

Planning Commission  
Martin Memorial Hall  
5259 Route 5, Ascutney VT  
Monday, November 27, 2023  
6:30 PM  
REGULAR MEETING  
Draft Minutes

**Members Present:** Joseph Bublat, Michael Todd, Hank Ainley (remote), Howard Beach  
**Members Absent:** Brian Bosenberg

**Ryan Gumbart, Land Use Administrator**

Others Present:

Halle Abuayyash (remote)	Bruce Cox	Jason (ZBA)
Jonah Blum	Cheryl Cox	Grace Knight (ZBA)
Anna Vogell	Willis Wood (ZBA)	

- 1 Call to Order**  
Mr. Bublat called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.
- 2 Agenda Review**  
No Changes.
- 3 Comments from the Chair and Land Use Administrator**  
The Chair stated that this would be Nichole Gagnon's last meeting as Recording Secretary for the Planning Commission.
- 4 Comment from citizens regarding items not on the agenda**  
None.
- 5 Review Minutes from Previous Meeting: 11/13/23**  
**Motion:** To table the minutes until the next meeting.  
**Made by:** Mr. Beach      **Second:** Mr. Todd  
**Vote:** All in Favor
- 6 Planning and Zoning in Vermont – Presentation by Jens Hilke, VT F&W Conservation Planner**  
Jens Hilke, a Conservation Planner from the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, gave a presentation. Topics covered were the benefits of large forests, wildlife present in forest patches, the power of forests on the

economy, losing wildlife habitats and working forests, effects of forest fragmentation, forest/habitat blocks, and climate change and animal migration.

Mr. Hilke also presented Vermont's Conservation Design, discussing interior forest blocks, connectivity blocks, property sales, private land, [Act 171](#) planning provisions, maintaining forest blocks and connections, town plan and future land use, and gave some examples of zoning rewrites and resources for the Planning Commission.

The Chair opened up the floor with a 15 minute limit for questions and comment. The Commission thanked the presenter for an informative presentation.

## 7 Project Status Update: Review Planning Commission project log

The Land Use Administrator gave a presentation on the Planning Commission Projects, which included actions taken, current status, and next steps for each of the projects. See below:

### PLANNING COMMISSION PROJECTS

\*Listed in order of priority\*

Project	Last Action Taken	Current Status	Next Steps
<b>1.</b> PUD Review – Habitat for Humanity	10/23 Per applicant's request, hearing continued by PC to 12/11	Hearing is scheduled to be continued on 12/11	Applicant will get requested information for review
<b>2.</b> Town Plan Amendment – Energy Section	11/15 Ryan created clean copy of energy section then reviewed and made changes.	Awaiting review by PC	If PC approves, vote to submit amendment to Selectboard
<b>3.</b> Town Plan Amendment – Required Changes	None	First discussion at 12/11 PC meeting. Halle to review needed changes.	Identify who will complete what.
<b>4.</b> Aquifer Protection Overlay District	Language as existing was formatted into the bylaws. Discussion tabled to 1/8.	Awaiting review by PC. Waiting on CAI to add layer to zoning map.	Review language and map.
<b>5.</b> Zoning Bylaws Amendment – PUD Review	Table by district was added and some language changes.	Awaiting review by PC. Further changes will be necessary.	Review LUA's changes, discuss further. Once finalized, warn bylaw amendment hearing.
<b>6.</b> Zoning Bylaws Amendment – Private Airstrips & Helipads	Brian provided resources and suggested a simple change to add new prohibited use in use tables. Ryan sent amendment materials to required parties for 30-day notice.	Hearing to be warned for 1/8	Vote to submit to Selectboard

### Future Projects:

1. 2024 – Planning – Update Scenic Resources section of Town Plan
2. March 11, 2024 – Zoning – Create Airport overlay district
3. 2024 – Discussion – Affordable housing
4. 2024 – Discussion – Short-term rentals, landlord & tenant rights
5. 2024 – Discussion – Small lots and setbacks

6. 2024 – Zoning – Add “Mixed Use” to Use Tables
7. 2024 – Zoning – Update Floodways and Floodplains language
8. 2024 – Planning – Update Future Land Use Map in Town Plan
9. 2024 – Discussion – Work with Fire and Police Departments on Standards for development

**8 PUBLIC HEARING – Town Plan Amendment – Energy Section: Review Rev. 12 - 2023.11.15**

The Planning Commission discussed the [Energy Section](#) of the Town Plan. The Commission discussed the language in the document. Changes were made where the Commission deemed appropriate. The Land Use Administrator will present the clean copy at the next meeting.

**Motion:** To adopt the Energy Section of the Town Plan, with the changes discussed at this meeting, so the clean copy to be sent to the Select Board at a future meeting.

**Made by:** Mr. Beach      **Second:** Mr. Bublat

**Vote:** All in Favor

**9 Route 5 Bike Route: Discussion**

Representative Arrison sent out a survey about having a bike path on Route 5, but the date to send the survey back had expired. The Commission agreed that they could send a letter to Rep. Arrison on their thoughts on the topic.

**10 Discussion of Items for Future Agendas**

- Affordable Housing
- Short Term Rentals
- Landlord Rights and Tenant Rights
- Small Lots and Setbacks
- Airstrip Regulations/Airport District
- Otter Creek Feasibility Study Update

**11 Any other business that can be legally discussed** None.

**12 Adjourn**

**Motion:** To adjourn the meeting.

**Made by:** Mr. Beach      **Second:** Mr. Todd

**Vote:** All in favor

The meeting adjourned at 8:08pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nichole Gagnon

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission will be Monday, December 11, 2023 - 6:30 PM, Martin Memorial Hall.

Remote option – Zoom link and instructions:

<https://www.weathersfieldvt.org/home/news/public-meetings-zoom>

To join any public meeting via phone, dial (929) 205-6099. When prompted, enter meeting ID 542-595-4364. You will not have a participant ID. Please press # when prompted to skip this section. The passcode for all meetings is 8021

#### WEATHERSFIELD PLANNING COMMISSION

Joseph Bublat, Chairperson

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Hank Ainley, Commissioner

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Brian Bosenberg, Vice-Chairperson

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Howard Beach, Clerk

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Michael Todd, Commissioner