

Town of Bristol
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Tuesday, August 19, 2025
Meeting Minutes
Amended and Approved 9/16/2026

Members Present: Kevin Hanson, Chanin Hill, Rob Rooker, Slim Pickens, Ellen Repstad
Staff Present: AZ Larsen, Zoning and Planning Administrator
Others Present: Jim Quaglino

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.

No changes were made to the agenda.

III. Public Comment

Nobody requested time to comment.

IV. New Business

Action: Approve Interpretation of ADU requirements and Statute

MOTION: Kevin made a motion as outlined in the meeting packet:

The following are interpretations made by the Planning Commission of State Statute (SS) 4412 and the Town Unified Development Regulations (UDR) regarding accessory dwelling units (ADU's):

- 1. The criteria for determining adding an ADU to a structure, primary or accessory.
 - a. Specific (setback) dimensional standards for the primary structure shall be used for any accessory structure to be used as an ADU even where there is a conflict between the dimensional standards for the accessory structure.*
 - b. An existing accessory structure that is complaint as an accessory structure but would be non-compliant when the primary structure criteria is applied to consider an ADU, requires a waiver.*
 - c. A pre-existing non-conforming accessory structure requires conditional use approval.**
- 2. It is possible for other State regulations, including but not limited to ACT 250, as well as private agreements to be in conflict with ADU regulations.
 - a. For ACT 250 Findings of Fact that limit development to single family units, the applicant needs to get a determination from the ACT 250 jurisdiction on the process to put in an ADU.*
 - b. For Deed Covenants or Home Owners Agreements (HOA), it is considered a contract freely entered into, and approval needs to be given accordingly.**
- 3. For an existing non-conforming specifically in a zone where residential uses are not allowed but are pre-existing:
 - a. ADU's can be added to an existing non-conforming use within a district where residential uses are not allowed as a conditional use.**
- 4. In § 4412 there is no allowance for an ADU in a new nonresidential building (accessory structure), only an existing one.
 - a. New and existing are used interchangeably.**
- 5. Other uses are allowed as part of the conversion of a primary or accessory structure*

for an ADU.

a. If an ADU is made part of an existing or new accessory structure, it does not prohibit other functions (uses) in the accessory structure. While it can be considered two (2), it can all be part of a single permit application.

The above interpretations are not intended to be an exhaustive review of SS4412 and the Town Unified Development Regulations (UDR), but to clarify areas of ambiguity as the Planning Commission has identified for administration of the UDR and added that:

These interpretations are effective at the time of approval.

The motion was seconded by Chanin, and discussion ensued.

Some clarifications were provided, and it was explained that this documentation is for use by the Zoning Administrator when interpreting the UDRs. Concerns were expressed that, without background information, this document may be difficult to understand.

There was some discussion regarding what requires a waiver and what requires Conditional Use review; AZ reviewed the flow chart they had created to outline the ADU permitting process and provide clarification. It was noted that consideration of a mixed-use building is not included in either the motion language or the flow chart; AZ will address this.

The conversation then turned to what has been discussed in the past regarding the difference in side setback requirements for accessory structures vs the setback requirement for an accessory dwelling, and the potential for conversion to use as a dwelling of a structure that has been built within the lesser setback distance.

It was agreed to put off further consideration of the motion until the next meeting.

MOTION: *Rob moved table the motion under consideration until the next regularly scheduled PC meeting. The motion was seconded by Slim, and approved unanimously.*

Discussion: Review ACRPC Draft Bristol Future Land Use (FLU) Maps

There was some clarification offered regarding the Regional FLU map information specific to Bristol which Adam Lougee had presented at the previous meeting. It was noted that the RPC is seeking input from towns regarding the development areas depicted on the draft maps, and that the Town's zoning maps will not be changed as a result of the Regional FLUs unless the PC makes any changes independent of the Regional FLU adoption. Adam had explained that the RPC had delineated areas using parcel lines as divisions rather than splitting parcels, and it was agreed that there are several parcels on the east side of Mountain Street that include steep slopes, and that these should not be included in the growth area planned for more dense development. No other adjustments were noted as being requested; AZ will pass this information along to Adam.

V. Administrative Matters

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of July 15, 2025 were approved.

Review: PZA Zoning Report – AZ reported that not many permits have been issued, several DRB hearings have been held/are scheduled, and they have been kept busy answering questions for residents. They noted that work on process guidelines and new application formats/information continues.

Discussion: Miscellaneous Correspondence – No correspondence needed to be addressed.

VI. Public Comment

Nobody requested time to comment.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary

DRAFT