

Town of Bristol
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Tuesday, July 21, 2026
Meeting Minutes
DRAFT

Members Present: Kevin Hanson, Melissa Hernandez, Chanin Hill, Slim Pickens, Kris Perlee, Ellen Repstad
Staff Present: AZ Larsen, Planning and Zoning Administrator
Others Present: Ron Dendas

I. Call to Order: Chanin 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.

No adjustments were made to the agenda.

III. Public Comment

Nobody requested time to comment.

IV. Town Plan Update

VT Smart Growth and Vital Conditions Framework

AZ provided information on perspectives for planning in alignment with State goals. Their presentation included:

- An overview of State planning goals
- Indication of where Bristol's planning purpose aligns well with those goals
 - Maintaining historic settlement patterns, and the relation to housing targets and economic growth
 - PC members noted that manufacturing is more likely to provide jobs, that a vital downtown brings visitors, and that service-oriented work should also be included in discussions
 - Protection of natural and historic features – noted that natural resources are important to residents
 - Recreational opportunities
 - Ensuring availability of safe and affordable housing

AZ then reviewed smart growth principles, and how to integrate those with a focus on people when working on town planning. Ron Dendas spoke of the importance of ensuring that people are thriving and outlined some of his work in this area, offering his support in this aspect of the Town Plan development. Ensuing discussion included the following points:

- Resident wellness requires opportunities for connections to community
- Seniors are typically not vacating larger houses, which would make them available for growing families
- While the State's primary focus is on housing, there are many other important aspects of community planning
- Housing matters need community input regarding preferences for type, location, and other factors

AZ reported that tabling at the Farmers' Market has not generated a lot of interest, but that those with whom they have spoken have offered positive feedback. AZ will be hosting a community session for further discussions, and continues to work on determining best strategies for engaging the broader community in relevant conversations.

Review and Discussion of 2020 Town Plan Implementation Tasks

AZ explained that the Conservation and Energy Commissions will each be reviewing the tasks outlined in the current Plan to indicate what has been completed and what continues to be relevant. It was agreed that also important is for these groups to outline work that they see as needing to be undertaken going forward. It was also agreed that the Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee should be asked for relevant implementation tasks to be included in the Plan update.

Update Implementation Tasks for 2028 Town Plan

It was agreed that this work would be tabled until November, as this section of the Plan is usually developed after community input has been reviewed and Plan updates have been drafted.

2020 Town Plan Vision Statement Initial Review

There was some agreement that the current Plan's vision statement is too lengthy, and that the purpose section of the Plan summarizes the vision fairly well. It was agreed that members would review this material for further discussion at the next PC meeting.

V. Administrative Matters

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of June 16, 2026 were approved.

Miscellaneous: Work Group Sessions and 2nd Meeting Date

AZ noted that the meeting space is available prior to PC meetings, as well as frequently able to be used during the day when the offices are open.

AZ reminded the group of the forum planned for the coming Sunday, encouraging PC members to attend; the forum will be a somewhat open house format between 4 and 8 pm.

Az proposed meeting twice per month during the Town Plan update; it was agreed that a second meeting would not be held in August, and that a schedule would be discussed at the regular August meeting, including whether a second meeting would be for work group sessions or general work on the Plan.

VI. Public Comment

Nobody requested time to comment.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary