

Town of Bristol
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Tuesday, March 18, 2025
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Kevin Hanson, Melissa Hernandez, Chanin Hill, John Moyers, Ellen Repstad, Rob Rooker, Slim Pickens, Bill Sayre

Staff Present: AZ Larsen, Zoning and Planning Administrator

Others Present: Jill Marsano (VTUMS)

I. Call to Order: Kevin called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. The meeting was held in person and via ZOOM.

II. Review agenda for additions, removal, or adjustment of any items per 1 V.S.A. 18 §312(d)(3)(A) and implicit approval

PC members introduced themselves and welcomed Ellen to the Commission.

III. Public Comment

Jim Quaglino commended the work of the PC and AZ.

IV. Continuing Business

Discussion: Revised Proposal of EV Charger Interim Bylaw Presentation

AZ provided some background information and reviewed the feedback previously provided by the PC; they also provided a copy of the Starksboro regulations which have been adopted. AZ noted the following:

- A refinement of the definition of Electric Vehicle Charging State
- The potential to include additional definitions if desired (ac/dc, household/commercial)
- Exemption for Level 1 chargers
- Outline of conditions/requirements for all/accessory/conditional uses
- Fire Department feedback – beneficial to include compliance with State regulations
- Accessory and Conditional Use parameters; Districts proposed for Permitted, Site Plan Review, Conditional Use Review

Discussion raised the following points:

- Because the technology is evolving, it might be best to leave out ‘Level’ definitions, others expressed that it might be best to include definitions of established levels for categorizing installations
- Fleet vehicles may indicate a need for larger installations not open to the public
- Private, home installations do not need more regulation than that required for safety
- Anticipated that this will be drafted as comprehensive, even though for an interim adoption
- Definitions should include level of electrical supply required (phase)
- Distinction between SFR and MFR installations for private use
- Unclear what benefit there is for regulating Level 2 installations at private residences
- Level 3 infrastructure more complex
- Fee collection and indirect tenant fees may need clarification for non-public installations

V. New Business

Discussion: Bristol Infrastructure Operations- Speaker Jill M.

Jill noted her recent conversations with Middlebury students assisting with determining Bristol's housing opportunities, and explained that connections to the Town's wastewater system are only feasible in the downtown area as well as indicating that system is currently at capacity. She provided some further details of the wastewater system design and limitations. She explained that simple shared septic systems would likely be the best approach for increasing density, noting the expenses and logistics that would be involved in increasing capacity of the current wastewater system.

Jill also outlined locations where there is potential for development which could be served by the water system, and explained that the current ongoing work to install new lines and thereby reduce leakage will help to increase the capacity of that system.

Discussion: Middlebury Student Infrastructure Research and Current Planning Goals/Policies

There was a discussion of the information presented in the recent student research reports, including topics such as consideration of septic availability and alternative wastewater disposal methods in the Town Plan.

AZ spoke of the benefits of mapping efforts, particularly for wildlife corridors and existing soils. They also noted that a better understanding of what is allowed for composting toilets and other alternative wastewater systems would be helpful.

Sharing of services (e.g., septic, heating) among properties was noted as something to be addressed in planning discussions, particularly for cost reduction purposes.

VI. Administrative Matters

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of February 18, 2025 were approved.

Review: PZA March Zoning Report – AZ noted that there had been minimal recent administrative permit activity, and indicated that there have been several DRB hearings held, primarily to address subdivisions.

Discussion: Vermont Act 181 – AZ provided some information on this Act and its focus on Act 250 reform, noting that RPCs will be creating future land use maps for their regions, and seeking PC input. John spoke of ensuring that density increases also allow for retaining the character of a town/area, and not giving up important aspects of local control. AZ pointed out that this Act does not remove local zoning, but does provide for development in specific situations without Act 250 review.

It was agreed to address annual organizational matters at the April 15 meeting.

VII. Public Comment

No member of the public offered comments.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary