

TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 19, 2025

Members Present: Beth Cook, Bob Cook, Emma Hanson, AnnMarie Harmon, Alice Peal, Jonathan Ursprung

Members Absent: Becca Newhall

Staff Present: JB Weir, Zoning Administrator

Others Present: None

II. Regular Business

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by Jonathan Ursprung. The meeting was held in person at the Town Offices and remotely via Zoom.

2. Review agenda for addition, removal, or adjustment of any items

JB noted that there would be no Outdoor Recreation Project update.

3. Public Forum

Nobody requested an opportunity to comment.

4. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of August 5, 2025 were amended and approved.

5. Village Master Plan Update

AnnMarie reported on the Steering Committee (SC) meeting held earlier in the day, which she explained covered a recap on the wetland permitting process, a review of the draft Plan's progress, and presentation of a plan for finalization of the project. She and JB indicated that the final report will likely be available by the end of November.

Alex of SE Group explained during the SC meeting that it remains to be understood what the permitting process will be once the Plan is implemented, which includes a better understanding of DEC's perspective. The meeting also covered composing a response to the additional requirements that Shannon Morrison has presented. Alex outlined the comprehensive strategies and goals which are felt should be accepted by DEC, and a letter has been drafted summarizing the group's current understanding of the problem and laying out those strategies and goals. AnnMarie listed the parties who will be copied when the letter is sent to Shannon. The letter requests more concrete direction on moving forward with the Master Plan, as much of the work has been premised on Shannon's indicating in 2023 that no further Wetlands permitting will be approved in the Irasville area unless an overview, including enhancement plans, is presented. Wetland details in the letter include the intent to impact buffer areas of 15% of the low functioning wetlands in the area and ensuring that the remaining lower functioning and all the high functioning wetlands be protected in perpetuity.

It was noted that in communication with Mike of the Army Corps, he indicated that the hurdles are not very large, and that he is going to look into the percentage of acreage impacted and cumulative impact information. AnnMarie noted that hydrological information provided through an additional study may be the basis for planning enhancement work in Waitsfield wetland rather than paying the

Army Corps in lieu fees, and make it more straightforward for developers to take on some of what is outlined in the Master Plan.

Alice asked if other Irasville locations are included in the draft plan, and it was confirmed that the SC has been looking at the overall buildout of the area. This prompted some discussion regarding what Alice indicated was a potential for overdevelopment of the area, with the general opinion being that the plans for development should be moved forward through the coordinated approach anticipated through the Master Planning work, as the planning is taking a comprehensive view of the impacts to wetlands.

During the SC meeting, Alex also outlined possible implementation strategies utilizing PUDs, as well as the potential for use of CHIP funds once that program is implemented. Kaziah Haviland also pointed out the need for increased community communication and the potential for establishing a finance team/subcommittee. It was agreed that this communication will continue, particularly as there is now a more concrete plan in place to present and receive feedback for.

Alice noted that SLR Engineering may potentially provide information pertinent to wetland restoration work and related hydrology matters; AnnMarie noted that they will be included in notification of the RFP being published for the next Planning Grant, if awarded.

Alice noted that one Selectboard member wished for a master plan project update. That update will occur at the next Selectboard meeting on Monday August 25th.

6. 2026 Municipal Planning Grant

This topic was not discussed.

7. CVRPC Update

Alice reported that:

- Regional Plan work is continuing, with Future Land Use mapping presentations taking place to provide information regarding Act 181, the new Tier system, and related topics. There is a session scheduled with the Selectboard on October 27. Alice will provide some background information prior to that meeting.
- Watershed Consulting has completed the study of the flood reconnection areas identified during work on the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan; they will be providing a report of their findings.
- Tri-Valley Transit is taking over the local bus routes in the coming months.
- The Meadow Road Bridge inspection was completed on July 29, and a report will be issued. The grant program through which an application was prepared several weeks ago is now accepting applications again, and Waitsfield's application will be submitted. VTrans may propose some temporary repairs which will buy time for the full engineering/scope of work to be completed.

8. Wastewater Planning Project Update

JB explained that there was a delay in USDA offering a loan/grant package, but that there should be notification to the Town by the end of August. He also provided an update on the Northern Borders program, indicating that at this point there will not be another application submitted, due to the 50% match requirement. JB also noted that property owners interested in connecting to the system are being invited to meet in order to move toward finalizing plans.

9. Vermont Local Level Outdoor Recreation Impact Project

No update was provided on this project.

10. 2025 PC Work Plan

Bylaw Update: Section 6.02(F) Garage Sales – JB explained that the Garage Sale Ordinance had been repealed by the Selectboard, and that the preference is to have the intent preserved in the Bylaws; he has suggested language to provide for this. It was agreed to add this item to the Work Plan.

Short-Term Rental Ordinance – Jonathan noted that the Selectboard has not asked for this work to begin yet, but suggested that PC members look at existing ordinances in other Vermont towns in preparation for future discussion.

11. Other Business

A reminder and encouragement to attend were offered for the CVPRC Land Use/Tier joint meeting with Selectboard scheduled for October 27.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary