

WILLIAMSTOWN PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MEETING HELD ON: July 09, 2025
Minutes - - (DRAFT COPY)

PRESENT: Rich Turner, CH, Susan Lyons, David Traczyk, Horace Duke

The Meeting was called to order at 6:25 p.m. at the Town Office.

Rich. T. Any adjustments to the Agenda? None noted.

Dave T. Move to accept the Minutes from June 11, 2025 with corrections, 2nd by Horace D. All approved.

New Business:

Rich T. Spoke on the Baptist Road Culvert Site visit. I was there along with - Jackie Higgins, Dave Wilder, from the Town, Taylor Litwin, Project Mgr. from Friends of the Winooski River. Michele Braun, Executive Dir. of the Friends of Winooski River, Julie Butler from Fish & Wildlife, plus a couple of consultants from SLR plus some folks from the state. Passed around a draft map of the site which showed the existing conditions and then the proposed construction. Everything looked pretty good there. However, Dave had a lot of washouts in that area and had put in in some big rip rack material off to the side to hold the bank. There are two landowners that they are working with. Julie Butler made a few recommendations for some changes. This project looks like it might be done sometime next summer.

Some tree removal needs to be done in the fall due to watching out for the bat population. They feel that they have some pretty good plans for funding for this. I did ask if they had an estimate for it yet. They had actually provided an estimate with the Grant application - - and Michele said that she thought that it was going to be around \$420,000. Some of the other culverts that went in around here were around \$300,000. Mentioned doing some letters of support when it got closer to the time of the work.

Horace D. This one is going to take quite a bit of site preparation as well.

Susan L. Does the town have to put in so much money?

Rich T. No – they are trying to do it so that the Town doesn't have to put in any money. Did mention that he noticed some small Brook trout going up the stream in the culvert that got washed out on Gilbert Road.

Dave T. That was one of the culverts that we originally looked at and some thought that it wasn't worth doing anything with. Look what happens!!

Rich T. They will keep us informed as it goes along to let us know of any follow-up meetings.

Rich T. If nothing else on the culvert project – I'll go into a couple of highlights from the CVRPC Board meeting. So, Montpelier City is updating their City Plan, Municipal Plan. They had a lot of discussions going back and forth. Montpelier is trying to put in a Grant for a Growth Area, Growth Center, which is up by the Country Club. More discussion on their end.

Williamstown was also mentioned as we are updating our Town Plan as well as Orange and Washington,

Browns Fields was also brought up as there might be additional funding available – this might be something that we might want to take a look at.

Sam Lash gave us a talk on a template for Hot Weather Emergency Planning. They have a Cooling Site Map identifying 42 cooling sites – 15 Libraries, some public facilities, fire stations. More discussion followed. They might incorporate that in our Town Plan or the local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

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- Rich T. We also had some discussion on recording Advisory and Non-advisory meetings. This is a non-advisory meetings so we are required to record them and keep them on file for 30 days. In our case we record it – the Advisory meeting – can be very helpful in case someone misses a meeting they can listen or watch a video of the meeting.
- Rich T. Mentioned an email sent out for a Regional Selectboard Meet-up – July 17th at 6:00 p.m., with pizza and soft drinks being served at 5:30 p.m. Being held at the Montpelier Senior Activity Center – 58 Barre St., Montpelier. This is for selectboard members, city councilors, and village trustees from across the Central VT region to come together to meet and share successes and challenges. Registration is required if you plan to attend. Let Jackie know.
- Horace D. I'd like to make a comment on the plans for the culvert on Baptist St. Make sure that their “wing walls” are tall enough so that the eddy currents – it the culvert gets to be full – that the eddy currents can't take out the bank. That's one of things that we saw that the wings weren't very high and the water got behind the wings and took out the culvert and everything else.
- Rich T. That is one of the things that they are looking at. That was part of it. Discussion followed again on the culvert project. (Good!) This is quite a plan!
- Rich T. Let's look at the Draft of the Williamstown Town Plan Survey. Discussion followed. Too many choices. Need to simplify, people are going to look at this and decide not to bother with it. Page 1 - - Trails, parks & outdoor recreation – not much here – remove. Jobs and work opportunities, that's pretty limited, cross off. Page 2 - list of values associated with a strong community – 5 removed. Page 4 - - types of housing - - cross off “cluster development”. Page 4 - - Community organizations, et al. Hard to get anyone to work on committees. Page 5 - - Special natural places that should be protected - - open block on both page 4 & 5. Remove one. Page 5 - - Demographics - - Rich is meting with “Eli” - - she will be doing this.
- Horace D. I see lots of questions about the schools, but I think that's going to be taken care of by the Legislature. I'm afraid that I don't see it saving any money. Because I don't see any area except for possibly Burlington that has a school big enough for 4,000 students. So that leaves you maybe 13 counties to fit into 11. It won't be a town board anymore – just a state board. They are consolidating to 12 school districts with 4,000 students each or more. So, Williamstown, Northfield, Randolph, Orange, Washington, plus a couple of little towns down below, maybe even Moretown. The Legislature just passed a rule that in 3 years they are going to do this. 12 school districts period, end of discussion. Now I'm hoping people will be smart enough to not reelect those people who voted for this. By December the must have a preliminary plan. They need more people, they have added retired superintendents, etc. to help with the plan. (Anyone with common sense? Probably not.) They are going to try and do this, but I can't see it working out well. Part of it is the State Board of Education and their rules.
- Susan L. This is definitely a very big concern!!

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Old/New Business/Comments:

- Dave T. Anything else to cut out of this survey?
- Susan L. Page 4 - - under housing - - Cluster development - - delete this.
Where would you put it? Pretty limited with our topography.
- Dave T. One thing missing is contact information. Who to send the surveys to? Who can they talk to about this?
- Horace D. Is there going to be a public hearing?
Yes – it’s part of the process.
- Discussion: Put surveys out at businesses in town; Town Office, Library, Pump N Pantry, also list it on the Front Porch forum a couple of times. Any type of events in town that we can bring it to.
Drop off at the Town Office.
Hopefully we can get something printed within a week or two to start handing them out.
- Rich T. The last thing to discuss is the Local Planning for Food Access Toolkit.
- Dave T. I looked thru it. What I did was to make a copy of, I think, page 10 – the chart that shows examples of food access strategies. I thought that this would be more relevant. I was thinking that in Williamstown we already have the food shelf, which is good, we’ve got Pump n Pantry where you can get all kinds of food, Hannaford’s is right down the road, and at times the town has a farmer’s market when produce starts coming in, sometimes is set up over by The Den, and looking all that I think we are pretty much covered.
- Rich T. I think as we are doing the town plan, that we can integrate some of these in different parts.
Transportation for example, there is a bus that goes to Hannafords.
Discussion: There is a bus that goes from the Gardens to Hannafords.
We could do a separate chapter on food. Maybe from the survey we could get some good input.
One thing missing is a sidewalk to make things more accessible.
- Horace D. We definitely need sidewalks and parallel parking all the way thru town to make it more user friendly. I would like to see a flashing light down by the intersection of Rt 14 and Meadow Street. It’s hard to see coming out and turning left into town - - traffic goes fast, they don’t slow down. It would also be helpful to cut the shrubbery on that corner also.
- Rich T. I’ll stop in and talk with Eli and Lory about the draft survey.
So with the Grant that we just got, I believe that we have a \$2,500 match – I thought that it was going to be coming out of the \$8,500 that we have in the budget.
- Noted - - It’s in the budget. Nothing has been taken out to date.
- Rich T. One more thing - - Niki, who did the table at the Library, is from CVRPC and is planning to attend a select board meeting for updates on the future land use map, ref. Act 181/Act 250. She reached out to Jackie to see when would be a good time to come to a meeting. She will be at the Sept. 8 meeting. We should be there for that.

Anything else? None - -
- Horace D. I’ll make a Motion to adjourn - - 2nd by Dave T.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Next Meeting: August 13th, 2025.

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