

TOWN OF STAMFORD, VERMONT

PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes — August 10, 2026

DRAFT — PENDING APPROVAL

Members Present: Lisa Gramlin (Chair), Pam Tworig, Marta Miller, Debra Burchard, Jim Stimpson, Alden Finney

Members Absent: Natalie O'Neil

Visitors: Jim and Deb Righi, Kurt Gamari

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Lisa Gramlin at 6:00 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Reading and Approval of Records

- Motion to accept minutes of 7/27/26 by Marta Miller, 2nd by Jim Stimpson. All in Favor.

Hearing of Visitors

- No Visitor Comments

Attendance Policy

Chair Lisa Gramlin asked board members to sign the attendance policy that had been agreed upon at previous meetings.

- Signed copy to be returned to the Chair.

Septic Regulations and Overshadowing

Chair Lisa Gramlin reached out to VLCT to ask if our town could implement regulations that would allow for more oversight and/or strengthening of septic permits. The Commission confirmed that local zoning cannot impose septic or well setbacks beyond state regulations, limiting their direct control over wastewater management.

- State preemption of septic setbacks means the town lacks statutory authority to enforce local septic system setbacks.
- Dillon's Rule restricts municipal powers, implying only explicitly granted or implied powers apply, limiting local regulation of septic systems.
- Coordination with engineers is limited, as septic designs precede town approval and rely heavily on engineers and contractors.

Water Protection Specialist Laura Ranker at next meeting on August 24th.

- Chair Lisa Gramlin spoke with Laura Ranker in preparation for the meeting.
- Future land use maps now tie into water designations, requiring careful alignment during zoning updates.
- A technical advisory committee is assessing overshadowing and related issues, with decisions expected by the end of 2026.
- State funding for dry wells is exhausted but testing assistance may still be available through programs like RCAP if eligibility criteria are met.
- The Health Department could potentially co-present at the upcoming meeting likely addressing water quality issues like E. coli contamination and recommending conservation strategies.

Community Character, Infrastructure, and Economic Considerations

- The Commission recognized that preserving rural character and controlling tax burdens from road maintenance and infrastructure growth must guide zoning and development decisions
- According to our survey results, walkable village centers with small commercial amenities like coffee shops and bakeries are desirable, but large-scale commercial development is not preferred.

Working Session on Zoning Districts

- Chair Lisa Gramlin and Secretary Pam Tworig prepared a map using vellum sheets showing the existing zoning districts and the Hoosic River and streams, Route 100, blacktopped roads, and dirt roads in town. Currently there are three districts in town (Residential, Rural, and Forest). There is very little differentiation between the districts. The Commission discussed potentially adjusting districts in some way to balance growth with conservation and protection of water resources as well as to help reduce road maintenance costs. No decisions made at this meeting.

Next Meeting: August 24, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

Motion to Adjourn by Lisa Gramlin, 2nd by Jim Stimpson at 8:19 p.m.