

TOWN OF STAMFORD
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
June 2, 2025
(UNAPPROVED)

Planning Commission: Peter Greenbush, Chair, Alden Finney, Kurt Gamari, ex officio member, Lisa Gramlin, Sheila Lawrence, Marta Miller, Daniel Potvin, David Saldo, and Jim Stimpson. David Tatro was not present.

Visitors: Callie Fishburn, BCRC, Samantha Page, BCRC, Nick Zaiac, BCRC, Jedidiah Gramlin, Debra Righi, James Righi, Diane Saldo, Lori Shepard, and Douglas Wright.

Peter Greenbush called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

HEARING OF VISITORS: None.

MINUTES:

MOTION by Marta Miller to accept the regular meeting minutes of April 14, 2025 as written.

SECONDED by Jim Stimpson. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

DISCUSSION:

Callie Fishburn, Regional Planner with the Bennington County Regional Commission, addressed the board during a routine municipal consultation which BCRC conducts twice during the eight-year town plan cycle. She is interested in how things are working with our local land use regulations and permitting process. Our new Town Plan will need to be adopted by June 2027 and will need to include housing targets and compliance with the 2023 HOME Act. This is based on availability of infrastructure as well as past how many housing units were permitted in the past. Our current town plan meets all other statutory requirements. Kurt Gamari asked if our Village designation had expired and needed to be renewed and what forced demands (for sewer/water) might come with that. Nick Zaiac stated that he felt comfortable saying that this would not happen and that designations open more opportunities.

Municipal Planning Grants are a source of funds towns tap into to update their Town Plan or Bylaws. The town can apply for these funds to work with a consultant, usually but not necessarily BCRC. Applications open up in the fall and are announced in the winter. Alden Finney wanted to know if new housing rules are mandates or recommendations. Callie explained that they are targets.

BCRC provides training and is open to hearing any needs we might have. Dan Potvin requested that BCRC share with us any information about training or events happening in other towns.

Callie Fishburn asked if we are looking to make any changes to our local land use regulations (Bylaws). Jim Stimpson mentioned the sign bylaw in progress. Marta Miller added that we are looking at defining driveway/private roads and "spaghetti" lots. Jim asked if we could apply for a grant to work on the Bylaws. Nick Zaiac, having reviewed our bylaws, felt that the language could be updated.

David Saldo wanted to know how BCRC is assisting with cannabis growing locations. Callie pointed the Board to VLCT training materials.

Callie briefly mentioned Development Review Boards and the merits of having a DRB system vs. our current split system of having a Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Adjustment such as having a more streamlined review process. BCRC is willing to come back and discuss with us.

Kurt inquired whether or not there are any flood hazard updates. The only new maps are flood maps. There was some discussion about the river corridor.

Callie outlined the variety of services BCRC can provide, such as transportation studies, energy programs, and environmental planning as well as working with town highway department. Stamford has two appointed Commissioners to the BCRC who vote but there is an opening for a Stamford Regional Transportation Commissioner.

Samantha Page presented, using slides, future land use mapping based on Act 181 (Act 250 Reform Bill). This includes changes to Act 250, designations, and how regional planning commissions work. Regional maps are not the same as local municipal plan maps and do not override the work the town has already done. She shared the new Act 250 tiers but didn't feel this would change anything in Stamford as they are tied to infrastructure the town does not currently have.

Changes to the Designation Program are determined through regional land use maps based on mapped centers and planned growth/village areas and has three different steps with varying benefits. Since Stamford already has a village designation, we would start at step 2. This does not affect our zoning. Kurt interjected that no one is taking advantage of the benefits of our village designation such as grants and asked if these grants were aimed at nonprofits, which Sam will follow up on. The BCRC would like the Planning Commission's boundary suggestions by the fall.

SOLAR: Jim Stimpson has been working with a contact on a 4MW system. While the project would be expensive, he suggested we use a grant writer. Some communities are creating LLCs to facilitate this. Peter Greenbush believes there is no longer the same federal money available for solar projects and requested more information.

Dave Saldo presented additional information regarding the right-of-way in front of the school. Dan Potvin and Peter Greenbush countered that the sign is now in the Select Board's hands.

MOTION by Peter Greenbush to adjourn. SECONDED by Marta Miller. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 8:45p.m.

Lisa Gramlin
Planning Commission Clerk