

PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes
Wednesday, February 5, 2025, at 6:00 PM
Town of Fairlee Town Hall
Grange Room
75 Town Common Road
Fairlee, VT 05045

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: Acting Chair Danen called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

PRESENT

Commission Members: Lynne Fitzhugh (Present); Susanne Pacilio (Present); Miranda Clemson (Present); Doug Tift (Present); and Tim Danen, Acting Chair (Present); Smith Reed (Absent); and Moriah Ludwig (Absent). A quorum was met.

Zoning Administrator: Chris Brimmer (Present)

Minutes Clerk: Joanna Bligh (Present)

Visitors

In Person: Lisa Avery

Online: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Pacilio made the motion, and Tift seconded the motion, to approve the minutes from January 8, 2025, as amended.

- Page 1, under Public Comments, first bullet, delete the bulleted line.
- Page 2, top of page, third bulled, add “Chapman Place/The Denison.”
- Page 2, under Open Discussion, bullet 2, change “The use of highway contractors is” to “contractors may.”
- Page 2, Motion, change “Sarah Copeland Hanzas” to “Monique Priestly.”
- Page 2, under Economic Development Plan, line introducing the bullets, change “resplendency” to “resiliency.”

Vote: All approved, none opposed, and none abstained. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT

Acting Chair Danen introduced ZA Brimmer for his report. ZA Brimmer asked the Commissioners for a run-down of the January 21, 2025, Conservation Commission Exploratory Group (CCEG) meeting.

- Fitzhugh noted that there was a good turnout of 31 residents and with 20 additional residents on Zoom. The CCEG held a straw poll of those who might be interested in a Conservation Commission in Fairlee, and 15 responded Yea, 3 responded Nay, and 5 were undecided. Fitzhugh stated that there has to be a Town vote to establish a Conservation Commission.

- Tifft stated that part-time residents probably would not make up the majority of the Conservation Commission. The petition would not make the 2025 Annual Town meeting because there is not enough time to gather signatures. Perhaps a special Town vote could happen. Tifft noted that the Select Board could spearhead the adoption of a Conservation Commission.
- Clemson stated that residents were pleased to hear that a Conservation Commission would not tell landowners what to do with their property.
- ZA Brimmer noted that off site ACT 250 mitigation is funneled through a Conservation Commission and any funding or grants would stay in Town.
- Chair Danen noted that information and education need to go out to the public.

NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT AREAS

Sample Language for Bylaw Provisions

ZA Brimmer provided the Commissioners with proposed new language for the Bylaw under sections 2.3, 2.4, 3.1.1, and 5.6.7. ZA Brimmer highlighted the Bylaw revisions and other discussion points as follows:

- The NDA area extends from School Street to the Fairlee Diner to the Connecticut River.
- This reflects the Village-scale economic development.
- The VT Agency for Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) using the above NDA area makes Fairlee eligible for block grants. Additionally, the USDA has rural development grants that can be stacked with other available grants.
- Jonah Richard has housing for residents using vouchers.
- Vehicle gas stations as a conditional use was discussed.
- The new constructions and refurbishments of buildings can use 20 feet of unobstructed shoulder for parking.

Discussion:

- Avery stated that in St. Johnsbury, there is funding for a coordinated entry list, which facilitates finding homes for those coming out of homelessness.
- Tifft that the Town could use funding for a low-flow community sewage system.
- Pacilio and Fitzhugh discussed the conditional use question for gas stations.
- Fitzhugh asked about the difference between an apartment house and an apartment building; ZA Brimmer replied that an apartment house has up to 3 units, and an apartment building has four or more units.
- Pacilio asked about landscape installations vs. VTAOT requirements. Clemson noted that landscaping can be 33 feet from the center of the roadway.
- **Definitions were added under section 5.5.5 E.**

Economic Development Plan

ZA Brimmer provided the members with an updated Economic Development Plan document and asked if they could review it to discuss at the next meeting. ZA Brimmer noted that what needs to be added is climate sustainability and energy efficiency models.

The members discussed the need to focus on climate resplendency with:

- Air quality issues from pine trees with “sunlight outgassing” or smog.
- Air conditioning is needed in many homes.
- Availability of cooling and warming centers.
- Denison brought the members’ attention to the work of the Hubbard Brook Research Foundation (<https://hubbardbrook.org/hubbard-brook-research-foundation/>) in North Woodstock, VT.

NEXT MEETING:

- Regular Planning Commission meeting on **February 5, 2025**.

ADJOURN

MOTION: Fitzhugh made the motion, and Pacilio seconded the motion, to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 PM.

Vote: All approved, none opposed, and none abstained. The motion passed unanimously.

Transcribed by Joanna Bligh, Minutes Clerk