



WAITSFIELD PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA

February 4, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

Planning Commission

Beth Cook
Robert Cook
Emma Hanson
AnnMarie Harmon, Vice-Chair
Becca Newhall
Alice Peal
Jonathan Ursprung, Chair

THE PLANNING COMMISSION WILL BE HOLDING A HYBRID MEETING. THE PUBLIC MAY ATTEND IN PERSON AT WAITSFIELD TOWN HALL OR REMOTE VIA ZOOM WITH TELEPHONE AND/OR VIDEO ACCESS. THOSE PARTICIPATING MAY SPEAK DURING THE DESIGNATED PERIODS.

To join the meeting remotely, use this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9190265312>

Meeting ID: 919 026 5312

Or call: 1 929 205 6099

Planning & Zoning Administrator

J. B. Weir

Town Administrator

Vacant

Town Clerk

Jennifer Peterson

Town Treasurer

Steve Lewis

Waitsfield Town Office

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1. **CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL**
2. **REVISIONS TO AGENDA, IF ANY (5 +/- min)**
3. **PUBLIC FORUM (10 +/- min)**
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JANUARY 21 (10 +/- min)**
5. **CVRPC UPDATES (30 +/- min) Brian Voigt**
6. **ALICE UPDATE (20 +/- min)**
7. **GROUNDWATER PROTECTION OVERLAY DISTRICT (10 +/- min) JB**
8. **VILLAGE MASTER PLANNING (15 +/- min) AnnMarie/Jonathan/JB**
9. **WASTEWATER PLANNING PROJECT UPDATE (10 +/- min) JB/Bob**
10. **OTHER BUSINESS (10+/-min)**
11. **ADJOURNMENT**

**Waitsfield Planning and Zoning Administrators Report
Planning Commission February 4, 2025 meeting**

5. CVRPC Updates

Brian Voigt will be in attendance to update the board on the Spring 2025 Wastewater Workshop (with Friends of the Mad River), floodplain reconnection projects, and the regional future land use map now being drafted.

6. Alice Update

Ms. Peal has included materials for discussion in the packet.

7. Groundwater Protection Overlay District (GPOD)

The Commission's public hearing on the proposed amendments will be held at the onset of the next meeting on February 18, 2025. An updated adoption timeline is again included in the packet for reference. Water Commissioner and Selectboard member, Brian Shupe, will be in attendance on behalf of the Water Commission. The public hearing will be from 7:00 – 7:30 p.m.

8. Village Master Planning

The VMPSA has not met since the last meeting on January 21st. If commissioners have not yet watched that meeting, it can viewed [here](#). At the 1/21 meeting, members reviewed initial conceptual design drawings and discussed the timing of the next community meeting. SE Group will come back in February with updated renderings based upon feedback from the 1/21/ meeting.

It is anticipated that the next meeting of the steering committee will occur the third week of February. The next steps include finalization of conceptual design for the next community forum event, along with the planning associated for that event. It is expected that the event will occur in March.

The project website has been updated to include an overview of the community event along with the dot board photos, as well as a comment/survey form. The website can be found [here](#). And is linked off the Town webpage [here](#).

8. Wastewater Planning Project Update

The Engineering Technical Team (ETT) met on 1/22/25 with Jon Ashley to review updated pump station locations and other final design work. Final location for the upper Bridge Street pump station is still being determined. The preferred location is situated on land deeded from Wrenn Compere to the Waitsfield United Church of Christ. The project team will be reaching out to Wrenn to gauge whether deed language restricting municipal use of the transferred acreage can be eliminated to allow a pump station there.

On 1/28/2025, the PZA and Jon Ashley met with the members of the Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP) with regard to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The PZA and Joshua Schwartz submitted the pre-application early last week. Vermont's CDBG funding assists communities on a competitive basis by providing financial and technical assistance to identify and address local needs in areas of: housing, economic development, public facilities, public services, and handicapped accessibility modifications. 70% of CDBG funds must primarily benefit persons of low and moderate income. Award potential is \$500,000 - \$1 million.

The project team is still awaiting details on the final grant and loan numbers from USDA RD, which had been expected in late January.

Once updated and complete, the PZA will include the revised funding stack for the project.

As of 1/16//25, the Town website page for the project has been updated and can be found [here](#).

10. Other Business

Jonathan may have an update on the MRVPD.

The PZA took part in a webinar hosted by ACCD on the 2025 Omnibus Housing Bill (aka the HOME Act). He can report on what he learned from that discussion.

Upcoming trainings/webinars:

Grants & Funding Chat:

This chat is a bi-monthly series to help members learn about specific funding opportunities as well as ways to make their funding applications competitive – and the advance work that is required when using someone else's money.

Each meeting focuses on a different topic. After an eye-opening 15-minute presentation on the day's topic, the format transitions to a participant Q&A, where attendees can ask questions of the presenter and each other. Bring your questions, share your challenges, and learn from other communities.

This series is presented by Bonnie Waninger, the Project & Funding Specialist on VLCT's Municipal Operations Support Team.

Registration Information

Register once and attend all sessions! Once you register, your link to join will be the same for every 2025 Grants & Funding Chat. Zoom will send you an email with the link to join ahead of each chat.

Future Dates and Topics

Tuesday, March 11, 2025 – Climate Resilience

Tuesday, May 13, 2025 – Housing*

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 – Transportation*

Wednesday, November 12, 2025 – Community Economic Development

* These two might switch dates due to timing of the legislative session.

Presenter

Bonnie Waninger, Project & Funding Specialist, VLCT

Website [here](#). Registration for February topic not available as of yet

Mad River Valley Wastewater Workshop:

Date: Spring 2025

Location: TBD

The Friends of the Mad River, Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission and Department of Environmental Conservation are partnering to offer a Wastewater Workshop in the Mad River Valley in the Spring 2025. Discover how onsite wastewater treatment (septic) systems work and the various kinds of systems installed in Vermont. Learn why newer systems are no longer the septic systems of the past. Understand the regulatory framework for on-site wastewater systems and potable water supplies. Develop an understanding of how to maintain your onsite wastewater system to keep it functional in the years to come.

The Future of VT Land Use Regulation

In this webinar, we will provide the audience with an understanding of H. 687 (Act 181) and how it affects the state, municipal and regional planning commission processes. From the Act 250 perspective, this workshop will provide an overview of the changes to the law, and then focus on the “nuts and bolts” of the interim exemptions that provide an on ramp to the “tiered” system of land use review. The Agency of Commerce and Community Development will discuss the incentive programs of the new Community Investment Board, and the RPC representative will discuss their roles in plan and map development for the new tiered system and designated areas.

Presenters:

Peter Gill

Jacob Hemmerick

Charlie Baker or Catherine Dimitruk

Repeat sessions of this webinar will be offered on the following two dates:

Wednesday 2/5/25 10:00am - 11:00am [Register](#)

Thursday 3/27/25 2:00pm - 3:00pm [Register](#)

Vermont’s Land Conservation: Where do we go from here?

Vermont has an incredible track record of protecting land for people and nature. Using the Conserved Lands Inventory developed by Vermont Housing & Conservation Board as part of Vermont’s 30x30 effort, we reflect on the distribution of permanently conserved lands around the state, and how those lands intersect our most ecologically important places seen in Vermont Conservation Design. By looking at these past patterns, we can celebrate the work by federal, state, town, and NGOs. We can also reflect on the types of lands and parts of the state that have been historically under-represented in our land conservation investments, and prioritize future places to work for both people and nature. Join us for this exciting webinar to learn how your town’s efforts can contribute to making our conserved lands more diverse, equitable, and ecologically impactful.

Presenters:

Robert Zaino, Ecologist

Jens Hilke, Conservation Planner

Repeat sessions of this webinar will be offered on the following two dates:

Thursday February 20th 1:00- 2:00p.m [Register](#)

Tuesday, April 8th 2025 10:00a.m. - 11:00a.m. [Register](#)

Cold-Blooded Critters: Conserving Vermont's Reptiles and Amphibians

Despite its cold winters, Vermont is home to surprising herpetological diversity with 19 confirmed species of reptiles, and 21 amphibians. Many of these species, like the gray treefrog, are small and cryptic, and more often seen than heard. And you could go your whole life without seeing a spring salamander if you don't know where to look! But unlike these common species, a growing number of Vermont's reptiles and amphibians are rare, threatened, or endangered within the state and need our care, attention, and protection to survive challenges such as climate change, habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, and poaching. Join VT Fish & Wildlife Herpetologist Luke Groff, and Conservation Planner Jens Hilke, to learn about iconic VT species of special conservation concern such as Timber Rattlesnake, Mudpuppy, North American Racer, Wood Turtle, Spiny Softshell Turtle, and more. We'll discuss their unique ecology and habitat requirements, learn about Fish & Wildlife conservation programs to support these species, and explore municipal land-use planning strategies that can help ensure thriving populations of reptiles and amphibians in Vermont for decades to come.

Presenters:

Luke Groff - Herpetologist

Jens Hilke - Conservation Planner

Repeat sessions of this webinar will be offered on the following two dates:

Tuesday February 11th, 2025 1:00p.m. - 2:00p.m. [Register](#)

Friday, March 14, 2025 10:00a.m. - 11:00a.m. [Register](#)

Seeing Success through Conservation Stories.

How can Conservation Commissions across Vermont effectively collaborate over long distances of space and time? By sharing stories of successes, challenges faced, and lessons learned, conservation minded committees across the state can learn from each other's experiences, and stand on each other's shoulders. Please join us as we celebrate moments of success both large and small by Conservation Commissions from all over Vermont. We will glean lessons, highlight best practices, and together take a step forward towards building a more robust sense of statewide communication, collaboration, and institutional memory so that Vermonters from all corners of the state can contribute their energies to solving local challenges while simultaneously supporting their like-minded peers.

Presenters:

David Moroney

Jens Hilke

Repeat sessions of this webinar will be offered on the following two dates:

Monday March 10th, 2025 3:00p.m. - 4:00p.m. [Register](#)

Wednesday May 7th, 2025 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. [Register](#)

Respectfully submitted,

J.B. Weir

TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 21, 2025

Draft

Members Present: Beth Cook, Bob Cook, Emma Hanson, AnnMarie Harmon, Becca Newhall, Jonathan Ursprung

Members Absent: Alice Peal

Staff Present: JB Weir, Planning and Zoning Administrator

Others Present:

II. Regular Business

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm by Jonathan Ursprung. The meeting was held in person at the Town Offices and remotely via Zoom.

2. Review agenda for addition, removal, or adjustment of any items

Alice was not present, so would not be providing updates. AnnMarie had a report to present during other business.

3. Public Forum

No members of the public were present.

4. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of January 7, 2025 were approved.

5. Groundwater Protection Overlay

JB provided an update, noting that there is no requirement for notification of individual adjacent property owners, and that all parties required to be notified have been sent a copy of the draft, with no comments having been received. The public hearing is scheduled for February 18.

JB also reported that Robin Morris is stepping down from his Water System and Wastewater Project roles, and that water connections/allocations will likely be going through the Zoning Office going forward.

6. Village Master Planning

There was some discussion regarding adjusting the schedule of Steering Committee (SC) meetings, in order to provide the PC members with time to watch the recordings in advance of PC meetings. JB will look into this matter. Next discussed was how to ensure that the PC is up to speed prior to the upcoming public meeting on the project, which is being planned for March. A joint SC/PC meeting was proposed, but the timing and already planned upcoming agendas indicated that this is not likely to be possible until later in the Spring. The possibility of providing child care and food during the next public meeting was raised, and it was agreed to move forward with plans for this, including reaching out to Ira at Friends of the Mad River, who has indicated that some grant money may be available for this type of effort.

