

### Kingfield Planning Board Draft Minutes

Date: Tuesday, April 14, 2026

Location: Webster Hall

Time: 6:00-8:40

Topic(s): Bowdoin College site plan application on Iron Bridge Road

Board present: Jared Clukey, Sue Davis, Richard Hawkes, Scott Hoisington, Babe Smith, Rob Woodhouse

Board absent: Taylor Jordan

Other: Bowdoin: John Simoneau, Michael Woodruff; Sebago Technics: Tanner Goodine, Kylie Mason; Verrill: Juliet Browne; Kingfield: John Benson, Bill and Robyn Caron, Charlie Cary, Adam and Anne Craig (and baby), Steven and Terry D'Amato, Claudia Diller, Linda Gray, Judi Hawkes, Eric Holman, Chuck LeBlanc (and baby), Jeffrey Maget, Ben, Cathie and Jamie Martin, Jillian Monahan, Bill and Julie Swain

Zoom: Two "Zoom user"s not identified, Amanda Neuts, Thomas Torr

#### *Agenda*

Chair Richard Hawkes called the Tuesday, April 14, 2026, Kingfield Planning Board meeting to order at 6:00 pm. He noted that there was a quorum.

*Scott Hoisington moved approval of the agenda for the April 14, 2026, meeting, seconded by Jared Clukey. The motion passed unanimously.*

*Rob Woodhouse moved approval of the minutes of the March 10, 2026, planning board meeting, seconded by Scott Hoisington. The motion passed unanimously.*

#### ***BOWDOIN COLLEGE SITE PLAN REVIEW***

John Simoneau introduced his team: Simoneau is Director of Capital Projects at Bowdoin, Mike Woodruff is Director of the Bowdoin Outing Club (BOC); from Bowdoin's consulting team Sebago Technics, Kylie Mason, COO, and Tanner Goodine, senior civil engineer, are in charge of technical aspects of the project from design to permitting; Juliet Browne from Verrill will help with the permitting and legal issues.

Simoneau then explained the goals of the BOC, to introduce Bowdoin's international students to a Maine outdoor experience, to build community through interaction, and to teach leadership skills. Student leaders have 350 hours of training in leadership, managing risk, wilderness operating guidelines and principles, and first-aid training.

Along with the goals, operating guidelines and principles include 'leave no trace,' chem free trips, the need to share the road, careful use of fire from start to end, quiet times. The site is authorized-use only, with no opportunity for a free-for-all. There is a gate and anyone using the site will need to get a key.

Tanner Goodine then presented the outline of the plan: to extend a gravel loop road from the existing drive, with seven gravel pads extending off the road to accommodate four tents each. Additional proposed improvements include an approximately 950-sf picnic shelter, an approximately 600-sf sanitary building, one vault privy located near the existing shelter, and a gravel pad for vehicle staging and equipment storage, like canoes.

The existing structure is proposed to be re-used for staff housing, containing up to two beds for occupants. The site will utilize a well for water supply and fire suppression with a yard hydrant and underground electrical and a subsurface septic system to serve the proposed bathhouse.

#### **QUESTIONS FROM PB MEMBERS**

After clearing up with code enforcement officer (CEO) Ben Hitchcock that the property was not in tree growth and that the existing structure had been permitted with an open floor plan with one or two beds, PB member Rob Woodhouse opened up a discussion about campground permitting at State as well as local level and Bowdoin's use of the term 'institutional.' By definition, Kingfield ordinance does not consider this a 'campground' if it does not charge a fee. However, the Planning Board considers the campground requirements in the ordinance need to

be reviewed with this application because of its strong likeness to a campground. Bowdoin agreed and stated they have considered those requirements in putting this application together.

Woodhouse was concerned about State Department of Health and Human Services campground requirements, sanitation standards, etc., and asked if Bowdoin would be applying to the State for a permit. Simoneau responded that they have been careful to crosscheck Kingfield's ordinance requirements with State requirements and will be following up with that regarding water testing, sanitation, etc. Chair Hawkes added that he had already checked with the State on this and had received a reply: if sites are not being advertised to the public and are used by the students only with no fee, the State would not regulate or license the campground.

PB member Scott Hoisington asked about numbers of vehicles and the impact on the bridge relative to the need for another traffic study. Simoneau responded that there were recommendations from the most recent bridge study that had not yet been implemented and that Bowdoin would be happy to work with the Town, State and road associations to implement those recommendations before considering the need for another study.

Hoisington then asked about noise and curfews, winter use of the site, and if any students would have access to the site. [Strict noise management is outlined in the application.] Simoneau responded that winter use would fit with their winter programming but that any student would need BOC permission to use the site.

