

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes July 3, 2025 - DRAFT

In Attendance: Kevin Blow – Chair, Rick Conway, Mike Norris, Robb Spensely, Donna Wilson, Chuck Charbonneau, Ann Reed, Jeff Biasuzzi, Logan Solomon, Alicia Malay, Nancy Gaudreau

Meeting was called to order by K. Blow at 6:32pm.

K. Blow noted one revision to the agenda, New Business to state update rather than discussion for the planning commission membership. Moved by R. Spensely and seconded by D. Wilson to accept agenda as amended. Motion passed 6-0.

Minutes from the May 22, 2025 meeting were approved with a motion by R. Conway and a second by D. Wilson, which passed 6-0.

There were no public comments.

Under old business, the subdivision by-laws were reviewed specifically in the two highlighted areas of the document previously provided by Logan Solomon from RRPC. Section 105 of the addendum of the subdivision by-laws state:

“Location of Fragile Features and Natural and Cultural Resources, as identified in the Pittsford Town Plan (including wetlands, floodplains and surface waters; steep slopes, prominent knolls and ridgelines; wildlife habitat and natural areas), as well as historic resources, farmland, and forest resources in area to be developed.”

There was discussion on what wording is currently in the Town Plan and Zoning Regulations to meet the requirements, as well as maintain consistency and clarity. The Planning Commission debated on whether to clarify or delete portions of Section 105 wording. It was decided, after some discussion, to remove the wording ‘prominent knolls and ridgelines’ but keep the remainder of the statement.

Included in the discussion was R. Spensley reminding Commission members that the bylaws need to have some teeth when completed. Delimit the level of criteria based upon subdivision process. M. Norris mentioned using ANR atlases for some of the mapping information. This may help mitigate the excessive cost to the builder/homeowner. L. Solomon stated that the guidance can be structured however the Planning Commission sees fit for this portion of the bylaws. There was a discussion about minor and major subdivision definitions, as well as a 10-acre town versus a 1 acre town. Towns are no longer required to have a DRB for a ten-acre town, just permanent zoning and subdivision bylaws.

The next highlighted section is on page 10, item j. L. Solomon stated that some version of this is necessary as appropriate by Pittsford. The section read:

“(j) Applicants shall identify and avoid undue adverse impacts on wetlands, flood hazard areas, surface waters, and historic or cultural sites identified in the review process. Only when

necessary to ensure a subdivision conforms with the goals and policies of the Pittsford Town Plan, the ZBA shall require the preservation of open space or existing site features through layout design, clustering, or designation of common land.”

The Planning Commission members discussed the definition of cultural sites, what Google’s definition was, identifying different places in town that may be cultural sites, and decided to keep with this. Examples brought up of cultural sites are the Fort Vengeance Monument, the Ice Caves, Town churches, and the library. There was also a question of what is clustering and the consensus was that the word buildings should be after clustering. This also led to a discussion on needing more clarity and definition for words within the subdivision bylaws. There was a discussion on where the definitions should be present, whether in the beginning of the subdivision bylaws or as a part of the zoning regulations. Right now, there are definitions, then telecommunication definitions as a separate appendix in the zoning regulations. L. Solomon was asked if other towns have definition sections. He stated that Poultney, Brandon, and West Rutland all have recently updated their definition sections. There was a question on whether it should be definitions or a glossary. Ultimately, it was decided the definitions for the subdivision bylaws should be part of the zoning regulations and follow the telecommunication definitions as Article XXII: Subdivision Definitions.

A. Reed started the discussion of a Tier 1A versus a Tier 1B town by reading the criteria for a Tier 1A town. These include:

A) A municipal plan that is approved in accordance with 24 VSA § 4350

B) The boundaries are consistent with downtown or village centers and planned growth areas as defined in 24 VSA § 4348(a)(12)

C) The municipality has adopted flood hazard and river corridor bylaws or the proposed Tier 1A are excludes the flood hazard areas and river corridor

D) The municipality has adopted permanent zoning and subdivision bylaws that do not include broad exemptions that exclude significant private or public land development from requiring a municipal land use permit.

E) The municipality has permanent land development regulations for the Tier 1A area that further the smart growth principles of 24 VSA chapter 76A, adequately regulate the physical form and scale of development, provide reasonable provision for a portion of the areas with sewer and water to allow at least four stories, and conform to the guidelines established by the Board.

F) The Tier 1A area is compatible with the character of adjacent National Register Historic Districts, National or State Register Historic Sites, and other significant cultural and natural resources identified by local or State government.

G) The municipality has identified and planned for maintenance of significant natural communities, rare, threatened, and endangered species located in the Tier 1A area or excluded those areas from the Tier 1A area.

H) Public water and wastewater systems or planned improvements have the capacity to support additional development within the Tier 1A area.

I) Municipal staff adequate to support coordinated comprehensive and capital planning, development review, and zoning administration in the Tier 1A area.

This information came from a Memorandum found by the Land Use Review Board (LURB) No decision was made on whether Tier 1A or Tier 1B would be preferable, as a conversation happened discussing one acre towns versus ten acre towns. R. Conway would like clarification that a Tier 1B is a ten acre town. This criteria also led to a conversation about the future land use map, especially the one developed by Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC) for their Plan 2026. There was discussion on how RRPC came to a selectboard meeting about their Plan 2026, as well as the selectboard having several meetings with the Plan 2026 mapping on their agenda. A. Reed has sent Devon Neary and Logan Solomon several changes that have come about due to these meetings. A. Reed reported she is still waiting to hear back on some of the changes proposed to RRPC, including the update on where all of the water connections are in Town.

K. Blow updated the Planning Commission membership that at the selectboard meeting of July 2, 2025, the selectboard voted to appoint Gordon Fox as a regular member of the Planning Commission (moving him up from being an alternate) and appointing Nancy Gaudreau as the new alternate member of the Planning Commission.

J. Biasuzzi gave updates on a VLCT training taking place about ordinance adoptions and updates, as well as updates for the open meeting law that are now in effect.

R. Conway let the Planning Commission know the new historical marker has been installed in the temporary home until Bridge 108 is completed. A photo was shown to all in attendance showing the marker installed.

R. Spensley made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:13pm. This was seconded by M. Norris and approved 6-0.