MOTION: *AnnMarie made a motion to appropriate up to \$500 of Planning Commission funds for the*

purpose of providing child care and food at the upcoming public meeting that is part of the Village Master Planning Project, to be held in March 2025. The motion was seconded by Beth, and passed unanimously.

AnnMarie then outlined the draft drawings which had been provided by SE Group, noting that the focus is on creating development along the Slow Road, which is proposed to be extended to the north onto property owned by Sean Lawson, with the access to Route 100 also moved northward. At the southern end, it is being suggested that the southern end of Slow Road and its connection to the shopping center also be reconfigured to provide a straighter access lanes between Route 100 and the Post Office as well as potentially extending the road to the south either through the green or along the existing service road.

Proposed along the current Slow Road area is development of housing/mixed use buildings, with parking located behind the buildings, partially to serve as a traffic route as the road itself will be designed to be closed to traffic for events such as the farmers' market. It was noted that there needs to be an evaluation of commercial demand, to determine if all the structures along the road can serve as mixed use, including housing.

PC members discussed that having buildings at the north end of the road would diminish the view of the wetland area, and there were points made regarding the best location along the road for potential inclusion of a green space/playground area. Alternatively, it was noted that keeping buildings along the roadway as depicted would provide more of a 'Main Street' feel.

The potential for locating a community center/pool here was discussed, with points made regarding associated parking needs and a center's likely interruption of a pedestrian-oriented space. It was noted that a pool in the Skatium area would be difficult to develop due to the soils there, and also that there may not be a large enough population to support a pool. The Fiddler's Green site was mentioned as a possible siting spot. JB spoke of the recent changes in St. Albans, including construction of a community center, which has in part been funded through establishment of a TIF District and a targeted LOT.

On the eastern side of Route 100, design plans include an expansion of parking into the green space that now houses a septic system, with a public picnic area planned for the northern end of the eastern line of buildings, where there is a great viewpoint. The demolition of the western strip of buildings, to be replaced with three new buildings having a greater presence on Route 100, is also part of the design for this area. The location of proposed crosswalks across Route 100 was noted.

PC discussion included mention of parking along Route 100 adjacent to the three new buildings that are proposed.

It was outlined that these plans provide for the development of over 100 new housing units, which is intentionally greater than the 70 requested due to the realization that not everything included in the draft plan will be developed immediately. This also provides for more flexibility as final plans are developed.

There was a discussion regarding the removal of the Brothers' building, PC members felt that this building is attractive and should not be taken down; it already provides housing, and there was no consensus regarding the need for straightening the entry road to that area.

Questions arose about what is planned for either side of the Shaw's building, as well as whether enough parking has been incorporated into the draft plan.

JB reported that he had been in discussions with Sean Lawson, who is amenable to the proposed change of the northern end of the Slow Road. They also considered some locations along Carroll Road that might support housing.

It was brought up that both the Baird and Parker properties have some potentially developable land along the roadway, and that this planning might provide an opportunity to reach out to both parties and determine their interest in participating.

Phasing possibilities were discussed, with it being noted that the proposed changes, while not as overwhelming as plans presented during previous Irasville planning work, are quite comprehensive. Additionally, the parcels included in the design are all privately owned and therefore development proposals will not come from the Town but from individual landowners.

The need to provide useful information for the general public to understand the concepts was noted as important; AnnMarie suggested the use of 3D renderings if possible. The messaging and context in which it is presented were discussed, as methods to ensure that the public input which is being sought will be relevant.

Jonathan pointed out that it is possible enough development takes place outside of Irasville that wastewater capacity is fully used, and all that is presented in the plans might not be feasible. JB noted that there is likely more capacity in the long run, but that this is a consideration to keep in mind.

It was confirmed that Fiddler's Green has not been included in the plans to date, and that Downstreet will be looking into increasing the number of housing units there.

