

Town of Hancock, Maine

**MINUTES OF JULY 9, 2025 PLANNING BOARD SITE VISIT AND
MEETING**

SITE VISIT TO DIRIGO MATERIALS QUARRY

Board Members: Doug Kimmel, Ken Emerson, Scott Dyer, Deb Foster, Meredith Akerstein, Ant Blasi; CEO Kevin Brodie

Others in attendance: Brian Raymond, Stephen Salisbury

The site visit commenced at 5:00 pm.

Brian Raymond conducted a tour of the five-acre site in Hancock into which Dirigo seeks a permit to begin Phase 1 of expanding from the adjacent property in Ellsworth where it is currently working. Eventually Dirigo plans to excavate to about five feet above the water table.

Raymond said that Dirigo will begin clearing the area in the next couple of years while continuing to “work the pit” in Ellsworth, treating both areas as one big site operating under the same soil erosion and other plans.

Asked if this expansion would provide any benefits to Hancock, Raymond said it would presumably lead to a higher property tax valuation but not necessarily create any jobs.

Raymond said the French company that owns Dirigo [Vinci] is committed to reclamation, and a portion of Dirigo’s profits is set aside in a trust fund to cover reclamation costs. When Dirigo completes work, it will reseed with grass the Hancock as well as the Ellsworth portion of the site.

Raymond pointed out a well on the Ellsworth side of the town line that he said should be sufficient to monitor the water level in the additional five acres in Hancock as well.

The site visit concluded at 5:45 pm.

PLANNING BOARD MEETING AT HANCOCK TOWN HALL

Board Members: Doug Kimmel, Ken Emerson, Scott Dyer, Deb Foster, Meredith Akerstein, Ant Blasi; CEO Kevin Brodie

Others in Attendance: Selectperson Carol Lowrie, Ruth Franzius, Brian Raymond, Stephen Salisbury, Forrest Goodwin, Patrick Lyons

Doug Kimmel called the meeting to order at 6:07 pm.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR GOODWIN MINERAL EXTRACTION APPLICATION

1. Description of Mineral Extraction Application

Steve Salisbury described the Goodwin plan to extract rock and truck it out to Route 182 for processing in Tremont or Lamoine. He said that blasting would be announced a day beforehand to the Hancock Town Clerk, but not to abutters or neighbors. Blasting, drilling and transporting would be conducted during the hours the Town MEO ordinance prescribes.

An Austin Powder office in New Hampshire would set up seismographs and report findings to the Hancock CEO to ensure compliance with the Town's MEO.

The zoning for this site is Rural Undeveloped.

2. Public Comment and Planning Board Discussion

Ruth Franzius read a letter to the Planning Board in which she and her husband Roderic complained of "uncontrolled blasting that took place on the Goodwin land under a building permit for a shooting range," and asked that the Planning Board include in any new permit "conditions to protect us and other properties in the neighborhood from blast damage." Goodwin attorney Patrick Lyons argued that so long as Goodwin has not been found to have failed to comply with the consent agreement with the Hancock Selectboard, the Franziuses' allegation was not relevant to his application for another permit for another purpose—and whether Goodwin is or is not in compliance with the consent agreement is for the Selectboard and the CEO, not the Planning Board, to decide.

Ken Emerson insisted that compliance with the consent decree is a valid condition for the Planning Board's approval of Goodwin's application for a mineral extraction permit.

Carol Lowrie noted that the square footage of the shooting range now exceeds what the Planning Board's original permit approved. Lyons said this was covered in the consent agreement, and Meredith Akerstein said this was irrelevant to their application for a mineral extraction permit.

Doug said there seemed to be agreement that disputes over the shooting range were irrelevant to Goodwin's application for a mineral extraction permit.