PB member Sue Davis asked about the number of trips in and out on a daily basis, referencing a table she had seen in the application indicating only two a day for a total of 22, consisting of c. 11 vans. Simoneau clarified that a group would arrive on a Friday night, go and return on a trip on a Saturday and depart on a Sunday, explaining the count. That would limit entrance and exit to twice a day maximum, noting that members of the group will not be leaving to go for dinner or shopping, for example.

Chair Hawkes then presented his questions. After noting that "the package was mostly well written" and that the PB and Bowdoin had had a pre-application meeting last July, he found that it was not complete in a couple of areas that needed further discussion.

- Abutters: had Bowdoin met with them. Simoneau outlined the meetings he had had:
  - After July meeting met with some abutters at Marmee's and discussed concerns (October 1)
  - Participated in a Lower Iron Bridge Road Association Annual Meeting in the Fall (October 11)
  - Master road associations discussion relating to bridge (October 12)
  - Before today's meeting notified members of Lower Iron Bridge Association of this upcoming meeting (March 25)

It was noted that Bowdoin has not specifically notified the immediate abutters and Hawkes mentioned a public hearing would require that by the town.

Hawkes received a call from Phillip McLure, an abutter, who was concerned because he has an easement across the property and wanted to make sure it was still there. Hawkes checked the site plan map that shows that it is there. McLure will also see the pavilion from his camp, though Hawkes noted that plans show proposed re-vegetation should prevent that.

Juliet Browne, Verrill-Law, noted that ex parte communications among parties to the topic needed to be in a public venue or shared with all parties. She requested copies, for example of Hawkes communication with Maine DHHS, etc. Hawkes understands and is happy to comply.

Hawkes referred to the terms 'campground,' tents, camping, campsites, camping space, 'institutional,' 'non-profit,' public use, and requested that both parties "look at these terms and feel good about them."

Hawkes asked what the \$35,000 for Rt 27 Intersection Improvements was for. Simoneau responded that it was for possible assistance with implementing items in the bridge study that had not been completed. Davis asked if that included the recommendation to have a new bridge design ready to do, which received an emphatic "No."

Hawkes then went through the 19 Findings of Facts, making comments where they applied:

- Under 3. Vehicle Access:

- Hawkes noted two major safety concerns with vehicle access. One was related to ingress and egress of multiple vans and support vehicles (sometimes with trailers) crossing the bridge and turning onto Route 27 or onto Iron Bridge Road, coupled with the neighborhood traffic. The other safety concern was related to the Bowdoin traffic traveling on lower Iron Bridge Road, which is very narrow.
- ⊖ Hawkes noted the shared responsibility for the maintenance and repair of the road and bridge among the road associations, that all needed to work together to determine proportionate share in those expenses
- Hawkes requested Bowdoin College work with the neighborhood, Town of Kingfield, MDOT and Brochu family to complete the Gorrill Palmer traffic study recommendations. Examples could include providing engineering design services, providing grant research and writing, and potentially pledging funds with other stakeholders to a reserve account to help solve this problem.
- Under 4: Parking and Circulation: Hawkes asked for assurances that vans would reduce what would otherwise require as many as 28 parking spaces based on camper tent sites.
- Under 7: Utilities:
  - Vault toilets: allowed in shoreland zoning; maintenance/pumping has been addressed.
  - Subsurface septic system design: request that it be available no later than start of project construction
- Under 11: Emergency Vehicle Access: adequately addressed by Kingfield Fire Chief
- Under 12: Landscaping: additional plantings meet Kingfield ordinance
- Under 14: Noise:
  - Kingfield Fire Dept. satisfied with firework prohibition
  - Sign identifying guidelines: PB requests seeing a draft of the wording
- Under 18: Municipal Impact
  - Satisfied with Kingfield Fire Dept. response
  - Don't want disturbances that might require a call to the police
  - There is a yard hydrant for immediate fire suppression; guidelines should include noting its presence.

### ***Regarding PB Review Criteria and Standards***

Hawkes noted that Bowdoin lists extensive best management procedures (BMP) of inspection, maintenance and housekeeping. He asked if this is shared with the contractors and where the records are kept for auditing by the Kingfield CEO. Hawkes also referenced the lack of assurances of the condition of the Iron Bridge Road to accommodate this project.

### ***Bowdoin Timeline***

If Bowdoin has approval by May, they would like to begin construction for use by the Fall.

### ***Public Comment***

Bill Caron, President of the Claybrook Road Association, reminded people present that the Brochus own the bridge. After the last flood event, the Brochus refused to help with repairs. Residents had to go ahead with necessary repairs without them. Caron also noted that upper Iron Bridge Road is single lane, not two-lane until Lower Iron Bridge Road. He asked how vehicles towing trailers will handle that in the winter much less the summer. (Not likely to be towing trailers in the winter.) He was also concerned about icy roads in the winter when navigating a turn onto the bridge from Rt. 27.

Judi Hawkes wanted to make note of the math for seven beds with four four-person tents amounting to more than 100 students. Asked how many students belong to the BOC, outing club director Michael Woodruff answered 1,500; it's the largest club on campus. The largest number of students attending at any one time would be during

orientation of freshmen in August; the busiest weekends would be in September and would taper off after that. A typical outing would be four 12-passenger vans with 48 students and a truck or two.

Bowdoin's OC has other locations around the state. When asked about personal vehicles coming to this site, Woodruff explained that personal vehicles are not allowed for insurance reasons. Only 12-passenger vans are used for student outings.

Claudia Diller stressed the danger of traffic turning onto the bridge, especially when adding vans and vehicles towing trailers of canoes, etc. Davis pointed out that the Gorrill Palmer traffic study called for signs indicating the intersection. Ira Mt. resident Julie Swain noted that school buses would not pick up her children because of the danger, that parents had to take their children to another location for pick up. When parents requested signage, they were told no, there were already too many signs. Jillian Monahan, Judi Hawkes and others commented on the danger at the intersection, exacerbated by the heavy Rt. 27/16 truck traffic.

Abutton Terry D'Amato, secretary of the Lower Iron Bridge Road Association, commented on the traffic Bowdoin would add to a residential road, asking about finding a safer location for Bowdoin. Bill Swain commented on the back up of vehicles coming across the bridge mornings as people arrive to work on house construction projects. Woodruff said there would be no problem adjusting to such traffic.

Hawkes asked if Bowdoin's access to engineers at Sebago Technics could offer some help solving the issues related to the bridge and the road. Bowdoin responded that anything major like bridge replacement or road redesign was beyond the scope of the applicant.

Judi Hawkes then asked why the PB didn't have the authority to 'Just say no' to further development until the bridge and road issue is resolved. PB member Jared Clukey responded that he did not believe the PB had such authority. Judi Hawkes responded that the PB's responsibility was the safety of Town residents. Richard Hawkes asked if she meant the PB should put a moratorium on growth in that neighborhood, adding that such action was beyond the PB's purview, that such consideration needs to go to higher authority.

Simoneau responded that he met with a group talking about creating a master road association (combining multiple associations from multiple subdivisions) and would be happy to play a role in that but has heard nothing further.

Abutton Adam Craig discussed the issues he sees at length, stressing the lack of vetting and communication. He found out about this from newspaper articles before Bowdoin reached out to Ira Mt. residents. Being in the recreation business himself, he is in favor of getting young people out for recreation, just not in this difficult location. His major concern was the bridge.

As only 1.8 acres of the 20.7-acre lot is discussed in this application, Bill Swain asked what future plans there were for the balance of the property. Simoneau responded that the long-term goals spoke to a year-round facility with a lodge but it was dependent on fundraising. Now, the only goal is to complete this campground phase.

Responding to questions about use, Simoneau responded that individuals would not have access, but other groups of alumni and Bowdoin-related parties might want use of it for retreats, etc.

Julie Swain quoted the application with regard to "Kingfield Ordinance Criteria and Standards—Rural 1." It speaks of no "significant adverse impact upon the value or quiet possession of surrounding properties," and would "not result in the generation of excessive nuisances." Swain responded, "I think there's some contention with this statement with all the neighbors... 112, 84, 50 people, that's a lot of people in one area in the woods" with retirees, small families, etc. Others in the audience agreed.

After much discussion, it became clear that a motion to accept the application as complete was required before a public hearing could be set.

Terry D'Amato asked if Bowdoin had any second thoughts about this location, knowing the risks of the bridge and road to public safety. Simoneau responded that risk management regarding students is their primary business and Bowdoin has a very good record on safety and vehicles.

*Rob Woodhouse moved to accept the application as complete subject to information requested, seconded by Jared Clukey. The motion passed unanimously.*

*Scott Hoisington moved to hold a public hearing tentatively on April 28 subject to room availability, seconded by Jared Clukey. The motion passed unanimously. Richard Hawkes will clear this with the Town Manager and take care of official notices to the abutters.*

Juliet Browne offered to cover legal expense of the PB, if it decided to have a lawyer.

*Jared Clukey moved to adjourn, seconded by Sue Davis. The motion passed unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted, Sue Davis, Secretary