Another core team meeting with Alex will aid in refining the plan in preparation for the public meeting/presentation in March.

7. Wastewater Planning Project Update

JB highlighted some of the information he had included in the meeting packet, noting that a pre-application is being submitted for the Community Development Block Grant, the engineering team continues with design work, and that Greensboro needs to return 2.5 million dollars in ARPA funding, which will now be split between Montgomery and Waitsfield. He and Joshua Schwartz continue to explore potential funding sources.

8. Other Business

Emergency Shelters – AnnMarie reported on her conversation with Fred Messer regarding the Elementary School serving as an official emergency shelter. It was agreed to invite Fred to attend the

PC meeting on April 1 in order to discuss ways to ensure that this becomes more common knowledge.

MRVPD – Jonathan reported that this group has reviewed and approved a work plan for the upcoming year, and that Joshua Schwartz had been able to have a conversation with UVM Medical Center staff, which indicated that there does not appear to be much room for discussion at this point regarding the closure of the MRV Health Center. Jonathan also indicated that the PD is planning to hold a celebration of its 40th anniversary, to reinvigorate public awareness/understanding of the District's efforts.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:59 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary

February 4, 2025

To: Waitsfield Planning Commission

From: Alice Peal

Webinar, Floodplains, CVRPC Survey, Meadow Road Bridge

I recommend this webinar by the UVM Water Resources Research and Floodplains Research Programs

The Potential of Vermont's Landscape to Attenuate Floods and Enhance Flood Resilience (With some discussion of inundation and erosion hazards) Rebecca Diehl Research Assistant Professor Department of Geography and Geosciences January 16, 2025

Slides here:

<https://floodready.vermont.gov/sites/floodready/files/documents/VT%20Floodplain%20Managers%20Jan%202025.pdf>

Recording also available

Flood Ready Vermont has drop-in session on the third Thursday of the month from 9 – 10 am.

<https://floodready.vermont.gov/news/thurs-116-9-am-locating-functioning-floodplains-vt-floodplain-management-drop-discussion>

<https://floodready.vermont.gov/news/online-water-resource-seminars-water-connects-2024>

CVRPC Regional Plan Committee News

Currently working on the Energy Chapter - topic for next meeting is renewable energy siting.

Survey from CVRPC:

The Planning Commission will be receiving a survey from CVRPC. The purpose of the survey is to promote community awareness on the future land use map that will eventually become a useful planning tool for the region. The input we receive will help us update the new Regional Future Land Use Area Map and guide future projects and policies. The goal is to align our Regional Plan with community vision. The survey includes more detailed questions such as demographic input, use and services, types and potential areas of growth (residential, commercial, and industrial), and economic, land conservation and transport network priorities. We also want to include broader questions such as key regional challenges/opportunities and familiarity around land use practices.

Meadow Road Bridge

I'm working with Keith Cubbon at CVRPC. We found a Federal Grant Program to fund the study and design for the failing Meadow Road Bridge. 100% funded. I presented this to the Selectboard, they gave the go ahead. Ten minutes later the new story about the Federal Grant and Loan freeze dropped in my email.

I talked with Keith Cubbon again and with all the new stories about this edict, we decided to move forward with the application for the grant, due on March 4. Hopefully this all might just mean a delay in distribution of the grant money.

(I'm asking the SB to rename the bridge the Alice Peal Memorial Bridge)

Groundwater Protection Overlay District

Adoption Timeline

- 1) 12/17/2024: PC approved Table 2.12, corresponding definitions and Map - **Complete**
- 2) 1/14-15/2025: Warned meeting in Valley Reporter for 1/16/25 issue; submitted materials to CVRPC and ACCD; submitted materials to abutting towns - **Complete**
- 3) 2/18/2025: PC public hearing for adoption
- 4) 2/19/2025: Send PC approved GPOD to Selectboard
- 5) March/April: Select Board public hearing for adoption (could be later depending on Town Administrator vacancy)