

**TOWN OF EXETER
PLANNING BOARD
NOWAK ROOM
10 FRONT STREET
JUNE 26, 2025
DRAFT MINUTES
7:00 PM**

I. PRELIMINARIES:

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT BY ROLL CALL: Chair Langdon Plumer, John Grueter, Gwen English, Jen Martel, Nancy Belanger, Select Board Representative, Alternate Marty Kennedy, Alternate Dean Hubbard and Alternate Sam MacLeod.

STAFF PRESENT:

II. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Plumer called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, introduced the members, and activated Alternates Marty Kennedy and Dean Hubbard.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

1. The application of Foss Motors for design review of a proposal to demolish the existing building located at 133 Portsmouth Avenue and construct a new 36,500 square foot car dealership with expanded parking, vehicle display area and associated site improvements.
C-2, Highway Commercial zoning district
Tax Map Parcels #52-110, #52-111 and #52-112-2
PB Case #25-4.

Chair Plumer read the public hearing notice out loud. He noted the application was for an informal design review pursuant to NH RSA 676:4. He read out loud the notes from the Town Planner dated June 20th which detailed that abutters were notified, and plans and supporting documents dated May 21, 2025 were in the meeting packet of June 12th and the application had been continued until this evening. Mr. Sharples recommended the Board vote at the end of the design review or table for more information.

Bruce Scammon of Emmanuel Engineering indicated he was present with Tim Foss, Attorney Tim Phoenix and Doug Remore of Jewett Construction. He showed the location of the existing dealership next to Hannaford. He noted that last spring they proposed a new building and parking in the wooded area. He showed the existing building and noted there are 12 service bays and due to growth would like to expand and build the new dealership next to the building. It would be three stories with entrance off Sylvania Road, with a full basement and service bays in the back, increasing from 12 bays to 30. He noted that they started at the Conservation Commission first. Mr. Scammon described how they would need to fill the rear area and described the wetlands, manmade wetlands and swale. He described the three lots, 110, 111 and 112-2 and culvert that runs across the property to the dam at the water works

43 which goes to the Squamscott River. He described the proposed large sand filter to treat the water and
44 described the flow of water. He noted the existing pipe would be extended a couple hundred feet. He
45 described the easement for the abutter's detention pond. He noted that Alteration of Terrain permit
46 will be needed and described the million-dollar sand filter as 21' deep with large stones, sand layer and
47 more large stones with pipe that is perforated in the rock areas. He explained the manhole covers, catch
48 basins and pipes and the location under the parking area which would be traditional asphalt. He noted
49 NH DES may require an underground denitrification chamber. He pointed out the retaining wall close to
50 the property line and proposed driveway out back, storage and service parking. He noted there would
51 be a lot line adjustment or elimination because the building would be on both lots.

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53 Mr. Grueter asked about maintenance of the sand filter and Mr. Scammon indicated it would not need
54 any, only the pretreatment area.

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56 Mr. Grueter asked who was supposed to maintain the area out back where the drainage easement is
57 and Mr. Scammon indicated there is probably an agreement and he will find it for him.

58
59 Ms. Belanger asked about nitrogen removal with the sand filter alone and if there is a denitrification
60 chamber. Mr. Scammon noted both would improve levels of nitrogen, but the added chamber would
61 help more.

62
63 Ms. Martel asked if other locations had been explored that wouldn't require the wetland to be filled in.
64 Mr. Scammon noted Lot 110 doesn't have the space. Ms. Martel recommended asking for variances for
65 setbacks. Ms. Martel asked about landscaping and recommended the plan be robust because of all the
66 vegetation proposed to be removed. Ms. Martel noted it would be helpful to see the proposed parking
67 plan. Mr. Hubbard agreed and questioned how much parking was across the street. Mr. McLeod asked
68 the number of cars for sale on the site, the amount of inventory. Mr. Scammon noted the lower lot
69 approved was for 145 parking spots. They are looking at 400 in the upper lot, so 545 between the two.
70 There would be 60 bays, 45-50 employees and 40 parking spaces for customers. Ms. Martel asked for
71 drawings of what the building would look like.

72
73 Ms. Belanger asked about added traffic to GTE Road and where employees are parking now. She noted
74 the driveway is still two-way traffic and there would be concerns about backing out. Mr. Scammon
75 noted a traffic study may be needed.

76
77 Mr. Kennedy asked about the amount of parking and whether it was required or for their needs. Mr.
78 Scammon noted the service bays, clients and employees. Mr. Kennedy asked if it was more than
79 required and he indicated he did not have that answer yet.

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81 Mr. Grueter asked about snow storage and Mr. Scammon pointed out existing storage and noted there
82 could be some out back or it could be removed from the site.

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84 Ms. English noted she agreed with Ms. Martel and questioned if the building couldn't be closer to the
85 road. She agreed with Ms. Martel about landscaping and noted a lot of features troubled her. She asked
86 if they considered solar panels.

Mr. Grueter noted when he lived in Florida dealerships would have parking garages in the building, which is a plus in New England.

Ms. Kennedy also questioned whether the building could be slid closer to Portsmouth Avenue and Mr. Scammon indicated they would not have enough display space in front.

Mr. Hubbard asked about customer parking. Mr. Scammon noted 15 spaces may be moved.

Mr. Hubbard asked if the top of the proposed building would be one story above existing and Mr. Scammon noted the existing building already has two stories and it would probably be a little taller.

Mr. Grueter motioned that the design review process for Foss Motors, Planning Board Case #24-4 was concluded and to instruct the Town Planner to notify the applicant in writing according to NH RSA 676:4. Ms. Belanger seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

April 24, 2025

Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Hubbard recommended edits.

Ms. English motioned to approve the April 24, 2025 minutes , as noted. Mr. Grueter seconded the motion. Ms. Belanger and Mr. Kennedy abstained. The motion passed 5-0-1.

June 12, 2025 - ***Tabled***

V. OTHER BUSINESS

- Election of Officers

Ms. Martel motioned to re-elect John Grueter as Clerk of the Planning Board. Ms. English seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Chair Plumer noted that he talked to Pete Cameron and he indicated he will be stepping down. He noted the Town Planner will be on leave for several weeks.

- Master Plan Discussion
- Field Modifications

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131 • Bond and/or Letter of Credit Reductions and Release

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133 **VI. TOWN PLANNER’S ITEMS**

134 **VII. CHAIRPERSON’S ITEMS**

135 **VIII. PB REPRESENTATIVE’S REPORT ON “OTHER COMMITTEE ACTIVITY”**

136 **IX. ADJOURN**

137 *Ms. Belanger motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 PM. Mr. Hubbard seconded the*
138 *motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.*

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140 Respectfully submitted.

141 Daniel Hoijer,

142 Recording Secretary (Via Exeter TV)