Ruth asked that any permit protect neighbors' property against the effects of blasting. Lyons said the MEO already contains such protections and that the Goodwins would provide them. Asked by Ken if he was confident he could monitor and verify Goodwin's compliance with federal and state regulations and the Town ordinance's blasting provisions, CEO Kevin Brodie stated he can confirm permit-holders' *reports* of what they are doing, but not whether they are in fact doing it.

Meredith and Doug said that pursuing this matter further was irrelevant to considering the application before the Planning Board. Doug asked if there were any additional public comments. Hearing none, Deb Foster moved to close the public hearing, Scott Dyer seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

The public hearing closed at 6:30.

REGULAR PLANNING BOARD MEETING

Doug called the regular meeting to order at 6:38.

1. Election of Chair for 2025-2026 Fiscal Year

Meredith nominated Doug Kimmel to continue as Planning Board chair, Scott seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

2. Election of Secretary for 2025-2026 Fiscal Year

Scott nominated Ken Emerson to continue as Secretary, Deb seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

3. Approval of Minutes of Workshop Meeting, May 28, 2025

Deb moved to approve them, Meredith seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

4. Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting, June 11, 2025

Deb moved to approve them, Meredith seconded, and the motion passed, 5–0.

Meredith moved to amend the evening's agenda to include, as previously promised, consideration of the completeness of Dirigo's application for a mineral extraction permit. Deb seconded, and the motion passed, 5–0.

5. Old Business: Goodwin MEO Application: Findings of Fact

The Planning Board reviewed the application. Doug moved to approve it, Deb seconded, and the motion passed 5–0 under two conditions: 1) that Goodwin provide a certificate of current liability insurance; and 2) the Selectboard confirm Goodwin's compliance with the consent agreement.

6. New Business: Review of the Completeness of the Dirigo MEO Application

The board reviewed the application and noted that Dirigo had satisfied its request to provide a letter appointing a designated agent (Sara Caldwell) and copies of Dirigo's letters of intent to apply to the Town and of notification to abutters, plus the five attachments to them. Ant Blasi noted that the application's narrative referred to the Comprehensive Plan when it should say the Mineral Extraction Ordinance.

Ken moved to find the application complete, Deb seconded, and the motion passed, 5–0. Ken moved, seconded by Deb, to schedule a public hearing on the application at the Planning Board's September 10 meeting. The motion passed, 5–0.

Ant noted that in order to comply with the MEO (see p. 14), Dirigo will have to drill a new monitoring well in the Hancock property into which it plans to expand operations, and that this should be included in the Findings of Fact.

7. Public Comment

Carol Lowrie said that building and plumbing permits are not readily available at the Town office or on its website and that the information they contain is incomplete, inconsistent and unhelpful. Kevin said the Town's computer program is outdated and the Planning Board should consider asking the Selectboard to invest in a new program. Kevin volunteered to do the necessary research if the Selectboard expressed interest.

Ken moved to declare that the Planning Board finds the Town's permits and the information they provide to the public are inadequate. Deb seconded, and the motion passed, 5–0.

8. CEO Report

Kevin reported 5 internal plumbing permits and 1 septic permit, on which the Town earned \$506.25. Four houses, 1 garage, 2 accessory buildings, 1 solar and 1 change to an already existing housing permit, for \$3,313.80. Mandatory training is coming for LD 1829, which concerns identity law for housing as it applies to public sewer systems. Kevin will be out of the office from July 24–Aug. 5, covered in part by Nick Branca and Sandy, but in his absence no permits can be issued.

9. New Business: Revised Signage Ordinance for Temporary Summer Businesses

Meredith moved to defer this discussion to the next workshop meeting. Ken seconded, and the motion passed, 5–0.

10. New Business: Schedule Workshop for Revision of ECO and MEO

Ken moved to schedule the workshop meeting as part of the regular meeting on Sept. 10, beginning at 5:30. Deb seconded, and the motion passed, 5–0.

11. Adjourn

Ken moved to adjourn, Deb seconded, and the motion passed, 5–0. Doug adjourned the meeting at 8:12.

