

TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 7, 2026

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

Members Absent: Beth Cook

Staff Present: JB Weir, Zoning Administrator

Others Present: Madhurii Barefoot, Ryan Diehl, Franni Hoag (MRVPD), Joshua Schwartz (MRVPD)

II. Regular Business

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm by Emma Hanson. 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 address the PC.

4. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of March 17, 2026 were approved.

5. Wilder Farm

Emma outlined that a discussion a change to the Zoning Bylaws proposed by Ryan and Madhurii would focus on whether this requires an emergency change to the bylaws, reminding the group that any change would impact the entire Ag-Res District. There was some discussion regarding the impacts of a retreat center and determining what would qualify a property as a farmstead, as the proposal includes that determination be made for allowing development of a retreat center.

Emma explained that, while PC members appeared to be comfortable with incorporating a change along the lines proposed, this should be considered as part of the PC's planning work, and not addressed as a reaction to the request, as there is currently no work taking place regarding Bylaw changes. She suggested that submission of a petition, as outlined in Bylaws, would prompt the PC to consider in the near term the options around allowing for a new Conditional Use for retreat centers. Emma noted that the other option would be to include this matter when the PC does again take up review of the Bylaws, although that effort is not currently on the horizon.

It was discussed that the section of the Bylaws that speaks to submission of a petition needs some clarification, but agreed that the PC would honor such a petition if submitted.

6. MRVPD 2025 Annual Data Report

Joshua Schwartz provided some background information about the MRVPD and the current year's work plan, and Franni Hoag presented an overview of the information presented in the Annual Data Report for 2025, noting that this information and more is available on the Community Dashboard found on the MRVPD's website. The Report covers population, housing, economic, and environmental trends.

Franni then spoke of the biannual Wellbeing Survey, which will be administered and updated this year; this collection provides more qualitative information about residents' satisfaction in various domains.

7. Short Term Rental (STR) Discussion

Emma reviewed the changes made to the draft ordinance, agreed upon by the subcommittee following review of the model ordinance provided by Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT). These include using the definition of dwelling unit capacity rather than what had been included previously for bedrooms/sleeping spaces, and incorporation of bedroom definitions based upon State Wastewater Rules. Becca noted that the group had agreed upon setting up a two-year renewal process, to include inspections by the Fire Marshall. It was confirmed that establishment of the ordinance will be used for data collection purposes as well as enforcement. In response to a question from Joshua, Becca explained that it is intended that voluntary compliance and community assistance will help to ensure that all STRs are registered. Joshua indicated that he would review the draft document and provide feedback to the subcommittee for further discussion at an upcoming meeting.

8. Wastewater Planning Project Update

Joshua's most recent written update was included in the meeting packet; he noted that the project page on the Town website had also recently been updated. JB reported that the tree cutting at the Munn Site was underway, and that he was finishing up site visits to plan for property connections.

9. Other Business

It was agreed to cancel the second April meeting, and to meet next on May 5.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary