

WILLIAMSTOWN PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MEETING HELD ON: April 8, 2026
Minutes - - (DRAFT COPY)

PRESENT: Rich Turner, CH, David Traczyk, Susan Lyons
Guests: "Sam" Lash, CVRPC, Larry Hebert
The Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Office.

Rich. T. Any adjustments to the Agenda? None noted.
Susan L. Move to approve the Minutes from March 11, 2026 as written. 2nd by Dave T. All approved.

New Business:

Rich T. The Minutes have been approved so we will open the meeting with Larry Hebert who is here to talk to us about the building project that he is planning.

Larry H. Basically, I am here to talk about the project located at 2511 VT Rt 14 here in Williamstown. This is for the construction of two (2) 4-unit apartment buildings. This is to also include the project located on Fox Run Road which will have six (6) additional apartments for a total of eight (8) two-bedroom apartment buildings. Because of changes in Legislature, plans have been redrawn, and we are hoping to have some help thru a Grant. Working on getting all the permits needed. (Maps, designs and drawings were presented to the group. Went over the plans for everyone in detail.) There will be 4 units in each building with parking available. One unit - per state requirements - is set up as a handicapped unit. The rule is (5%) or if there is 6 or more than one (1) must be a handicap unit. There will be 2 bedrooms per unit. The 2nd floor is set up the same as the first floor. The deal was from the Selectboard that when we bid on that lot we had to start building something or remodel it within 18 months, because of the shape the building was in the decision was to tear it down. So this is what the ACT 250 Jurisdictional Opinion is all about. You will be receiving something more on this. Just wanted to give us a heads up - - anyone have any questions?

Rich T. So what time frame are you looking at?

Larry H. It all depends on the State of VT. If it all goes thru – we could do up to 50 units because we are a town without zoning.

Some discussion followed - - Larry confirmed that the handicap unit was going to be ground level. Each unit would have two bedrooms except for the handicap unit. One bedroom would be larger and it would have a small office area or it could be used for a small bedroom.

Larry H. I have been working all winter with the state and architects and getting things permitted. This Fox Run project has already been approved by the SB and the State. They actually had less laws back then so that worked out to our benefit. (Maps and designs were shown on this project also.) This was such a big area that we had two plans drawn up. Discussed the plans being made for both the (6) – other apartment buildings off Center Road. The State has done a traffic study on this because of the intersection here to make sure that it is all going to work. Approximately an additional 50 cars going and coming. The next map shows the housing project above his home. These will be single family homes – there was originally going to be 37 lots but I lost 3 to the salamanders and frogs. I am putting in five amphibious crossings to accommodate their migration. You have to put up the cement block barriers and tubes for them to cross through. Plus we had to work out something for 64 acres for the deer yard - - we had to find two acres per deer and a replacement yard was hard to find, especially something that meets all the state criteria – so I offered to pay them to find something for the deer. This has been going on for 5 years - - so we made a deal and it was going to cost \$2,000 per acre (standard cost set by the state) to replace the deer yard – so it cost me \$128,000.

Susan L. What is the average acre on the house lots?

Larry H. They average from 2 to 2 ½ acres. There are some larger ones also. Most of them will have some pretty good views also. Can see Camel's Hump from some.

