

Town of Bristol
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Tuesday, May 20, 2025
Meeting Minutes
DRAFT

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

Staff Present: AZ Larsen, Zoning and Planning Administrator

Others Present: Kevin LaRose, L.S.

I. Call to Order: Kevin called the meeting to order at 7:02 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.

During the meeting, the order of agenda items was modified.

III. Public Comment

Nobody requested time to provide comments.

IV. New Business

Discussion: Speaker – Kevin LaRose, LaRose Surveys

Kevin had been invited to the meeting in order to provide some designer-related input on potential infrastructure changes and help the PC better understand how zoning regulations might enable some flexibility in wastewater treatment options.

While allowing that connection to a municipal system is the optimum solution for areas with more development density, Kevin outlined that the State is being asked to consider a reduction in the minimum bedrooms for basic septic design. He explained that being able to design for a lower minimum, as well as some other design options, would allow for construction of a residential system in a smaller footprint, although he did confirm that a 10,000 square foot lot allows for the current standards related to primary and backup systems, along with required setbacks, to be met.

Kevin also confirmed that greywater systems are not addressed in the State Wastewater Rules. Further, he noted that clustered or shared residential systems help by avoiding the need to separate individual systems, but that establishment of these requires coordination and cooperation between households. He pointed out the Efficiency Vermont is a good resource for flow reduction options.

The status of the Town's current municipal system was discussed, with it being explained that the current input of high strength waste has the system at capacity, although if this is remedied there would be volume capacity available for additional residential connections. It was also discussed that the annual costs, which are likely to increase, are being borne by the limited number of users on the system.

PC members thanked Kevin for taking the time to speak with them about these matters.

V. Organizational Business

Discussion: Review Policy and Procedures

There was discussion regarding term limits for the Chair and Vice Chair positions, the alignment of the mission statement with the 2020 Town Plan, which is currently in effect, and the potential for making it more clear that comments may be submitted in writing outside of a meeting.

Action: Approved proposed changes, if any, to Policy and Procedures document.

MOTION: *Rob made a motion to remove the language regarding term limits of the Chair and Vice-Chair from the PC Policy and Procedures document. The motion was seconded by Melissa, and passed unanimously.*

VI. Continuing Business

Discussion: Infrastructure – Municipal Capacity and Long-Term Planning

AZ explained that they had included in the meeting materials the information from the Town Plan related to utilities and infrastructure, as information to be used in discussing the feasibility of new locations for more dense development. It was discussed that reviewing related sections of the zoning regulations would also be useful, and the potential for shared systems in the development of PUDs was highlighted. AZ pointed out that PUDs are a type of subdivision, and so may need to be emphasized as an option for development even when retained under single ownership. Kevin spoke of the potential to outline in the Town Plan the possibility of shared wastewater systems, and also that there should be some consideration of providing incentives for density where it is suitable.

There was some clarification needed regarding the zoning districts in the village and surrounding areas; AZ will verify that this is all depicted correctly.

VII. Administrative Matters

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

Review: PZA May Zoning Report – AZ reviewed recent permitting activity and answered questions regarding some of the permits applied for and approved, including providing an explanation of statutory language requiring that ADU setback be the same as those for a primary dwelling. There was some discussion of the timing and logistics of accessory structure/ADU development in the same structure.

VIII. Public Comment

No member of the public offered comments.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary