lentz,

Commissioners attending on Zoom: Glen Griswold, Nottingham; Lindsay Williams, Dover; Steve Brown, Dover;

Staff attending on Zoom: Kyle Pimental, Lisa Murphy, Mark Davie, Natalie Gemma, Blair Haney, Megan Taylor-Fetter

Zoom Guests: Emma Berger, NHDES, Bill Courtemanche, Madbury Planning Board

2. Community Updates

Kevin Sullivan reported that the construction of the new school in Rochester is going smoothly and in budget and will open in a couple of weeks.

P. Rasmussen Durham's Riverwoods assisted living residence is doing a 3% expansion which will result in a total of 55 units.

P. Nelson stated that there has been a squabble in Newington over river front access where the private property owners are blocking access. Peter asked if any other communities have had a similar experience and if and how it was resolved. Glen Griswold stated that he has had some experience as a surveyor and offered that Peter reach out to him.

M. Richardson reported that the owners of a building along the river have agreed to open their portion of the riverwalk to the public. The issue of maintenance and liability are considerations.

M. Bobinsky stated that the apartment building downtown is moving along and is the tallest building in Somersworth at 5 stories. The same developer is in the early stages of



proposing another project next door. There has been a transformation of that part of the City.

All the hardware is on Blackwater Road. Waiting on connections with Eversource to tie in the system to the grid. The City will benefit; there is a power producing agreement in place.

3. NHDES Wetlands Regulations Presentation

Emma Berger, Supervisor of the Inland Wetland Permitting Section at the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES), delivered an interactive presentation on what the NHDES Wetland Permitting Section regulates, the permitting process, wetland permit types, required submittal information and an overview of the application review process.

The session emphasized strategies to avoid unnecessary delays and support reviewers in making timely decisions. Berger offered tips for applicants, focusing on thorough project planning, accurate application preparation, and clear documentation.

Emma discussed examples of why we protect wetlands including flood control, wildlife habitat preservation, water quality improvement, and economic value. A wetland permit is required if a project involves excavation, filling, dredging, or construction on wetland surfaces. A permit is not required if a project does not disturb the soil. Emma discussed the wetland types including freshwater emergent wetlands, forested shrub wetlands, ponds, lakes, and riverine systems.

She outlined the full permitting workflow—from initial project planning through application submittal and review—and shared real-world examples of avoidance and minimization techniques used in successful projects. She also detailed the forms, requirements, and best practices for preparing a complete and compliant wetland permit application.

4. Discussion

M. Polizzotti presented on the Stafford EDD. He stated that it was originally designated by the U.S. Economic Development Administration in 2015 and encompasses all Strafford County communities and Brookfield and Wakefield in Carroll County.

The Responsibilities are:

- Maintain a CEDS
- Foster economic development efforts and engagement in the region
- Build regional partnership
- Regionally-focused economic development planning

M. Polizzotti outlined the EDD structure:

- The Board of Directors lead the EDD and vote on CEDS adoption
- Strategy Committee provides insights and input that shape the CEDS
- Regional engagement efforts to promote economic development and collaboration and inform CEDS.



M. Polizzotti explained that in order to better serve the region, formalizing both the Board of Directors and the Strategy Committee into the SRPC Bylaws and setting updated expectations for membership, voting, and other key responsibilities is necessary.

Mike Polizzotti asked for feedback from the Commissioners and asked who should be included in the EDD Board of Directors or its advisory Strategy Committee? Keep it broad "large employer" or "representative of manufacturing." Any other associated edits to the bylaws you would suggest? Commissioners were asked to forward their comments to his email.

5. Other Business

September Commissioner Field Trip

Blair Haney stated that the September Field Trip is planned to be a workshop with Commissioners and UNH Planning Students.

As part of our Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) with Southern Maine RPC and along with the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, we want to showcase amendments to zoning, changes to subdivision regulations, or other municipal policy/program changes that address housing affordability. We are working to help address needed housing for the shipyard's labor force. SRPC is home to a large share of employees at the base.

SRPC staff is looking for a few Commissioner volunteers to present recent housing solutions from their communities. Presentations will be 5 minutes each and center on "What is your housing challenge? What was the solution?"

Sarah Wrightsman, Don Manter, Paul Rasmissen, and Rick Healy volunteered to present at the September workshop.

6. Citizens Forum

J. Czysz stated that the FY2026 Commissioner Handbook is complete. Printed copies are available and the handbook can also be viewed on the SRPC website.

Colin provided a brief update of the State's Transportation Ten Year Plan. NHDOT has released information on the draft 10-year plan. The draft 10-year includes significant cuts to individual projects and programs that will be debated by GACIT, the Governor, and the Legislature through June/July 2026.

NHDOT will be posting the schedule of GACIT hearings soon. It is very important for municipal staff and residents to attend the hearings and advocate for local projects and regional priorities. NHDOT included the scoring results of TAP projects from early 2025. The projects from Durham and Farmington were recommended by NHDOT for funding. The TAP project list can be reviewed and modified by GACIT members.



All Ten Year Plans are available on DOTs website: <https://www.dot.nh.gov/projects-plans-and-programs/ten-year-plan>

7. Adjourn

At 10:35 A.M. M. Bobinsky motioned to adjourn, seconded by S. Wrightsman. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 10:35 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Megan Taylor-Fetter
Office Coordinator
SRPC



RULES OF PROCEDURE

*Strafford Regional Planning Commission
Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization, and
Strafford Economic Development District*

Meeting Etiquette

Be present at the scheduled start of the meeting.

Be respectful of the views of others.

Ensure that only one person talks at a time. Raising your hand to be recognized by the chair or facilitator is good practice.

Do not interrupt others or start talking before someone finishes.

Do not engage in cross talk.

Avoid individual discussions in small groups during the meeting. When one person speaks, others should listen.

Active participation is encouraged from all members.

When speaking, participants should adhere to topics of discussion directly related to agenda items.

When speaking, individuals should be brief and concise when speaking.

The Strafford Regional Planning Commission & Metropolitan Planning Organization holds both public meetings and public hearings.

For public meetings, guests are welcome to observe, but should follow proper meeting etiquette allowing the meeting to proceed uninterrupted. Members of the public who wish to be involved and heard should use venues such as Citizen Forum, Public Hearings, Public Comment Periods, outreach events, seminars, workshops, listening sessions, etc.

