FINAL

Bridgewater Zoning Board
July 21, 2025 Minutes

Board members present: Chair- Steve Williams, Edwin Boyce, David Bulk

Public present: James Gickas (building inspector), Michael Coscia, Deborah Coscia, Virginia S. Merrill

Steve called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and the board members introduced themselves. Steve summarized the purpose of the meeting was to review a setback variance request for a proposed deck located at 291 Deer Path Lane. The board verified abutter notifications and a complete application.

Mike and Deb introduced themselves. Mike explained that they purchased the property three years ago in October. At the time of purchase, the existing residence—constructed in the 1950s—was in significant disrepair. The structure exhibited chronic water intrusion in the basement, lacked any functional drainage system, and contained widespread mold and mildew. The property currently relies on an old dug well, and the overall condition of the home and supporting systems has continued to deteriorate. Recognizing both the environmental and structural deficiencies, the owners will remove the existing home and replace it with a new, singlelevel residence featuring a walkout design. This redevelopment will substantially reduce the nonconforming footprint within the shoreland setback. Approximately 2,000 square feet of existing structure will be removed. The only portion of the new construction located within the setback is a 135 square foot deck, which represents a significant improvement over the current encroachment of the enclosed structure. The owners have proactively secured all necessary shoreland and wetland approvals, a new septic system has been approved, and an artesian well is planned to replace the outdated dug well.

Steve polled the board for any questions and there were none. Steve noted that the footprint is grandfathered in and stated that due to DES approval, he feels the board should allow the variance. David and Edwin concurred. The requested variance of 135 SF of deck in the lakeshore setback zone was approved. Steve asked if the house was torn yet and Mike answered it possibly had been that day but if not, this week and that they were waiting for dumpsters. David asked when construction would start and Mike answered September or October as the builder currently has another project in New Hampton.

Discussion was held regarding the coordination between the zoning board and the NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) for projects requiring both local and state review. The board noted that DES applies more stringent environmental and technical standards than those typically required at the municipal level. Because of this, members agreed that when DES approval has already been granted, it provides a strong indication that the project meets or exceeds the necessary environmental protections.

To support a more efficient review process, the board agreed that Steve may conduct a preliminary review of applications in the future when DES approval has been issued prior to the meeting. This review is intended to help streamline the board's evaluation and ensure that all relevant materials are in order before the matter is formally presented. Following discussion, all members voted in favor of adopting this approach.

Steve directed the board to review minutes from June 16, 2025. Edwin made a motion to approve the minutes as written, Steve seconded, and David abstained. Steve adjourned the meeting at 7:12 PM.