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- Susan L. When do you hope to get started on this project?
- Larry H. As soon as I get a permit. We have been stockpiling material for a couple of years. This road is going to be paved, all the way from Center Road all the way up thru. It's probably a little less than a mile. We are going to be doing all the site work, clear the lots, putting in the septic systems. Each lot will have its own drilled well.
- Sam Lash Question for Larry - - how many units total? Were they going to be at Market Rate?
- Susan L. What is Market Rate?
- Sam L. Are they going to be affordable units – or just what the market is at the time?
- Larry H. Depends on what the house is. There will not be any single mobile homes but will allow for double units and of course regular houses. The lots having all the work done on them, water, sewer, electric will run anywhere from \$99,000. The bigger lots (some 5+ acres) will be more. Is it affordable – good question - - 5 years ago the costs were lower. We are too far into it now to turn around. The previous Planning Cmsn had already approved the Fox Run project. I would appreciate your support of this new project.
The total of this project here and the other one will probably increase the Town's Grand List to about \$14 million dollars. The taxes shouldn't go up because of this - - the town will basically just have to plow the road. The schools should be happy about it as they would love to have more kids.
- Rich T. This all sounds great. Does anyone have any questions for Larry? If anyone would like to make a Motion to support Larry and this project.
- Dave T. Yes – I will make a Motion to support Larry Hebert and his building projects.
Susan L. I will 2nd this Motion.
All approved - - Motion passed.
- Sam Lash Are any of you planning on using the “Chips” program? This is a new program that the state has rolled out. I would be happy to send you some information on it. (Yes please – send us something.) This is a Community and Housing Infrastructure Program. Something to consider.
- Larry H. I would like to ask if I could get a letter from the Planning Cmsn supporting this project.
Rich T. Yes – we can certainly do that.
(Discussion followed on the wording - - suggestions to say something regarding that these projects are consistent with our Town Plan and future housing goals.)
- Larry H. I had a letter for the first one about five years ago but if you could structure a new one saying that I came and spoke to you about them and that you approve both of these projects.
- Rich T. At this point – I will turn over the meeting to Sam Lash from the CVRPC. She has information to share with us on the Municipal Climate Planning Pilot program. There is a Guidebook which Sam has gone thru and has tried to incorporate our actions into our Town Plan. We were also talking about April 25th and doing a community event at the Masonic Lodge.
- Susan L. I did get ahold of Bill Bown from the Mason Lodge and he said that the 25th is available. I gave him two dates, 4-25 and 5-2. The May date is not available.
- Rich T. I had sent you an e-mail and did mention that we are cancelling that and what we would like to do is to have something the same day as the Town's Memorial Day Parade. The date would be May 16th and we could have a table. Just wanted to mention that change before Sam gets going.

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Sam L.

I am handing out three pieces of information and we can go over them together. The May 25th date will now be May 16th. The first is the Williamstown Municipal Climate Planning Pilot, Proposed Workflow/Schedule Outline, and the May 16th Memorial Day Town Celebration Table Kick-Off.

So, on the 1st paper – **WHAT**: you were selected to join the State Pilot Program to test the Municipal Planning Climate along with Essex Jct. Just the two towns will receive the funds for this. This very thick Guide was given to me. There are also two other guides available. Instead of giving you each one of these large guides, I have torn it apart by chapters and then integrated it into your existing planning structure. I want to quickly go over our shared goals – correct me if I am wrong. In addition to doing a Town update – you also want the Town Plan to meet the Enhanced Energy Planning Standards. Your local Hazard Mitigation Plan has also expired. We also have some technical assistance available that the state might provide.

I would like you all to go thru this Guide and see what might not be something that your town needs to have included. I have pulled it apart and that part is available on “Googledocs” for you to look at. Any questions on the above before we go forward? We definitely want honest feedback on this Pilot program.

General Workflow: Regarding Community Engagement - - Kick-off on May 16th – emphasizing hazard risks and vulnerability. Two ways to do this - - Hoping to do something on the Town’s Memorial Day Event - - hoping to do three activities to engage the community, (see the paper included). The map activity notes specific natural hazards and has space allowed for personal comments. We could also use a fun spinner game with different topics and have a small prize for those playing. (candy) Could also have a special meeting with this board and also the selectboard members, the road foreman, other town folks that might be interested. Worksheets would be available, and this would maybe be a 2-3 hour meeting to really get all the scoring done. Hoping to do this sometime in May. I will flag this as an Action item.

Chapters: The general idea is to integrate our answers from the MCPG to match Williamstown’s Chapter Structure. The prompts that she has organized can be done in one of our meetings as a group. (Refer to the paper that was handed out.) These answers will go back to RPC to be integrated in our Town Plan.

Throughout: This I would suggest that we have a few on-going lists in a “Project Bin” to refer to and to keep all the projects in one place. Using these as a reminder to keep them in our Town Plan. Note on “Rabbit Holes” – As you go thru the guide there might be prompts that you might like to answer but don’t take the time at the moment - - it could be something that we get back to.

Full Plan Review: Revisit shared vision - - Prioritize implementation actions and community partner outreach; community outreach.

The Proposed Workflow/Schedule Outline Calendar is a little more specific in detail as to when and what we should be working on. The “blue” is the responsibility of the Planning Commission - - the “green” is the community engagement component, and the “red” is “as needed” or things to follow up on.

Briefly going thru the different Timeframes - -

Re the May & June Planning Cmsn. Meeting – on your Agenda – it would be good to dive right into the Natural Resources Chapter Guide Prompts.

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- Sam L. **Decision Points:** Googledocs/drive – best way to access materials. I can also provide paper copies for anyone who might want one. (All present at the meeting requested a paper copy and an extra one for Horace also.)
Continued going over the Workflow/Schedule outline. The July Planning Cmsn. meeting should focus on Energy and Enhanced Energy Plan Std. requirements. I also think it would be a good idea to have a special meeting in July to walk thru the key mapping resources - - it could also include any folks who might have a special interest in mapping. The maps come into play in different areas, Hazard plans, Natural Flood Insurance mapping.
My recommendation for August as it seems to be an important topic is Housing. Some other chapters that you might want to consider having a specific planning meeting for - - (see suggestions on the Schedule outline. This has been a lot of information. Any questions or concerns?
- Rich T. One thing that I had mentioned to Sam was that I would be happy to sit down with her on some of these topics. Transportation was one.
- Sam L. Transportation is one of the items that we will be reviewing under the Chapter Review. Keith Cubbon will be available to go over this area at the special meeting.
- Rich T. Spoke about the Regional Safety Action Plan - they are looking at talking with the Town Mgr, Road Foreman, Road crew, Selectboard members, Planning Cmsn, et al.
- Agreed This would be a good meeting to coordinate with Transportation.
- Susan L. What Special Meeting?
- Sam L. I don't have a specific date in mind – just a suggestion that it be in early May sometime. The one for the Hazard Identification, Risk & Vulnerability Assessment. That's the one that we really dive into and score the different hazards.
- Susan L. This meeting with everyone - - how do you explain what is will be about? Is there a handout? If we invite the folks that you have mentioned, then we will have to hold the meeting at the Public Safety Bldg and I will need to check their schedule for availability.
- Sam L. Yes, I can provide you with some information. You all can pick a day for this.
- Rich T. Yes - - it might be a good idea to check with the Town Mgr. as he will need to pull in the Town Road Foreman. I will check my schedule and theirs as well to see what will work for them.
- Sam L. We can do it in two sessions if that would work better for folks. I have the worksheets that will need to be completed and they can be integrated when we get them all back.
Sometimes in conversations we can identify different issues and its helpful to hear others thoughts, especially in the scoring process. If it can be done and handed in within a week to week and a half, that would be helpful.
- Rich T. I will be getting in touch with Ryan – the Town Mgr.
- Sam L. I can pull some of the worksheets for you and e-mail them to you or him directly.
- Discussion Talked about the Memorial Day Parade event to have the community engagement event for May 16th. Will need to check with Barb Graham for details. If that date doesn't work – we can set up another one.

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- Sam. L. I will e-mail you the Municipal Plan Climate Guide. As you go thru it you can highlight or cross off things that aren't applicable to your town.
- Susan L. If you have smaller meetings with different groups – do you have to Warn them?
- Sam L. Not if it's a majority or if you do it as a working group. If you aren't making full decisions and it's a work session – then you don't have to record them. (8:38 P.M.)
- Rich T. When will you be doing the minutes for this meeting. If it would be helpful - - can you send Sam a copy.
- Susan L. I will be in the office tomorrow but if Jasmin is also going to be in – I can't come in until after 2:00. I will not be in town on Friday either.
- Rich T. Any other questions or comments? None - - -. I will entertain a motion to adjourn.
- Dave T. I will make the Motion to adjourn. 2nd by Susan L.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:40 p.m. Next Meeting - - May 13, 2026

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