

Hartford Planning Commission Workshop

Draft Minutes

November 10, 2025

Planning Commission Chair John Reid called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. He followed by reading the hybrid meeting script and conducting a roll call.

The following individuals attended the meeting which was held at the Hartford Town Hall in Room 2 at 171 Bridge Street in White River Junction on Monday, November 10, 2025. The meeting was also available remotely but no one attended that way.

Planning Commission: Colin Butler, Toby Dayman, John Heath, Dylan Kreis, Bruce Riddle and chair John Reid.

Staff: Planning and Development Director Lori Hirshfield and Planner Matt Osborn.

Others: Dave Brown.

Chair John Reid called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. He proceeded to read the hybrid meeting script followed by roll call.

- 1. Public Comments:** Dave Brown of 614 Bliss Road was present to discuss the Public Utility Commission (PUC) application by SBA to increase the height of an existing telecommunication facility on Bliss Road. Dave is an abutting property owner. He stated that the Town Plan notes that “telecommunication facilities shall be the minimum height necessary to achieve coverage.” He felt the Planning Commission should have asked for a lower height than the proposed 120’ tower. He presented a handout. Lori Hirshfield noted that the Town no longer has authority regarding telecommunication facilities. The Town has an advisory role only. John Reid stated that he recalls the need for a taller tower to accommodate additional telecommunication providers. Dave stated that to get answers, the Planning Commission needs to ask questions from the PUC. Colin asked if the Planning Commission asked questions. John Reid responded yes. Dave concluded by stating that the Planning Commission decisions have an impact on the community.
- 2. Review of the Draft Minutes of October 20, 2025 Planning Commission Workshop:** John Reid asked if there were any changes to the draft minutes of 10/20/25. Being none, Bruce Riddle made a motion to approve the minutes of 10/20/25 as written. The motion was seconded by Colin Butler and approved unanimously.
- 3. Discussion of the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission Future Land Use Map for Hartford:** Matt Osborn started by noting that the new mapping requirements of Act 181 stem from the housing crisis and the need to streamline development. It results in changes to Act 250 that can provide benefits to Hartford and the development community. Matt noted that there are ten land use categories for all Vermont communities regardless of their size or region. Lori noted that the categories are prescriptive. Matt pointed out the existing Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (TRORC) Future Land Use Map (FLUM) for Hartford. The Act 181 categories are a change from the current TRORC FLUM and categories for Hartford. Matt noted the Act 181 categories:

- Downtown Center
- Village Center
- Village Area
- Planned Growth Area
- Enterprise
- Transition
- Resource-based recreation
- Rural General;
- Rural Agriculture and Forestry; and
- Rural Conservation.

Bruce stated that he spent a lot of time reviewing the TRORC Draft FLUM for Hartford and thinks that the Planning Commission should make changes to the Draft FLUM. The following are some of his concerns:

- Areas along the White River should be designated as rural conservation.
- Areas north of the railroad tracks in West Hartford should not be designated as village center.
- Not sure Hartford Village has the correct designations.

Lori noted that most properties would not trigger Act 250. It doesn't negate adherence to all town regulations.

Staff and the PC reviewed the FLU Map. Discussion ensued.

Bruce noted that Hartford hasn't provided detailed maps showing boundaries of the five villages. He thinks the Town should define the boundaries. Matt responded that there is wide range of ideas from the community about those boundaries. Lori noted the village center initiative is underway. She suggested that the stakeholders weigh in on village boundaries.

Matt noted that the map identifies the predominant use in the area and does not isolate individual properties. As an example, Matt noted the Quechee Lakes golf course and ski hill are identified as Resource-based Recreation and the areas include adjacent condominiums.

Matt noted the state housing targets identified for 2030. Since Hartford is the region's largest community and has four villages with Town water and sewer and access to an interstate highway. The Town is projected to have 21.4% of the region's share; 780 units out of 3,600 by 2030.

Colin noted that TRORC expects Hartford to complete our review of the map by the end of the year. He stated that he would have preferred more time to review the maps. Others agreed.

4. **Next Workshop:** Matt asked if PC members are available for a workshop on Monday, November 24th at 6:00 p.m. All members except Dylan Kreis are available. There was consensus to hold the workshop on Monday 11/24 at 6:00 p.m. The PC requested that staff comments about the Draft FLU Map be sent ahead of the workshop. Matt asked the PC to review the land use categories and to review the FLU Map for the 11/24 workshop. Matt asked the PC to keep Monday, December 8th

open if another workshop is needed. If needed, that meeting would take place at 6:30 p.m. since staff have a 5:00 p.m. meeting that night.

5. **Adjournment:** Colin Butler made a motion to adjourn the meeting. John Heath seconded the motion which was approved. The meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.
6. **Planning Commission Member Terms:** Dillon Bianchi, 9/1/28, Colin Butler, 6/24/27, Toby Dayman, 6/24/27, John Heath, 3/11/27, Dylan Kreis, 6/26/26, Bruce Riddle, 2/3/28 and Chair John Reid, 2/5/27.