

TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 20, 2026

Members Present: Bob Cook, Emma Hanson, AnnMarie Harmon, Becca Newhall,
Jonathan Ursprung

Members Absent: Beth 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 7:05 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

No changes were made to the agenda.

3. Public Forum

Nobody requested time to speak.

4. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of January 6, 2026 were amended and approved.

5. Eric Friedman (Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce (CC))

Eric spoke on several topics, noting that:

- The business community is having a good winter so far, although the summer was somewhat difficult.
- Business owners are not sure how to plan - locally, statewide, and nationally - as there is insecurity regarding what the future will be.
- The MRV Chamber has initiated some unique programs
 - Steward MRV is a very successful endeavor
 - Addressing social issues such as domestic abuse/trafficking through education of members
- The Welcome Center has become an important asset for the community.
 - Volunteer staffing is working well
- Creative solutions from business owners with for things such as housing issues
 - Sharing seasonal employees as appropriate
- Fewer lodges and inns in MRV than there were in the past
 - STR competition with less regulation than what inns must follow
 - Suggestion the State should provide more teeth for which Towns can enforce STR regulations
 - Explanation of MA legislation allowing Towns to charge tax on STRs, with funds used by towns for regulation/safety inspections/rent subsidies
 - Eric recommended that Waitsfield's STR standards be at least similar to that of Warren, as uniformity in MRV standards would make matters easier for the chamber
- Chamber has an STR group, those folks may be able to provide input on PC's current STR work

- He appreciates the Master Planning work
 - Additional businesses provide a benefit, providing for more of a destination area

6. Future of Irasville – Community Housing Infrastructure Program (CHIP)

JB provided an overview of information he had included in the packet, compiled from recent webinars he had attended. He and Jonathan encouraged PC members to attend the upcoming Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) webinar on this topic to be held on February 17. JB noted that there are still some questions to be answered before moving ahead on this, but that the program is now active and there is potential to complete an interest form once more details are clarified and recommendations have been provided to the Selectboard. It was agreed that it is likely that the CHIP program would allow funds raised to be used for future infrastructure development as well as debt payments, as this is allowed through TIF programs.

AnnMarie raised the matter of the ‘but for’ requirement as in some cases needing to be met in order to qualify for CHIP funding, noting that this is also a concern of legislators.

AnnMarie indicated that she had contacted some local businesses and property owners regarding serving on the committee. JB will determine who the appropriate contact at Northfield Savings Bank would be for participating in CHIP discussions.

7. CVRPC Update

This item was passed over, as Alice was not present.

8. Wastewater Planning Project Update

Bob reported that things are on schedule for a January 28 completion of the 90% design milestone, at which point a complete review of the current project status will be available. JB indicated that he would continue to work on site visits to outline connection configurations, that the LOT hearing at the Selectboard meeting indicated support for that funding source, and that he will also be meeting with the Department of Environmental Conservation and US Department of Agriculture to work on closing the funding gap which still exists.

9. Short Term Rentals (STR)

Emma had provided summary of the subcommittee’s work, noting that a two-phased approach is being suggested. There was some discussion of the purpose behind this work, with it being agreed that the Town is seeking to gather data in order to understand impacts on the community, to develop safety measures regarding STRs, and to implement tools to enforce those measures. Emma indicated that this would encompass the first phase of STR ordinance implementation, with the data being gathered regarding the nature of the rentals and inferences regarding factors such as the creation of any limitations on housing stock to be evaluated and addressed in the second phase.

It was agreed that the committee will get input from the Chamber/local businesses and then bring a final product to the PC for review before presenting this work to the Selectboard. The committee will also plan for community outreach on this matter.

10. Other Business

JB offered to draft some Town Plan language regarding child care for review by the PC, so that the required amendment can be completed and go through the adoption process. He also indicated that he would draft a PC report for the Town’s Annual Report.

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary