

Starks Planning Board Meeting & Public Hearing January 7, 2026

Present: Gwen Hilton, Ken Lust, Claire Nelson, Joe Hartigan, Tiffany Bellefleur, Edward Hebert, Phil Cole

Guests: Matt Streeter, Landis Hudson (*Maine Rivers*), Joe Hayden, Ernie Hilton, Byrne Wright, (*Selectboard*), Maggie Wright, Paul Frederic, Betty Frederic, Andrew Sanville, Joe Kresge, George Hand, George Zink

Chair Gwen Hilton called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and determined that adequate public notice was given both of the meeting and the Public Hearing, a quorum was present, and no conflicts of interest nor bias were reported.

Old Business:

The minutes of the December 3, 2025 meeting were approved by unanimous consent.

New Business:

Moratorium Ordinance on Battery Energy Storage Systems and amendments to the existing Subdivision Ordinance

Gwen opened the Public Hearing seeking comments or feedback on proposed amendments to the current Subdivision Ordinance and on the approval of a Moratorium Ordinance on Battery Storage Systems (BESS).

Gwen summarized the rationale for the proposed initiatives and sought public comments. Hearing none, the Public Hearing was closed.

Upon a motion and a second to approve the Ordinances as presented and to move them to the Select Board for final approval, the motion carried.

Maine Rivers application for a Shoreland Zoning Permit for the removal of the Lemon Stream dam

As the Board began its review of the application, an issue emerged with the proposed construction schedule (July 2027- September 2027). Section 16, F of the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance states that *"Permits will expire one year from the date of issuance if a substantial start is not made in construction..."*). Given the proposed construction schedule, Maine Rivers would clearly be unable to comply with those requirements. Moreover, once an application is deemed complete, the Planning Board has 35 days to either approve or deny the application, yet another requirement that poses issues for the proposed applicant.

After some discussion as to whether to proceed with the presentation or to table the matter, it was agreed to continue the review given the number of interested community members in attendance.

The Board made several suggestions/recommendations including checking on possible deed restrictions or covenants as well as providing additional information on the possible impact to wildlife and vegetation. The current plan is for Maine Rivers to submit an updated application sometime in the fall.

Adjourn: 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Claire Nelson, Secretary