

TOWN OF STAMFORD, VERMONT
PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes — 6/8/2026

DRAFT — Pending Approval

Members Present: Pam Tworig, Lisa Gramlin, Marta Miller, Jim Stimpson, Deb Burchard, Alden Finney, Kurt Gamari, ex officio

Members Absent: Natalie O'Neil

Others Present: Jessica Barsaleau, ANR, Dara Zink of BCRC, Debra Righi, and James Righi.

1. Call to Order and Hearing of Visitors

Meeting called to order by Jim Stimpson at 6:00. The Board welcomed Pamela Tworig to the Planning Commission. There was no comment from visitors.

2. Reading and Approval of Minutes

MOTION by Marta Miller to accept the regular meeting minutes of May 11, 2026 as written. SECONDED by Debra Burchard. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

3. River Corridor and Floodplain Manager Visit

Jessica Barsaleau, River Corridor and Floodplain Manager with ANR, spoke with the Board. She is available to assist our Administrative Officer, Debra Burchard, with river corridor questions at any point in the permitting process.

ANR is still the source for floodplain mapping although the flood maps are created by FEMA. The state is responsible for mapping the river corridor. Part of Ms. Barsaleau's job is to review municipal Flood Hazard Bylaws with a FEMA checklist based on the National Flood Insurance Program.

Our Bylaws have been reviewed and we are NFIP compliant. We need to uphold these standards in order to make sure town stays in compliance with new maps. The Road and Bridge Standards need to be readopted in order to retain our ERAF (Emergency Relief Assistance Fund) rating. This means that in a disaster FEMA will cover 75% and the state will cover 7.5%. If the town takes extra steps (adopting Road and Bridge Standards, having an Emergency Management Plan in place, having local Hazard Mitigation Plan, adopting River Corridor protection, and taking part in the NFIP) the state will cover 17.5%, which leaves a responsibility of 7% for the town to cover. Stamford has done all of these things.

Dara Zink said with new maps they are looking at timeframe of 2028 to make sure we remain in NFIP compliance which means residents continue to be able to purchase NFIP insurance.

4. Reorganization of Board

1. MOTION by Marta Miller to appoint Lisa Gramlin as Chair. SECONDED by Jim Stimpson. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.
2. MOTION by Marta Miller to appoint Jim Stimpson as Vice Chair. SECONDED by Lisa Gramlin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.
3. MOTION by Marta Miller to appoint Pam Tworig as Clerk. SECONDED BY Lisa Gramlin. Motion APPROVED.

5. Community Engagement and Survey Feedback

The Commission affirmed the value of community input gathered through the recent walking tour and visioning meeting. Although turnout was lower than hoped, participants felt the events fostered local engagement and reflected shared community values. The Commission committed to continuing broad promotion of the community survey to increase response rates and to improving the clarity and accessibility of future communications.

Members noted that survey responses received to date, along with themes from past survey efforts, show strong and consistent alignment on preserving the town's rural character. The Commission considers full survey participation critical to accurately reflecting resident views in the planning process.

A follow-up session with the Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) is planned for July 13, shortly after the survey deadline, to review collected data and explore conservation and natural resource planning in greater depth.

6. Zoning Bylaw Review and Modernization Strategy

The Commission discussed the timeline for comprehensive bylaw modernization, which, per discussions with consultant Nick Zak, is expected to begin after 2027 with ratification anticipated in late 2028. The town plan grant is currently active, and a bylaw modernization grant is planned for next year.

While full reform is several years out, members agreed that interim work has value.

There was general consensus that the current bylaws, while not dysfunctional, are difficult to read and use archaic language that confuses residents. Members emphasized making the bylaws more user-friendly to improve compliance and understanding. A suggestion was made to develop a newcomer welcome package including the bylaws, tax information, and local rules.

6. Administrative Officer Enforcement and Compensation

The Commission discussed the Administrative Officer (AO) compensation structure, noting that the AO is currently paid only for permit-related work and receives no compensation for enforcement visits or compliance follow-up.

7. Private Roads and Infrastructure Planning

Long-term road maintenance costs were raised as a significant fiscal concern, given the town's limited budget and existing maintenance challenges. The Commission discussed the need for clearer bylaws on private road classification.

8. Setbacks, Driveways, and Property Line Regulations

The Commission agreed to review and brainstorm setback standards at upcoming meetings.

9. Process Improvements and Document Collaboration

Members reflected on previous bylaw revision efforts that produced extensive drafts but stalled before adoption, and expressed a commitment to better process discipline this time. Members were encouraged to review the bylaws and other towns' bylaws individually between meetings to prepare for focused discussion.

10. Action Items

- **All members:** Encourage community participation in the public survey through social media posts and physical notices.
- **All members:** Individually review historical and current bylaws and identify sections needing updates, particularly setbacks, private roads, and land use; bring findings to the next meeting.

11. Next Meeting and Adjournment

The next regular meeting is scheduled for June 22, 2026 at 6pm.

MOTION to adjourn by Lisa Gramlin. SECONDED by Marta Miller. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.
Meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Tworig, Secretary
Stamford Planning Commission

Minutes approved on: _____