

Pittsford Planning Commission
Minutes - DRAFT
October 28, 2025

Board Members Present: Kevin Blow, Chuck Charbonneau, Rick Conway, Robb Spensley, Donna Wilson, Mike Norris, Gordon Fox

Others Present: Jeff Biasuzzi, Ann Reed, Logan Solomon – RRPC

1. Meeting - Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 by Kevin Blow – Chair.

2. Approval of Meeting Agenda

A motion was made by Robb Spensley and seconded by Gordon Fox to approve the meeting agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of October 23, 2025 were tabled until the next meeting due to an updated draft that not all members were able to review before the meeting.

4. Public Comments

None at this time.

5. Old Business

The zoning regulations were reviewed starting with the setbacks for connex boxes. The question was if setbacks were going to be required, as this has been debated two previous meetings. Instead of calling them shipping containers, metal boxes, or any other term, it was settled to call them connex boxes.

Chuck Charbonneau made the motion to make all connex boxes exempt from setbacks in all districts and no permit required. This was seconded by Rick Conway.

Robb Spensley felt there should be an exception for connex boxes in the case of a fire, people moving in, or during construction. He stated it would be reasonable for six months. Maybe people could get a permit for longer. If it is not broke, don't fix it was his thoughts. There have been no problems. Rick Conway and Chuck Charbonneau said connex boxes are not currently regulated and we have a precedence. There have been cases that went to court with boxes already on the property line. Putting a boat or camper on a property line is also allowed. Right now setbacks are not required. Chuck Charbonneau further stated that connex boxes are on someone's radar here in town. He feels we need to allow people to store their stuff in the connex boxes even on small properties where there is no storage and little land. He wanted to know why the planning commission is trying to make things more complicated.

Robb Spensley thanked Chuck Charbonneau for his information. Robb has talked to people in town that do not want them on the property lines. He suggested making rules to keep neighborly behaviors. There are those that do not want them on the lines due to neighbor issues. Some boundary lines may not be surveyed and may cause issues between neighbors on where the property lines are located. Rick Conway stated that setbacks may cause some surveys to be done too. Robb Spensley stated it may be easier if it is not right on the line. Chuck Charbonneau stated that driveways can be right on the line. These connex

boxes can be in the driveway, which is on the line. In the last five years, Chuck Charbonneau has not heard a complaint about the connex boxes for the planning commission or the selectboard, as he has watched all of the selectboard meetings.

Robb Spensley stated that some people can't afford to by connex boxes. He didn't think that the planning commission should do things that create conflicts. On a personal level, he wanted to know how members would feel if someone put a connex box on their property line or even multiple boxes. He also expressed concern about property values. Robb Spensley wanted someone to explain to him why it had to be on the property line.

Chuck Charbonneau stated he believes conflict will be created if we all of a sudden set setbacks. Why is it okay to tell someone they can't use their ten feet of property. Chuck stated he was okay with someone putting a connex box on the line. He doesn't like people having decorations on their lawn, but he does not complain about them.

Rick Conway stated that C&C Fireworks were told they could not use a tent, that it had to be a locked storage unit. The connex boxes have all been changed to the same color. Gordon Fox said the connex boxes at C&C come and go. Rick Conway stated that having them all the same color seemed nice.

Chuck Charbonneau stated that ultimately, the selectboard can always make an ordinance if there is an issue in the end with these connex boxes.

Robb Spensley stated again that he feels like they should not be on the property lines due to cost and sight. Rick Conway stated that a house can be the same way next to your property. The house could be dilapidated and it would be the same as a rusty connex box. Robb Spensley stated that some doomsday people turn connex boxes into houses or shelters. Rick Conway pointed out that would require a different type of permit, as it is a house then.

Donna Wilson said she was coming from the perspective that they are used as storage just like a shed. Connex boxes are becoming more popular due to the loopholes. Connex boxes should be treated like a shed in rural and village settings. They should have the same requirements as a shed.

Rick Conway stated that you will still see it. The ten foot difference is not going to make it harder to see from property lines.

Mike Norris stated if he built a four hundred square foot shed, he would need to have a permit. Connex boxes would not need one. As a temporary, maybe not have them permitted. Maybe all sheds should not have setbacks if a connex box is being used as a shed. If a shed is on blocks, it could be moved too. There should not be different rules for a connex box. It is like a pool.

Chuck Charbonneau stated that inground pools require permits and above ground pools do not. This is like a connex box and a shed.

