

MEETING MINUTES
MUNICIPALITY OF WOODSTOCK, VERMONT
WOODSTOCK PLANNING COMMISSION
31 The Green
Woodstock, VT 05091

The Woodstock Planning Commission held a public meeting on February 5th, 2025, to discuss the following:

Members present: Ben Pauly (Chair), Matt Driscoll, Alex Mulley, Sarah Glasser Tucker, Mary Margaret Sloan, and Brad Lawrence

Public present: Harry Falconer and Bryan Kovalick

Staff present: Stephanie Appelfeller, Mike Tuller, Molly Maxham, and Emily Collins

Administrative Tasks

1. **Call to Order** – Ben Pauly called the meeting to order at 6:03pm. No adjustments were made to the agenda.

2. **Minutes:**

Matt Driscoll motioned to approve 12/04/24 minutes as printed.

Sarah Glasser Tucker seconded.

Vote. 6-0. Approved.

Matt Driscoll motioned to approve 01/08/25 minutes as printed.

Sarah Glasser Tucker seconded.

Vote. 6-0. Approved.

3. **Public Comment: None**

4. **Planning Consultation:**

Bryan Kovalick from Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Planning Commission was present to conduct a planning consultation to the board. Bryan Kovalick recited the purpose of planning consultations as described in Vermont state statute. Twice within an eight-year period, the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) shall consult with municipalities to determine whether they are receiving adequate support and ascertain the efficacy of their efforts. Bryan Kovalick asked the following questions and allowed for group discussion.

Bryan Kovalick asked what planning efforts the board is currently, or planning to, undertake to update the 2023 amended Town Plan, which expires in September of 2027. Benjamin Pauly shared that Harry Falconer is applying for a municipal planning grant to build a future land use map. The grant will be awarded in April or May for work to begin in June or July. This would assist in the long-term goal of completely rewriting the Town Plan. There would also be a high focus on housing as directed by the Selectboard and Trustees.

Bryan Kovalick then asked what activities the board is involved in implementing the Town Plan. Bryan Kovalick stated that the ongoing process of rewriting the zoning bylaws is a relevant activity and asked if the board is focusing on the Village or Town. Benjamin Pauly said that the goal is to adopt revisions by June or July. These revisions will focus on allowing for densification efforts in the Village because of the potential offered by existing infrastructure. Depending on grant funding, the board would then direct their focus to the Town. Benjamin Pauly shared that Laura Powell may have more information on capital budgets, but that the board has not discussed budgets in detail as the Selectboard and Trustees have. Bryan Kovalick added that the Planning Commission may be involved in this process but is not required to be. Bryan Kovalick inquired about supplemental plans. Benjamin Pauly said that there have been discussions about focusing development in the East End, but that nothing specific has been proposed. Benjamin Pauly noted that the general spirit of their efforts is to make the development process as straightforward as possible within their growth goals. Bryan Kovalick asked about other related programming and Benjamin Pauly stated that there has been interest expressed in designating Neighborhood Development Areas and looking into subdivision bylaws.

Bryan Kovalick asked next if the board is receiving appropriate funds for their planning efforts. Benjamin Pauly stated that they have not identified a need for any funding but are optimistic for the municipal planning grant.

Bryan Kovalick asked if anything has hindered, interfered with, or delayed the planning process. Benjamin Pauly shared that there has been a lack of clarity surrounding policies and procedures to follow, especially as multiple board members are new to their roles. Mary Margaret Sloan said that they would appreciate advice from legal professionals on best practices to encourage transparency and public involvement. Bryan Kovalick notes that posting agendas in more locations and for longer than the required time could drive more engagement.

Bryan Kovalick inquired about any other ongoing or future planning needs of the board and how Two Rivers could assist with these needs. Benjamin Pauly said that Harry Falconer is a great resource to rely on. Benjamin Pauly again expressed interest in designating Neighborhood Development Areas and looking into subdivision bylaws. He says that Complete Streets would become a priority if Neighborhood Development Areas are pursued. Benjamin Pauly also expressed interest in understanding Act 250 housing exemptions, especially concerning floodplain standards. He wondered if Kevin Geiger or Kyle Katz with Two Rivers could assist in the Village adopting certain zoning regulations consistent with state regulations. There was conversation regarding the balance between building flood resiliency and mitigating the impact of new development on old development. Benjamin Pauly expressed interest in updating design criteria and Matt Driscoll advocated for a sort of package system to streamline the approval process. Harry Falconer said that this can be modeled after other towns. Sarah Glasser Tucker indicated that she has concerns about new buildings looking too similar to one another. Bryan Kovalick recapitulated the board's areas of interest: clarity in design review criteria for design review districts, reviewing zoning bylaws and regulations for subdivisions, integrating Complete Streets initiatives into planning, and Act 250 housing exemptions through revisions to our bylaws.

Harry Falconer asked if the board has done any hazard mitigation planning and clarified how it can be used as a tool for receiving assistance following natural disasters. Bryan Kovalick explained that a locality must have a Hazard Mitigation Plan in place to be eligible to receive individual aid or public assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and compels the state to cover a portion of local match requirements to FEMA funding. Benjamin Pauly was unfamiliar with this idea. Harry Falconer explained that towns can apply for funding to work on Hazard Mitigation Plans with their RPCs and may integrate it with the Town Plan to demonstrate intentionality to FEMA and guide local policy, in the event of a natural disaster. Benjamin Pauly expressed interest in solidifying river corridor, or riparian buffer, protections with this effort, perhaps in the flood area bylaws.

Bryan Kovalick will draft a memorandum to compile the board's feedback and guide next steps.

5. Continuation of Bylaw Analysis and Revision Recommendations:

Harry Falconer from Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Planning Commission was present to continue presenting zoning bylaw analysis and revision recommendations.

Ben Pauly adjourned the meeting.

Planning Updates

No other business was heard. Harry Falconer will work with his colleagues to review feedback from the Planning Commission. Individual board members will return to the next meeting with specific recommendations pertaining to their feedback.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02pm