

**City of Hallowell
Planning Board Meeting
City Council Chamber
February 18, 2026
6:00 pm**

1. Call to Order

Ms. Feinstein called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

2. Roll Call / Quorum

Ms. Feinstein took the roll call and established a quorum.

Present: Judith Feinstein (Chair), Richard Bostwick, Darryl Brown, Andrew Landry, Richard Seymour, Keith Taylor
Melanie Weston, Community Planner; *Sarah Moore, Code Enforcement Officer; Daniel Kelley, Deputy City Clerk

Excused: Lisa Rigoulot

3. Public Comments (The Board has agreed to limit the time allotted to Public Comment to fifteen minutes.)

None.

4. Approval of Minutes of the January 21, 2026 Planning Board Meeting

Motion to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2026 meeting as presented.

Moved: Taylor

Seconded: Brown

Unanimously approved.

5. Demolition Application for GE Holdings LLC, Rob Pontau, property manager, 35 Water Street, Map 4 Lot 33

* Ms. Moore arrived.

Rob Pontau represented Eric Mowatt, owner of GE Holdings LLC, in presenting an application for demolition of an existing building and construction of a new building.

Ms. Moore informed the Board that she has brought this building to the City Council for condemnation as a dangerous building. The structure is unfit for human occupancy and is one step away from falling in.

Mr. Pontau noted that their heavy equipment is on site for the demolition and asked if there were any reasons they couldn't start construction right away. Mr. Landry observed that the new construction doesn't require Planning Board approval.

Ms. Feinstein asked the Board to address the application for demolition.

Mr. Seymour pointed out that Ms. Moore's summary letter refers to landmark property. Ms. Moore explained that it is one of the older homes in the city but there is no historical documentation.

Mr. Taylor asked what §8-508 says; Ms. Moore provided the text. Ms. Weston informed the Board that the property is listed in the 2021 update to CARMA as being built in 1870 but not eligible for the Historic Register.

Mr. Seymour observed that the Board has performed its due consideration but doesn't see any reason to preserve the building. Ms. Feinstein expressed concern that if it were a hundred feet down the road the Board

would be concerned. Mr. Taylor suggested the Board approve demolition and move on to the new construction.

*Eric Mowatt arrived.

Motion to find the application complete.

Moved: Landry

Seconded: Brown

There was a brief discussion about finding the application complete even though the Board had not addressed the new construction that is part of the application. Mr. Brown withdrew his second and Mr. Landry withdrew his motion.

Mr. Landry asked Ms. Moore what approvals were necessary outside the Historic District; she told him she has received plans which satisfy the requirements and are ready for approval.

Mr. Mowatt stressed that the property is not in the Historic District and that he had done his due diligence.

Mr. Landry commented that all the Board needs to do is approve the demolition, and the CEO will issue the building permit.

Mr. Mowatt added that the solar panels, if they add them, will be on the back side of the roof, not on the street side. Mr. Seymour suggested moving the new building back from the street; Mr. Mowatt said the location is approximately where the existing building is.

Motion to find the application for demolition complete.

Moved: Landry

Seconded: Seymour

Unanimously approved.

Motion to approve the application and grant a demolition permit.

Moved: Landry

Seconded: Brown

Unanimously approved.

6. Certificate of Appropriateness for New Construction in the Historic District for Neil Anderson, 22 Pleasant Street, Map 6 Lot 34

Neil Anderson, 21 Pleasant Street, presented an application for new construction at 22 Pleasant Street. He explained that the building will be a small house intended for his mother-in-law. It is a pre-generated plan.

Mr. Landry asked if they would use stained wood for siding as shown in the application; Mr. Anderson said they would, though they may or may not include the stonework.

Mr. Taylor asked what the standards for new construction in the Historic District were; Ms. Feinstein said the goal is not to duplicate but to make sure it is compatible, that it fits. Ms. Weston added that it must meet all the standards – scale, mass, height, etc. Mr. Bostwick observed that the supplied photo is nice, but he is not convinced that it is compatible with the neighborhood; the material is quite different. Mr. Landry suggested that since it is a fairly wide lot it won't really conflict.

Mr. Seymour asked if there were pictures of the garage; Mr. Anderson provided a picture and noted that the garage is detached. Mr. Seymour asked if the house would be only 25' wide; Mr. Anderson said they plan to increase the size by a few feet, 5 to 7% larger with two more windows on the southern side. He said the site plan reflects the larger size. Mr. Seymour asked if the roof would be metal; Mr. Anderson said they would be okay with either metal or shingles and noted that the neighbor on the south has a partial metal roof.

Mr. Landry asked if the house would be any closer to the Queen Anne house on the north; Mr. Anderson said the location is more or less where the former house was and added that they are trying not to decrease the back yard. To accomplish this the garage will be narrower and not set as far back as in the picture. It will be a single-car garage. They plan on a full-height basement for the house.

Mr. Seymour expressed concern with the looseness of the plan; Mr. Anderson said he would be happy to come back to the Board with any changes.

Mr. Bostwick said he did not feel that the roofline of the garage is compatible with what's there now; Mr. Anderson explained that the garage is being fitted into a small space and that changes the roofline. He thinks of it as a mono-slant garage roof with an attached shed. He added that there will be one window facing the street and one facing the house. Mr. Taylor asked if the shed could be placed behind the garage; Mr. Anderson said it couldn't because the buried drainage line with setbacks restricts the space available.

There was discussion regarding what the Board would like to see. Mr. Seymour requested information about the size and dimensions, the windows and doors, the siding, and the roofing. Mr. Anderson said he has gone as far as possible without incurring major expense and asked if an architect's plan was necessary. Ms. Weston said that plans from Hammond Lumber's design service would be fine.

Mr. Brown said he felt the design of the garage/shed is questionable, especially the windows in the shed.

Motion to table the application.

Moved: Landry

Seconded: Brown

Unanimously approved.

7. Minor Subdivision Application for Northbridge Granite Hill Estates, Map 19 Lots 47A, B, C, D, E & G

Andrew Johnston, a consultant at ARC, represented Northbridge Granite Hill Estates in presenting an application for a minor subdivision. He explained that this subdivision is an administrative lot line adjustment to clean up lot configurations. They are requesting waivers to standards specifically relevant for development, such as water supply, traffic assessment, stormwater management plan, etc.

Mr. Johnston used a mounted copy of the plan to show the proposed changes. He explained that the changes are being made to facilitate possible future development, appraisal, and property management. Mr. Seymour asked if future development was planned; Mr. Johnston said there was no immediate plan, but the original plan was for additional development.

Ms. Weston pointed out that in the Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions Lot 7 was described as not being part of the Retirement Community, but it is now being enlarged with land from Lot 5. Mr. Johnston explained that Lot 5 was reserved for future planning in the original subdivision and not part of the Retirement Community.

Ms. Feinstein asked if there was a disadvantage to not altering the lot lines; Mr. Johnston said it would make appraisal more difficult, for example, the lot surrounding the water tower lot. He explained that there is no net gain in the number of parcels, just reconfiguration by creating two parcels and eliminating two parcels.

Ms. Feinstein invited members of the public to speak.

Tony St. Peter, 351 Winthrop Street, an abutter, told the Board that he was not concerned with what is being proposed but by how abutters were notified. He said he and his wife received their notice on the morning of the meeting. There was no map or detailed information in the notice. He maintained it was a poor attempt at satisfying the legal requirements for presenting and noticing the meeting. He repeated that he sees no issues with the proposal and asked the city to pay more attention to notice requirements. He added that the Public should be able to see the presentation as well as the Board can.

Ms. Feinstein expressed appreciation for Mr. St. Peter's addressing the process. She also noted concern about the length of time the Postal Service took to deliver the notice.

Mr. St. Peter noted that the letter says the Planning Board would hold a Public Hearing.

Pamela St. Peter, 351 Winthrop Street, pointed out that the mailing address on their notice was incorrect.