Mike Norris stated that shed and connex boxes are the same use, so why have different rules? Why are we splitting hairs on this? If ten feet is a setback that is required for everything except connex boxes, then he is going to buy a connex box and get ten feet of his lawn back. Mike Norris said he changed his mind on connex boxes after talking about it two meetings ago and then thinking about it and the ramifications of being allowed to not have setbacks. Connex boxes are essentially a shed.

Jeff Biasuzzi stated that the planning commission does not work with the rules every day. The legality is that it is an assembly of materials for occupancy or use. The planning commission is saying a connex container is not an assembly of materials, which is not right. He suggested a compromise of five feet so that people can mow around them and take care of their property.

Robb Spensley restated if it is not broke, don't fix it. Jeff Biasuzzi said it is broke, but why change it. Rick Conway stated they are trying to change it to get more use of land. Jeff Biasuzzi stated that the person could get a setback waiver if there is an issue.

Rick Conway asked if it is going to affect safety if connex boxes are put back to back on two adjoining property lines.

Gordon Fox said he does not like telling people what they can do, but Jeff point on getting to the other side of it makes sense.

Chuck Charbonneau stated that Hitchcocks could not put up a garage and that affected the town with the inability to snowmobile across their land. This is going to upset the town.

Ann Reed spoke up and said that maybe the setback waiver would be the answer to both sides.

Rick Conway asked Chuck Charbonneau if he was okay with any setback. He also stated they are down to ten feet for setbacks. If anyone applies for a variance or waiver, it may not pass.

Logan Solomon stated that waivers and variances are legally very different. Waivers allow more flexibility. They are different.

Rick Conway stated that Chittenden and Rutland Town have no zoning. What are other towns doing? There are so many different configurations to the lots in town too. Are we causing a safety issue?

Chuck Charbonneau said he didn't believe a safety issue would be caused due to the different size hoses and equipment the fire department has. Rick Conway stated that maybe placement can't block emergency needs.

Chuck said he would rescind his motion. He does not want setbacks. He does not feel the planning commission has a right to tell a landowner where to put a connex box. He feels if a neighbor has an issue with the placement, the neighbor should take it up with the connex box owner. Rick Conway stated he needs to go with precedence. Chuck Charbonneau also stated he needs to go with precedence. Donna Wilson stated that she did bring up the box trailer on Route 3. Chuck Charbonneau stated that box trailer had a story behind it, as someone had put a house too close to the property line and it was retaliatory.

Donna Wilson stated that the zoning regulations need consistency. A shed and a connex box have the same use.

Rick Conway asked if Chuck Charbonneau's motion was still up. Chuck Charbonneau stated that his motion was still up. Ann reread the motion. Rick Conway stated that is how it is currently.

Gordon Fox stated he was trying to understand and asked Donna Wilson if she wanted setbacks or a permit. Donna Wilson stated she wanted setbacks. Robb Spensley commented he wanted setbacks and possible permits. Rick Conway asked about five foot setbacks. Donna Wilson agreed with Rick Conway that waivers or variances could set precedence.

Chuck Charbonnea stated he would amend his motion to state all connex containers need a five foot setback in the rural and village districts and do not require a permit. All other districts are exempt from setbacks and do not require permits for connex containers. This was seconded by Rick Conway. Motion passed unanimously.

Ann Reed asked if there were any other zoning regulations that need to be reviewed.

Rick Conway asked about the percentage of maximum lot coverage on page 17. He wanted to know if this needed to be changed to get as much use out of the land as possible.

Logan Solomon stated that yes, you may want to increase the maximum lot coverage due to the height restrictions.

The consensus among planning commission members was to change to 25% maximum lot coverage except in the conservation I and conservation II districts.

Logan Solomon let the planning commission know they would need to approve to go to public meeting.

Rick Conway made the motion to adopt resolution to hold a public hearing on the draft zoning amendment in accordance with 24 VSA Chapter 117. Chuck Charbonneau seconded the motion.

A comment was made that connex boxes need to be in the table of uses and in the definition. Logan Solomon said he would add this in.

The vote on the motion passed unanimously.

The planning commission reporting form and public hearing form are ok as written by Logan Solomon. The hearing will be held in the conference room at the municipal offices at 7:00pm on November 20, 2025 to allow for time to advertise the hearing in the Rutland Herald, as per statutory requirements.

6. New Business

None at this time.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be November 20, 2025 at 7:00pm.

9. Adjournment

A motion was made by Chuck Charbonneau and seconded by Robb Spensley to adjourn the meeting at 8:26PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Reed
Recording Secretary

Approved by,

The Pittsford Planning Commission