

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
August 18, 2025

In Person: Jeanne Gervais, Bill Hawkins, Mark Vaillencourt, James Ozone, Allison Lowe (NVDA)

Virtual: Mike Strait, Joel Cope

Call Meeting to Order: Jeanne Gervais called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

Updates to the Agenda: None

Public Comment: None

Town Plan (Allison from NVDA): Previously, the Planning Commission had discussed the Regional Future Land Use Map, which is required under Act 181. The mapping process seeks to identify areas that can receive greater density and might be eligible for Act 250 exemptions. All regional Planning Commissions need to map their lands the same way. All local and dually adopted plans need to have a current and prospective land use map. NVDA mapped Brighton, which can provide useful information as the Town Plan is updated.

Allison reviewed the map with the Planning Commission, showing areas of higher density, areas in which the Town may want to encourage higher densities and more development, areas that are currently zoned for higher densities and served by water/sewer, and other required land categories (e.g. rural general, rural/ag/forestry, infill, transitional, recreational). There are opportunities to expand the boundaries of the village center.

Village center designations offer benefits, such as eligibility for tax credits for certain income-producing properties, consideration for grant funds, and potential eligibility for partial Act 250 exemptions (e.g. allowing up to 50 housing units on 10 acres of land). Currently, Vermont statute allows for small multi-unit development (up to four units) if property is served by town water/sewer. This is reflected in the proposed changes to Brighton's zoning bylaws. The map identifies areas that can reasonably be included in the village center (extending down Railroad Street and Derby/Pleasant Streets, respectively). Higher density may refer to more housing, but also light commercial and mixed-use.

The map did not identify planned growth areas, which require subdivision regulations (as well as water/sewer service and zoning). This would be necessary to consider transition areas on the map as potential planned growth areas. Allison indicated it may make sense to consider subdivision regulations to allow for benefits (i.e. tax credits, neighborhood designation status, and limited Act 250 exemptions) and to develop the transitional areas mentioned, as well as on Route 105 as identified on the map.

Allison also asked about sidewalk infrastructure in transition areas and if certain areas were not walkable, an important consideration for neighborhood designations. Mark Vaillencourt mentioned that the town did not have a sidewalk path around the lake, which is difficult because the majority of this land is privately-owned. Prior attempts to install sidewalks in these areas, as well as on Railroad Street, have not been successful. Allison inquired if there were sidewalk infrastructure missing that the town wants to prioritize and include in the Town Plan. Joel identified Mountain Street and South Street as two priorities.

The Planning Commission also discussed the Brighton Community Survey. Paper copies and flyers with the QR code/web address have been printed. Commission members will distribute. They will be available at Town Hall, the library, and local businesses (including Kingdom Market, Ace Gervais). Completed paper surveys can be dropped at Town Hall or the library. Postcards with info/QR code will also be sent out, and there will be extras to hand out.

Zoning Administrator Update: None

Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting: Bill Hawkins moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Seconded by Mark Vaillencourt. All in favor; motion carried.

Other Business: None

Adjourn: Bill Hawkins moved to adjourn at 6:45pm. Seconded by Mark Vaillencourt. All in favor; motion carried.