

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

July 20, 2026

Present: Annie Budrewicz, Bill Hawkins, Mark Vaillancourt, James Ozone, Jeanne Gervais, Chris Wells, Jared LaValley

Virtual: Mike Strait, Alison Low, Bruce Webster

Annie Budrewicz called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

Update to the Agenda: None

Public Comment: None

Town Plan - Alison from NVDA: Alison continues to work on the draft and would like to upload a complete outline and chapter drafts to a shared folder for the Planning Commission to read/review and discuss sections in subsequent meetings. Alison discussed the vision for Brighton, highlighting survey results asking respondents to rank which goals are most important (accounting for and reconciling differences between responses from both residents and non-residents).

The vision includes maintaining the value of the town while ensuring a robust infrastructure that allows for growth, affordability, livability, etc. She will share a draft version of this vision as well. Alison mentioned that the current plan does not expire until the end of 2027, but pulling planning initiatives into a central document, per the municipal planning grant scope of work, is important.

Jeanne Gervais asked Alison how property owners with apartments can get assistance through the state (e.g. rehabilitation of properties, etc.). Alison noted that there are programs in place, such as the Vermont Housing Improvement Program and the Community Housing Investment Program. She said it makes sense to look at zoning bylaws to make sure they don't impede some infill development opportunities that have been identified. Chris Wells, who owns properties in Brighton, mentioned incentives for converting/upgrading apartments/buildings (VHIP is one such source of assistance).

Bruce Rumball-Petre mentioned the issue of parking. It is limited in the downtown/village area, and adding more units can further exacerbate the problem. It is particularly critical in winter when vehicles need to be out of public/street parking for snow removal. Alison believes there are ways to address this while encouraging development (looking outside the "core" village and

expanding into the surrounding, identified areas). She also mentioned other towns who collaborate with area organizations (i.e. churches) for daytime parking needs. Alison reiterated that zoning regulations should also align with these types of infrastructure needs.

Zoning Administrator Update: Bruce Rumball-Petre has been reaching out to property owners, including the owner of the dilapidated property on Derby Street. She indicates she wants to contact an attorney and have the property surveyed. He also spoke with another property owner about cleaning up his property and obtaining the correct permits. The owner of the house in construction on Derby will also obtain a permit for his travel camper, where he lives while he is working on the home.

Bruce also spoke with the owner of a home on Pleasant, who just built a deck. He didn't realize he needed a permit, but will get one. The containers on Lakeshore Drive must be removed; the DRB did not approve a variance for them as they don't meet the setbacks per the survey on record. The owner can appeal the DRB decision. Bruce will issue a notice of violation. They will then have seven days to correct; thereafter, they will be charged \$100/day until resolved.

Bruce and the Planning Commission also discussed certificates of occupancy and whether this fee (\$50) should be included in the permit cost. COs have been inconsistently issued and filed, and the listers are trying to address this now. Mark Vaillancourt stated he believes the fees should remain separate. The Town did include the CO fee in the permit cost in the past and the total was collected when the owner applied for the CO. This was changed to separate fees as tracking permits and payments was challenging (e.g. the permit form has no line for payment received; there is no way to know if someone paid for the permit and the CO).

Mike Strait indicated that if the board wanted to consolidate the fees, the overall permit fee should be increased and the form changed to make documenting payment more streamlined and sustainable. Additionally, if the Planning Commission decides to take this action, the Town will have to forgo all CO fees outstanding at this point.

Specific language (e.g. *"This fee includes your permit and CO. If you do not apply for your CO within 90 days of project completion, you will be charged an additional \$50"*) needs to be developed and in alignment with state law and zoning bylaws. Mike Strait also mentioned the need for specificity regarding people who apply for COs currently, such as the cut-off for charging a separate fee, if any. Alison noted also that zoning bylaws need to reflect state law that permits expire after one year.

No action taken. Will be discussed at the next meeting.

Town Plan - Discussion: The current town plan is set to expire in 2027. The Planning Commission will continue to work with Alison.

Zoning Bylaws - Discussion: Zoning discussion is ongoing, but ideally, the town plan will be completed first to guide zoning decisions and to ensure revisions align with (and don't impede) the goals stated in the Town Plan. Alison will send a matrix of statutory changes made in Vermont since 2013 to inform bylaw revision. Bruce would also like to create a step-by-step process for obtaining a permit, including fees, timelines, and requirements, so it is more transparent for those applying.

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

Other Business: None

Adjourn: Jeanne Gervais moved to adjourn at 6:50pm. Seconded by Mark Vaillancourt. All in favor; meeting adjourned.