

Information about 2025 Proposed Amendments to Land Use Ordinance

Randolph adopted the Land Use Ordinance (Zoning Ordinance) in 1988. Over the years, the Ordinance is amended at Town Meeting to address land uses and state laws that emerge and change over time. Amendments are proposed by the Planning Board or by petition from Town voters. State statutes provide the structure of how amendments are presented at Town Meeting.

The Planning Board held a public hearing about the proposed amendments and received many questions and comments from our residents. The following amendments are recommended by the Planning Board and a draft of the Land Use Ordinance with these amendments is available at Town Hall.

Explanation about Proposed Amendments Recommended by the Planning Board (voted on by ballot):

To see if the Town will vote to adopt Amendment No. 1 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Randolph Zoning Ordinance (Land Use Ordinance Part 1) to clarify what uses of a dwelling are Permitted Uses, including one or two guest rooms or a single Short-Term Rental, and what is considered to be Lodging which would continue to require a Special Exception from the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Based on questions and comments about short-term rentals, the Planning Board reviewed the current Land Use Ordinance to determine how to address this type of land use. Short-term rentals involve dwellings being rented for transient use (less than increments of 30 days) and often rented through an online rental service. The current definition in the Ordinance of “Lodging” does not adequately define short-term rentals and Planning Board concluded that the current Ordinance can be interpreted to mean that short-term rentals are not a permitted use. The Board recognizes both the long history of rentals and the growing number of short-term rentals in town as well as the need for having housing for residents. Therefore, one proposed Amendment #1 creates a definition of short-term rentals and makes them a permitted use, but limits them to one per property. It also allows for guest rooms to be rented on a short-term basis. The amendment defines lodging, which would continue to require a Special Exception from the Zoning Board of Adjustment, as a use that is different than a short-term rental.

To see if the Town will vote to adopt Amendment No. 2 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Randolph Zoning Ordinance (Land Use Ordinance Part 1) to clarify

that yurts are to be treated the same as tents, and to add tent platforms to the Definition of “Structure,” meaning the 25-foot setbacks would apply.

Platforms, often used for tents or storage, have not been defined in the Land Use Ordinance leading to confusion about setbacks and structures. The Board is proposing to add “platforms” and “yurts” to the definition of a “structure” which means that in the future these features would need to meet setbacks.

To see if the Town will vote to adopt Amendment No. 3 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Randolph Zoning Ordinance (Land Use Ordinance Part 1) to update the Definitions of “Dwelling,” “Dwelling Unit,” and “Multi-Family Housing,” and add Definitions for “Single-Family Dwelling” and “Two-Family Dwelling.”

One amendment to the Land Use Ordinance can lead to the need to update several others for consistency. The Planning Board is proposing to amend definitions for different types of “dwellings” and “dwelling units” to add clarity and update these definitions.

To see if the Town will vote to adopt Amendment No. 4 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Randolph Zoning Ordinance (Land Use Ordinance Part 1) to expand the Definition of “Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU),” limit the size of a detached ADU to two bedrooms and no more than 1,200 sq. ft. of gross floor area, and add a Definition for “Gross Floor Area.”

One attached accessory dwelling unit (ADU) is permitted by NH law without requiring any additional lot size or frontage beyond what is required for a single-family dwelling. Randolph’s current Ordinance allows both attached and detached ADUs, but does not adequately define ADUs or how big they can be. The Planning Board is proposing that, in the future, detached ADUs should be limited to two bedrooms and no more than 1,200 SF. Two-family dwellings remain as a permitted use, but would need a lot size of 160,000 SF (3.67 acres).

To see if the Town will vote to adopt Amendment No. 1 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Randolph Town Forest Ordinance (Land Use Ordinance Part 4) to add a requirement that the chair of the Town Forest Commission shall not be a member of the Planning Board or president (or equivalent) of an organization that serves as an Activity Manager.

This proposed amendment applies to the Randolph Town Forest section of the Land Use Ordinance and specifies that the chair of the Town Forest

Commission shall not be a Planning Board member or in a leadership role of an activity manager organization. Since the Planning Board oversees aspects of the Forest Commission (such as budget, appointing activity managers, holding hearings on some Forest activities and issues) and activity managers assist in the management of the Forest, this amendment will help avoid conflicts.

To see if the Town will vote to adopt Amendment No. 2 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Randolph Town Forest Ordinance (Land Use Ordinance Part 4) to change the dates of when the Town Forest Commission submits a draft budget to the Planning Board and when the Planning Board holds a public hearing on the draft budget to bring the dates in line with the Town budget.

This amendment to addresses when the Forest Commission submits their draft budget to the Planning Board to coincide with the Town's budget schedule.