



TOWN OF STOWE PLANNING COMMISSION Meeting Minutes March 2, 2026

The Town of Stowe Planning Commission held a regular meeting on **Monday March 2, 2026** starting at 5:30 PM. The meeting was held at the Stowe Town Office with remote participation via Zoom. Voting members included Bob Davison, Brian Hamor, Jill Anne, and Heather Snyder. Non-voting member(s) present included Jeff Sereni. Municipal staff Sarah McShane was present. Jo Sabel Courtney also attended.

Call to Order

Chair B. Hamor called the meeting to order at approximately 5:30 p.m.

Adjustments to the Agenda & Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items

There were no public comments and no adjustments/additions to the agenda.

Review Prior Meeting Minutes [02/02/2026] B. Davison motioned to approve the February 2nd meeting minutes. H. Snyder seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Review Draft Stowe Town Plan & Potentially Warn a Public Hearing

Chair B. Hamor introduced the agenda item and recommended that the Commission provide technical and grammatical edits for staff to incorporate, and that the meeting focus on items warranting group discussion. Staff explained the changes made to the document since the Commission last met and reviewed the plan. She noted that the Department of Public Works had reviewed the Utility Element and provided technical and factual edits, all of which have been incorporated. Staff then highlighted each of the tracked revisions and explained the substantive changes.

A revision was added to the People & Place – Census section to recognize that not all residents identify as male or female. The Transportation section was updated to reflect the importance of gravel in maintaining local roads, the financial cost of purchasing gravel from outside sources, and the need to begin considering the long-term availability of gravel as a municipal resource. Additional revisions were made regarding sidewalks and municipal storage, along with the addition of a new policy under Local Planning Process supporting diverse backgrounds and perspectives on municipal boards and commissions. Minor edits were also made to the Energy policies to clarify, and in some cases soften, the language as recommended by C. Safford. Members agreed to accept all of the recommended revisions except for one Energy policy, where the Commission decided to retain the term “prioritize” in Energy Policy 2a. All other suggested revisions were accepted.

B. Davison then shared additional requested revisions. J. Sereni asked whether the Table of Contents should be simplified by removing the word “Our” from each topic area in Chapter 5. Members agreed to remove the word to make the document cleaner and more reader friendly. H. Snyder suggested incorporating the results of Town Meeting into the plan to reflect the most recent actions. Members then discussed the timing and warning process for the plan and agreed to wait until the next meeting to warn a public hearing.

H. Snyder suggested adding the year to the income data referenced in the plan. B. Davison asked that the discussion of Act 47 include the word “mandates” to reflect the requirements of the recent law. Members also discussed several photographs in the document and questioned whether they were all located in Stowe; staff will review them more closely and replace any that are not.

Members briefly discussed Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) and whether the tool had been used locally. Members were only familiar with one example involving the Stoweflake property. They also agreed that the Planned Unit Development (PUD) section should highlight the requirements for SKI-PUDs and Resort PUDs.

H. Snyder noted two typos in the grand list section and suggested that the discussion regarding the gap in the homestead tax rate could be used in a future Front Porch Forum post or other materials inviting people to review the plan. Members also discussed the short-term rental data and the number of registered properties, requesting clarification regarding properties that have more than one registration.

The Commission discussed the section on Memorial Park and noted that it does not address the wetland and drainage constraints or the condition of the Gale Recreation Center. Members also discussed PFAS and whether the plan should acknowledge that contamination affects not only municipal water systems but also private wells and water sources that may eventually need to connect to the municipal system. Staff suggested adding a brief statement recognizing that PFAS impacts both municipal and private water sources and is a broader community concern.

B. Davison recommended adding an action item to work with the Stowe Land Trust to amend the conservation easement on Mayo Farm to potentially allow housing development within the three-acre homestead zone for municipally sponsored affordable housing. Members discussed the location of the homestead zone and the earlier discussions related to the conservation easement. The Commission agreed to add the action item under the Housing section.

B. Davison also asked that the development of a stormwater management plan be incorporated into the Town Plan. Staff will review the document to determine whether this item is already included.

With no further requested edits, members discussed Town Meeting and the need to be prepared to answer questions regarding the existing Town Plan and housing-related initiatives. Staff will incorporate the changes discussed and circulate an updated version of the document. The Commission agreed that staff should finalize the plan and, if ready at the next meeting, the Commission vote to warn a public hearing for April 20th.

Members then discussed hosting an informational meeting as an opportunity to invite the community to learn more about the plan. They also reviewed upcoming meetings, including a joint meeting with the Selectboard on March 25th. Members asked when the Selectboard would receive a copy of the draft plan. Staff explained that if the Commission feels ready at the March 16 meeting, it can vote to warn the public hearing, which would “freeze” the document until after the hearing. The Selectboard would receive a copy in their meeting packets the Friday before the joint meeting. Staff will also post the most recent version of the plan on the Town website once it is ready. Members ultimately decided to postpone the informational meeting and dedicate the next meeting to finalizing the plan and potentially warning the public hearing. The meeting then transitioned into a brief discussion of inclusionary zoning.

Review Year Ahead – Inclusionary Zoning.

Staff explained that the next step will be to draft a RFQ and interview interested consultants. The Selectboard has allocated \$35,000 to hire a consultant to assist in developing inclusionary zoning regulations. Staff encouraged the Commission to begin thinking about their goals for the project. She noted that two of the key policy questions will be determining the appropriate payment-in-lieu amount and identifying the project size at which inclusionary zoning requirements should apply.

B. Davison shared several comments and recommended that the consultant be very familiar with Stowe’s housing market and the cost of building within the town’s unique development environment. He asked whether developers might be able to provide information about construction costs so the Commission can better understand what it takes to build in Stowe and ensure that an inclusionary zoning program is structured in a way that is workable.

Staff indicated she will begin speaking with colleagues in other communities to better understand what approaches have worked well and what challenges they have encountered. Members discussed the unique housing dynamics in resort destination communities and the labor market conditions in northern New England. B. Davison referenced several examples from other communities, noting that the regulations may need to be modified to be effective. Members also discussed potential sources of information, including the Housing

Needs Assessment and the short-term rental economic analysis currently being prepared for the Selectboard. The Commission expressed interest in learning from communities that have already adopted inclusionary zoning as they begin transitioning into this next phase of work.

Updates/Correspondence/Other Business

General Updates.

B.Hamor shared that he will provide a brief announcement on the Town Plan at Town Meeting.

Correspondence.

None

Review Upcoming Meeting Schedule

Next PC Meeting Date - Monday March 16th

The meeting was adjourned shortly after 6:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah McShane, Planning & Zoning Director

Parking Lot Ideas/Topics for Further Discussion

Identify example other town plans that identify and map scenic viewsheds.

Reserve meeting time to discuss PUD/PRD

Map of town-owned properties (done)

Review plans of adjacent communities and regional plan (done)

~~Review zoning districts, purposes, overlay districts~~

Develop map showing residential development activity (in progress)

Develop map showing location of homestead properties

Review requested zoning amendment/ADU's for duplexes.

Stormwater Utility District – Bob's list of recommendations

Joint meeting with the DRB & Selectboard (?)

~~Schedule joint meeting with Energy Committee~~