Ms. Moore told the Board that notification is required between seven to fourteen days prior to the meeting. She added that the text of the notification was reviewed and sent out within that time frame. She also pointed out that details of the plan are not required as part of the notice.

Mr. Landry questioned the use of the term "Public Hearing" in the notice, since the Board must vote to hold a Public Hearing. Ms. Feinstein suggested that the city needs to recognize and plan for the Postal Service's problems.

Mr. Seymour asked if a Public Hearing is required; Ms. Weston said a Public Hearing is not required for Minor Subdivisions. General discussion followed.

Motion to grant the requested waivers for certain application standards.

Moved: Landry Seconded: Taylor Unanimously approved.

Motion to approve the application and grant minor subdivision approval.

Moved: Landry Seconded: Taylor Unanimously approved.

The Board recessed briefly to sign the subdivision plans.

8. Other Business

Delegation of Authority Letter Update

The Board briefly discussed the draft changes to the Delegation of Authority letter. It was noted that the term "flush-mounted" could be misleading, and it was suggested to change it to "parallel to the roofline."

Motion to approve the Delegation of Authority with the one change suggested.

Moved: Landry Seconded: Seymour Unanimously approved.

Update on 9 Summer Street

Ms. Moore summarized the situation created by the Board's actions at the January meeting which included two possibly contradictory motions.

She explained that Legends Residential Care LLC is licensed state-wide, but beginning in December of 2025 the State requires them to apply for licenses for each facility. Currently the State is backlogged, so Legends Residential Care LLC can operate under the state-wide license because of their pending application. She also informed the Board that the State Fire Marshall has inspected the building and signed off on the inspection.

Ms. Moore told the Board that she consulted the City Solicitor for advice on the zoning issues. Deputy City Solicitor Alex Pringle said that under the Fair Housing Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Maine statute [30-A M.R.S. §4357-A] Legends Residential Care LLC does not need a conditional use permit and that a "community living arrangement" must be treated as a single-family residence for zoning purposes.

Ms. Moore also noted that neither the Code Enforcement Officer nor the Planning Board has the authority to make a finding on the mortgage situation.

Ms. Feinstein asked if there was any need for Board action; Ms. Moore said there was not. She added that all building permits have been handled appropriately.

Ms. Feinstein recognized Mr. McKee.

Walter McKee, 70 Middle Street, an abutter to 9 Summer Street, expressed concern with the amount of effort the Board expended on this application and the fact that the applicant had not attended the meeting, only the property owner. He said the Board made great effort to make a determination. He also said the city should hear from the applicant in addressing an application.

Ms. Weston pointed out that the applicant should not have submitted an application. She also noted that the Board often deals with applications where the applicant is unable to attend the meeting and sends a representative.

There was general discussion. Ms. Feinstein observed that Legends came to the Board in good faith and the Board acted in good faith.

Discussion of possible Ordinance revisions

Ms. Weston informed the Board that Ms. Moore has been approached regarding a mixed-use proposal to turn office space into dormitory housing for the owner’s contract workers. The current ordinance has nothing to govern or permit temporary workforce housing. She suggested amending the ordinance since this issue will become more common. She added that the state has developed a definition and standards for workforce housing.

There was general discussion with the Code Enforcement Officer of related issues. Ms. Weston noted that specific requirements to regulate occupancy and facility standards can be written into the definition.

Query from the Code Enforcement Officer

Ms. Moore informed the Board that GE Holdings (Eric Mowatt) is contemplating purchasing another of the “gateway” properties which is already dangerous, vacant, and at risk for squatters. Ms. Weston informed the Board that the property is not in the Historic District and is not eligible for the National Register. Ms. Moore asked if she needed to bring that and neighboring properties to the Board. The consensus of the Board was that she did not.

9. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn.

Moved: Seymour

Seconded: Bostwick

Unanimously approved

The meeting was adjourned at 8:39 PM.

Accepted as Presented on March 21, 2026, by a vote of ___ Yea to ___ Nay.

Attested: _____
S/
Judith Feinstein, Chair