

Town of Bristol
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Tuesday, January 20, 2026
Meeting Minutes
Approved 2/17/26

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

Staff Present: AZ Larsen, Planning and Zoning Administrator

Others Present: None

I. Call to Order: Kevin called the meeting to order at 7:01 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

Discussion: General Survey.

AZ had provided a draft of a survey, generally focused on housing matters, for the PC to review as an initial step in compiling a survey to be distributed at Town Meeting. It was discussed that the goal of presenting a survey at this point is to get a general feel for community sentiment and begin community engagement as the PC starts its work on updating the Town Plan. Some edits to the draft were suggested, and it was agreed that PC members would send detailed comments to AZ to be compiled for further review at February's meeting.

Discussion: Municipal Planning Grant (MPG) FY26 and Town Plan Update

AZ outlined that there is a two-year time frame for utilization of the MPG funds awarded for Town Plan updating, and noted some of the skills they believe will be important to consider when reviewing proposals from consultants. AZ also reported that an application had been submitted to the Municipal Climate Planning Guides Pilot Program, but it has not yet been announced if the Town was selected to participate in this program. There was some discussion regarding the use of these guides and what benefits might be provided; further information will help determine the usefulness of this program for use in drafting the Town Plan.

The MPG workplan was outlined, with the current Plan's expiration date of March 2028 noted. It was proposed to create three focus groups as a strategy for reviewing and editing the various sections of the Plan. There was agreement that using this strategy to spread the work out was generally useful, but concerns were raised regarding whether this would allow for enough community involvement, as well as ensuring that the groups were not drafting edits other than data updates without conferring with the full PC beforehand.

It was agreed that the Energy and Conservation Committees should be engaged in updating the chapters relevant to their focus areas.

Discussion: Review Focus Groups (People, Land, Infrastructure) for Town Plan Update

AZ outlined the potential for focus groups to meet once a month, and report out to the full group on the regular third Tuesday meeting. Each group would review the changes needed for the chapters they covered, update data as appropriate, and review the goals and strategies contained in each chapter. There was further discussion regarding how much latitude the groups would have in drafting language; it was agreed that the

language in the Town Plan is more general than what is in land use regulations, and it is not anticipated that the focus groups would draft concrete policy changes without first getting feedback from the full PC.

AZ will look into any Open Meeting law implications/requirements for the focus group meetings.

Discussion: Consider additional meeting day on first Tuesdays

There was some discussion of the Town Plan update timeline, and questions regarding for how long two meetings each month will be necessary; it was agreed to initiate this new schedule and to reassess as the update process progresses.

V. Administrative Matters

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

VI. Public Comment

Nobody requested time to comment.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary