



**NH OFFICE OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (OPD)
SPRING 2026 PLANNING & ZONING CONFERENCE
SATURDAY, MAY 9, 2026 FROM 8:45 AM TO 3:30 PM**

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

PLANNING BOARD TRACK

Christine Johnston, Legal Services Counsel

NH Municipal Association

[*cjohnston@nhmunicipal.org*](mailto:cjohnston@nhmunicipal.org)

Christine (Fillmore) Johnston returned to NHMA in October, 2025 and provides legal services to NHMA's member municipalities, including legal advice, training programs, and educational publications. She finds it immensely rewarding to work with municipal officials – who are often volunteers – to fulfill their duties and serve their communities. She has worked both in private practice (most recently as a shareholder with Drummond Woodsum) and with NHMA, exclusively representing municipalities for more than two decades in all aspects of municipal law. She is also the current co-author of the four municipal volumes of the NH Practice legal treatise series. Christine received her B.A. from Tufts University and her J.D. from Boston College Law School.

John Christ, Community & Economic Development Field Specialist in Merrimack County

UNH Cooperative Extension

[*john.christ@unh.edu*](mailto:john.christ@unh.edu)

John Christ is a member of the Community and Economic Development team at UNH Cooperative Extension, where he works as a field specialist in Merrimack County. He provides community and economic development assistance and project implementation support that builds local and regional capacity to grow and sustain communities. Prior to joining UNH, John worked in higher education and taught at Plymouth State University and the University of Massachusetts, Lowell.

Stephanie N. Verdile, Assistant City Planner-Zoning

City of Concord

[*sverdile@concordnh.gov*](mailto:sverdile@concordnh.gov)

Stephanie began her NH Municipal Planning career in 2001 with the City of Laconia and worked in Alton and Gilford until she became the Town Planner for Pembroke from 2012 to 2018. Stephanie worked for the Office of Planning & Development (OPD) from March of 2018 to April 2024 as a Principal Planner in the Municipal and Regional Assistance (MRA) Program providing training and assistance for municipal land use boards, officials, and the public. She was an elected member of the Alton Planning Board and served as the Municipal Representative for Laconia, Alton, Gilford, and Pembroke on the Transportation Advisory Committees (TAC) for the Lakes Region Planning Commission (LRPC) and the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC). In April 2024, Stephanie was appointed a member



of the New Hampshire Housing Appeals Board by the NH Supreme Court. In July of 2025, Stephanie became a member of the City of Concord's Planning Department as the Assistant City Planner for Zoning.

**Mark J. Fougere, AICP, Principal
Fougere Planning & Development**

fougereplanning@comcast.net

Mark Fougere is an AICP land use planner with over 35 years of public and private sector experience and holds a Master's Degree in planning. Mr. Fougere has an extensive background in project management dealing with a broad array of planning related issues including spearheading rezoning efforts, managing development teams, site and land use planning, impact fees, fiscal impact analysis, public presentations, expert witness testimony, land use law analysis, and consensus building challenges. He has managed numerous rewrites and amendments to zoning ordinances and site plan/subdivision regulations.

Mr. Fougere has worked extensively in many New England communities on fiscal impact analysis, traffic corridor studies, housing, workforce housing, and land use regulations. Mark has also served on a municipal planning board and as a Selectman.

**Carol Ogilvie
Planning Consultant**

ogilvie.klein@gmail.com

Carol has worked as a land use planner in New Hampshire for over 35 years, primarily providing technical and planning assistance to local planning and zoning boards. She retired from her position as Director of Community Development for the Town of Peterborough in 2013 after more than 10 years in that position and continues to provide planning services around New Hampshire as an independent planning consultant. Prior to working in Peterborough, she was employed for 14 years at the Southwest Region Planning Commission in Keene, NH and for the NH Office of State Planning (now OPD). From 1999 to its conclusion in 2015 Carol taught the class on Selectmen's role in land use planning and enforcement for Antioch New England's Selectmen's Institute. In addition, she has held a position as an adjunct professor at Antioch NE teaching a course on Land Use and Community Planning. Carol received her B.A. from Keene State College and her M.A. in Sociology and Policy Planning from Kent State University. She lives in Gilsum, NH with her husband, where she currently serves on the Planning Board.

ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT TRACK

**Cordell Johnston, Esq.
Attorney at Law**

cordell@cajohnston.com

Cordell Johnston has practiced law in New Hampshire since 1984. After almost 20 years at the Concord law firm Orr & Reno, he served as Government Affairs Counsel at the New Hampshire Municipal Association for 18 years, from 2004 to 2022. Since 2022, he has maintained a solo practice limited to representing municipalities. He is the co-author, with C. Christine Johnston, of four volumes on municipal law (original author Peter Loughlin) in the Lexis/Nexis New Hampshire Practice Series, and has written many articles and given many presentations on the Right-to-Know Law, land use regulation, town meeting,



and other municipal law topics. He has served as a selectman and planning board chairman in the Town of Henniker and has been the town moderator since 2018.

Jason Dennis, Esq.

Hastings Law Office, P.A.

jdennis@hastings-law.com

Jason is a partner at Hastings Law Office, P.A. about a mile from the NH border in Fryeburg, ME. Jason, who resides in NH, has been a member of the New Hampshire Bar since 2010 and is a graduate of the New Hampshire Bar Association's Leadership Academy Class of 2016-2017. Jason has an active municipal and land use practice. He serves as legal counsel to several NH municipalities; however, he also occasionally represents property owners before municipal boards in towns that he does not represent. Jason earned his Bachelor of Science in Psychology at Roanoke College in 2003. He earned his Juris Doctor (J.D.) from Indiana University (IU) in 2008. Aside from his legal interests, Jason is an avid sports fan, and a Christmas village "architect." Jason has coached high school soccer and enjoys rock climbing and other outdoor activities with his family as often as possible.

**Sarah Thunberg, Flood Ready Maine Program Manager
Maine Office of Community Affairs**

Sarah Thunberg was a Principal Planner with OPD working as a NFIP coordinator before recently moving to the Maine Office of Community Affairs as the Flood Ready Maine Program Manager. Before working for the Office of Planning and Development Sarah worked as a meteorologist for the National Weather Service in Gray, Maine where she helped communities and emergency managers prepare for hazardous weather events, including several federally declared flooding disasters. Sarah received her B.S. in Atmospheric Sciences from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 2019 and her M.S. in Atmospheric Sciences at the University of Alaska Fairbanks in 2021.

**Stephanie Frechette, Principal Planner
NH Office of Planning and Development**

stephanie.h.frechette@livefree.nh.gov

Stephanie Frechette joined OPD in January 2025 and has been working as Principal Planner implementing FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program to municipalities. She's been with the State for 10+ years in emergency planning and security, water quality analysis and public water system regulation, and helping municipalities with state and federal compliance. She graduated from UVM with a B.S. in Environmental Science and concentration in Water Resources.

**Steven Whitley, Esq.
Drummond Woodsum**

swhitley@dwmlaw.com

For nearly 17 years, Steven has been advising clients on a wide variety of municipal legal issues including town governance, annual town meetings, public finance, zoning and land use matters, Right to Know law, and tax abatement appeals. He regularly represents municipal clients in New Hampshire District, Superior, and Supreme Courts, and before state administrative agencies. Steven's depth of experience is a



tremendous asset for his clients. Dedicated to serving his community, Steven is also a member of the Selectboard and Economic Development Committee for the Town of Hopkinton.

SPECIAL TOPICS TRACK

Gerry Bedard, Active Transportation Engineer New Hampshire Department of Transportation

Gerard.R.Bedard@dot.nh.gov

Gerard Bedard, PE, is the Active Transportation Engineer at the New Hampshire Department of Transportation. Active transportation is human-powered mobility, such as biking and walking. Gerry joined the NHDOT in 2013 as a highway design engineer and transitioned to the Active Transportation Engineer position in 2023. A civil engineering graduate of Merrimack College, Gerry also worked 16 years for a consulting engineering firm in Manchester, taught high school for a couple of years and was a stay-at-home parent for 14 years, often towing his children to pre-school on a tag-along bike. Gerry lives in Concord and commutes to work, most days, by bicycle.

Nick Altonaga, Senior Planner North Country Council

naltonaga@nccouncil.org

Nick manages the Transportation Program at North Country Council. He has experience in the fields of community development, land use planning, floodplain management, and economic development that spans New England and Montana. He is passionate about using his experience to improve communities in the North Country. In his spare time, he can be found writing stories, reading sci-fi, playing video games, or cuddling with his dog, Queso. When the weather cooperates, he can be found out in the White Mountains running and hiking.

Sam Durfee, Planning Manager City of Nashua

durfees@nashuanh.gov

Sam Durfee is the Planning Manager for the City of Nashua, where he is leading a comprehensive rewrite of the city's land use code aimed at expanding housing opportunities and strengthening Nashua's position as a vibrant place to live and do business. His background includes planning work at the local and regional levels, as well as nonprofit leadership through service on the boards of Plan New Hampshire and the Northern New England Chapter of the American Planning Association.

Joseph Perez, Director of Planning & Economic Development Town of Plymouth

jperez@plymouthnh.gov

Joseph Perez serves as Director of Planning and Economic Development for the Town of Plymouth, New Hampshire. He has held a range of planning roles in municipalities across New Hampshire and Alabama, with experience spanning current planning, comprehensive plan implementation, housing, and community development. Previously, Joseph served as a Planner for the City of Decatur, Alabama. He later returned to his home state of New Hampshire, where he worked for the City of Manchester as a Planner and Housing Initiatives Manager responsible for the City's Lead Hazard and Healthy Housing grant, focusing on



improving the health and safety of the City's housing stock. Now working in the small yet vibrant community of Plymouth, his responsibilities extend beyond traditional planning and zoning to include housing, economic development, infrastructure, and transportation initiatives. He also serves as vice chair of the Transportation Advisory Committee for the Lakes Region Planning Commission; as a member of the New Hampshire Planners Association Executive Committee; and on the board of directors for the Grafton Regional Development Corporation.

**Judi Barrett, Founding & Managing Director
Barrett Planning Group LLC**

judi@barrettplanningllc.com

Judi Barrett is the owner and managing director of Barrett Planning Group LLC. She brings 36 years of planning and community development experience as a consultant and community and economic development professional with state and local government. Judi has devoted her career to building the capacity of cities and towns to solve difficult public policy questions and to develop effective leadership and advocacy skills. She has prepared numerous city and town comprehensive plans, neighborhood revitalization plans, zoning ordinances and bylaws, and housing studies. She is well known for her work in affordable and fair housing policy and inclusionary zoning. A frequent panelist at regional and national conferences and a guest lecturer for graduate planning programs, Judi is also a technical assistance resource and trainer for city and town officials and non-profit boards.

**Michael Hagan, MCP, CBO, CFM, Building Division Manager
City of Keene**

mhagan@keenenh.gov

With 25 years of service to the City of Keene, New Hampshire, Michael is the Building Division Manager, Floodplain Manager, and Assistant Emergency Management Director. He holds a Master Code Professional certification through the ICC, serves as a When Disaster Strikes instructor, and is a Certified Floodplain Manager with three NFPA certifications. He also serves as Vice President of the New Hampshire Building Officials Association and represents the organization on the New Hampshire Building Code Review Board, which reviews and recommends state building codes, including any amendments.

Nadine Miller, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

nadine.m.miller@dncr.nh.gov

New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources, New Hampshire's State Historic Preservation Office

The Division's mission is to preserve and celebrate New Hampshire's irreplaceable historic resources through programs and services that provide education, stewardship, and protection. Ms. Miller has the honor to work with a group of dedicated professionals implementing a variety of programs including the State and National Registers of Historic Places, the State Conservation and Rescue Archaeology Program (SCRAP), the Moose Plate grant program, and reviewing federal and state projects throughout the state.

**Noah Hodgetts, Principal Planner
NH Office of Planning and Development**

noah.d.hodgetts@livefree.nh.gov

Noah Hodgetts is a Principal Planner at the Office of Planning & Development (OPD) within the New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs (BEA). He has worked at OPD since March 2018,



New Hampshire Department of
**BUSINESS AND
ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**



where he provides technical assistance and training on planning and zoning matters to a diverse range of stakeholders, tracks planning and zoning legislation, and is BEA's point person on housing policy. Noah currently serves on the New Hampshire Council on Housing Stability, the New Hampshire Zoning Atlas Leadership Team, the New Hampshire Food Alliance Network Leadership Team, the NH Alliance for Healthy Aging Steering Committee, and the New Hampshire Planners Association Executive and Legislative Committees. Noah was named the 2023 Professional Planner of the Year by the Northern New England Chapter of the American Planning Association and the New Hampshire Planners Association. Prior to working for the State of New Hampshire, Noah worked as a research analyst for a Boston-area affordable housing consulting firm. He received a M.Sc. in Urban and Regional Policy from Northeastern University and a B.A. in Human Ecology from College of the Atlantic.

Sarah Wrightsman, Manager of Community Engagement and Education
New Hampshire Housing

swrightsman@nhhfa.org

Prior to joining the team at New Hampshire Housing, Wrightsman was Executive Director of the Workforce Housing Coalition of the Greater Seacoast. Wrightsman is a graduate of Leadership Seacoast's class of 2019 and Leadership New Hampshire's Class of 2021. She holds a master's degree in public policy from the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire. Wrightsman is actively engaged in the planning community in the granite state, representing her hometown on Strafford Regional Planning Commission's Board of Commissioners.