

Town of Bowdoin
Planning Board Minutes
August 25, 2026

Members Present:

Michaeline Mulvey, Chair

Tom Giggey

Helen Watts, Vice-chair

Lauren Leclerc

Absent:

Gwen Thomas, Dennis Douglass, Code Enforcement Officer

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 pm at 17 Liberty Lane to do an on-site walk of the property for the Wenger's Site Plan Review application. The Board reconvened at the Town Office at 7:55 pm.

The July 14, 2026, July 28, 2026 and August 11, 2026 meeting minutes were reviewed. Giggey moved to approve the amended minutes of July 14, 2026. Mulvey seconded. Three votes for approval and Watts abstained. Watts moved to accept the minutes of July 28, 2026 as written. Giggey seconded. Two votes for approval and Leclerc and Mulvey abstained. Giggey moved to approve the amended minutes of August 11, 2026. Mulvey seconded. Three votes for approval and Watts abstained. All meeting minutes will be signed at the next meeting.

Members of the Public Present at the Site Walk:

Sheila Wenger, Roy Wenger, Wenger's daughter, Brandt McCollett, Addie McCollett, Eileen Johnson, Bill Baker DiGiulio, Nancy Murphy, Carmen Williams, Tim Williams, Michele Ryan, David Green, Michael Roux, Lori Brackett, Tina T. Hart, Wayne C. Hart, Helen Watts (recused)

Members Present at the Town Office:

Sheila Wenger, Roy Wenger, Wenger's daughter, Carmen Williams, Tim Williams, Tina Hart, Wayne Hart, Brandt McCollett, Addie McCollett

New Business:

None

Old Business:

Sheila & Roy Wenger, 17 Liberty Lane, Map 8, Lot 28-01

Helen Watts recuses herself from the Planning Board as she is a neighbor of the Applicants. Mulvey has reviewed all minutes of past Planning Board (Board) meetings where the Wenger's Site Plan Review application was reviewed and has reviewed the application.

The Harts submitted a letter to the Planning Board dated August 15, 2026 including information on the potential decrease in property value associated with the Wenger's proposal for a homeschool collective with forest enrichment program and "campground." The Board stated during the meeting that the letter was generated by AI and not an assessor and is not considered a credible source of documentation. The Board cannot review the claim regarding impact on appraisal values from the AI-generated information provided.

The Board is likely going to require a buffer to the parking area as a condition of approval of the Site Plan Review application. Noise from overnight users of the yurts/overnight sites will be ameliorated by the distance to the campsites from the property boundaries. The abutters won't have a view of the campsites from their property boundaries. This project won't create a high traffic volume at 2 days a week for the homeschool. Parking seems to be well situated beyond the driveway.

The Board responded to points raised in Lori Brackett's letter submitted to the Board dated August 12, 2026.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) are defined by the state. Complaints are brought to the attention of the Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) and the Selectboard are the overseers of addressing complaints.

Liberty Lane was reviewed by the Road Commissioner and was designed to Town Road Design standards.

The site walk included a pedestrian/gravel walking path. Special features would be the yurts and they don't have building permits yet.

The Site Plan Review Ordinance requires that lighting not be obtrusive. The Board can put conditions on the Site Plan Review approval regarding specifics of the lights. Adhering to the condition would be on the Applicant. The Board can only enforce the Town ordinances and cannot enforce state regulations. A licensed Site Evaluator signed the composting toilet design.

The Planning Board can put a condition on the approval that water will be used to control dust on the road. Vehicle speed on Liberty Lane can also be addressed.

Undue adverse effect on scenic beauty is a nebulous performance standard.

The Board can put a condition on the approval limiting students and days they are onsite.

The Applicants will have to comply with state requirements for hunting. They will try to get a response from the state that their proposal won't be considered a school by the next meeting.

The abutters to the parking area would prefer an "appropriately-sized 6-8-foot high PVC fence versus something natural." The Board Chair stated that a fence would provide more visual buffer but less noise buffer than a double-row of buffer plantings. Most of the traffic will be during the day but there will be some rentals of overnight use areas.

The Board will likely require buffer plantings along the property line between the parking area and the neighbor to the corner of the property and then down to the wetland seen during the site walk.

Multiple petitions from abutters requesting the Site Plan Review application be denied were submitted to the Board.

The next steps for the Site Plan Review application review will be going through the Site Plan Review approval at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren Leclerc, Secretary

Cc: Selectmen, Code Enforcement Officer, Fire Chief, Webmaster, Planning Board files