

TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 16, 2025

Members Present: Beth Cook, Emma Hanson, AnnMarie Harmon, Becca Newhall, Jonathan Ursprung
Members Absent: Bob Cook, Alice Peal
Staff Present: JB Weir, Zoning Administrator
Others Present: None

II. Regular Business

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 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

It was noted that Alice was not present, and so no CVRPC update would take place.

3. Public Forum

Nobody requested an opportunity to comment.

4. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of September 2, 2025 were approved.

5. Village Master Plan Update

AnnMarie reported that another response had been received from Shannon Morrison, in which she indicated that she is discussing Waitsfield's concerns with her supervisor and others. Shannon also stated that there is no moratorium in place on Wetlands permitting in Irasville, and that the reason she wanted to see a Master Plan was so that the Town would better understand the implications of their planning work.

It was also noted that no further response had been received from Mike of the Army Corps, but he has indicated that he will get back to the Steering Committee regarding cumulative impacts on Irasville wetlands.

The Steering Committee meeting for September has been cancelled, but the core group will be meeting before the end of the month.

JB explained that he has informed Shannon of the Community Development Block Grant being applied for, and outlined that the work proposed under that application includes replacement of an aging culvert under Carroll Road with either a box culvert or potentially a bridge, acquisition of the property at the corner of Carroll Road and Main Street, and restoration of the Town's stormwater pond.

It was agreed that it is likely better to wait for a future Municipal Planning Grant round before applying for further Master Plan work through that program.

6. CVRPC Update

Alice was not at the meeting, and no update was provided.

7. Wastewater Planning Project Update

JB reported that there would be a meeting the next day with Dubois & King and Simon Operations regarding the running of the system, and that a kickoff meeting of the Project's Finance Committee had been held. This group will be looking at opportunities and strategies for obtaining further funding for the Project.

He also noted that:

- On September 24, the Wastewater Project Team will be meeting with the Selectboard for an extensive presentation.
- The Town has signed the offer provided by USDA, but is not yet obligated to take the funds; this is to be applied towards construction of the first phase, from Fiddler's Green to the former TD Bank building.
- An application is planned for the Northern Borders Regional Commission, to apply towards construction of the second phase, from the TD Bank building to the Elementary School.
- He will be providing an update for the School Board on September 24.
- Design work is ongoing, as scheduled.

8. Vermont Local Level Outdoor Recreation Impact Project

JB noted that an update was provided in the meeting packet, and summarized that the final toolkit is not yet available, but that he hopes to have a presentation on the use of that kit at an upcoming meeting. The data has all been provided, and a report from SE Group is expected by the end of September. AnnMarie suggested that the report may contain information to be included in the Town Plan.

9. 2025-2026 Work Plan

Town Plan – It was agreed that it will not be a large undertaking to provide language regarding support for child care services, JB will be able to draft something for review. It was also confirmed that this update will be approached as an amendment, approval of which by the RPC will allow for another four years before a full Town Plan update is due. It was outlined that the PC will work on finalizing the language and go through amendment process over the next couple of months.

Short Term Rentals – Emma had provided a summary of existing regulations from various locations in both the US and Canada.

There was an extensive discussion regarding the regulation of STRs, with the following points generally agreed upon:

- Ensuring renters' safety through implementation of a requirement that rented units must be certified to fire code
- Other safety measures, such as maximum occupancies, parking requirements, and a provision of a local point of contact are also reasonable requirements
- The need to appropriately define STRs
- Members will follow up with the MRVPD and Warren to learn more about the software being used by Warren for their STR regulation

Other aspects of STR regulations were also discussed:

- Initially establishing regulations regarding safety, followed by further discussions regarding limitations on the number of STRs allowed in Town

- Based upon location
- Based upon ratio of STRs to full-time residences
- Grandfathering of existing STRs if limitations are imposed
- The importance of temporarily renting for some homeowners, who have depended upon holiday demand to provide related income
- The need to understand the current situation and various impacts of STRs before determining regulatory details
- Potential for differentiation between renting a room in one's home and renting a full living space
- Enforcement considerations, and whether a staff person or more constable/sheriff support might be required
- Allowance for complaints to provide a route for revocation of STR permit
- The possibility of managing STRs through Zoning Permits
- Potentially including seasonal rentals in any fire code/safety requirements
- Clarifying the impact of STRs on area inns

Jonathan outlined that the PC will be putting together suggestions for the Selectboard regarding the issue, and it was agreed that a better understanding of what currently exists for STRs in Waitsfield is needed before proceeding.

10. Other Business

No other business was addressed.

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary