

Hartford Planning Commission Workshop

Draft Minutes

November 24, 2025

Planning Commission Chair John Reid called the meeting to order at 6:00 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 24, 2025. The meeting was also available remotely but no one attended that way.

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

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

Others: None.

1. **Public Comments:** John Reid asked if there were any public comments. There were none.
2. **Review of the Draft Minutes of November 10, 2025 Planning Commission Workshop:** John Reid asked if there were any changes to the draft minutes of 11/10/25. Being none, Colin made a motion to approve the minutes of 11/10/25 as written. The motion was seconded by Bruce and approved unanimously.
3. **Discussion of the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission Future Land Use Map for Hartford:** Matt Osborn noted that staff developed a list of questions and comments regarding the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (TRORC) Future Land Use Map (FLUM) for Hartford. He suggested going through the list and getting feedback from the PC.
 - I. **Overlay District:** Hartford has several overlay districts (Rural Lands Overlay District, Agriculture Overlay District and the Wildlife Connector Overlay District). Will these be affected by the proposed Regional Land Use designations? **TRORC Response:** Staff reviewed the overlay districts with TRORC Planner Kyle Katz there was consensus that there isn't a conflict. **PC Review:** The PC did not have any concerns.
 - II. **Christian Street:** Christian St. Agricultural Overlay area is proposed by TRORC as Rural Agriculture and Forestry (RAF) & Rural General (RG). As an agricultural overlay district, clustered development is allowed. In the Town Plan Future Land Use Plan, the area is identified as Residential. Currently, the area is not served by Town water & sewer. Without it, density is one dwelling unit per acre. **TRORC Response:** One dwelling unit per acre is consistent with the Rural General category. TRORC changed the designation of a small section of RAF lots along the west side of Christian Street to Rural General. The east side of Christian Street was already designated as Rural General. Town staff recommends changing a larger section of RAF lots to Rural General to be consistent with the Town Plan Future Land Use and the R-3 zoning boundary. **PC Review:** There was extensive discussion about this area and whether Town water and sewer could be extended to this area and serve as a location for higher density housing. The PC concluded by going along with the staff recommendation.

- III. Route 5 South of I-89 Overpass: The area west of Route 5 and south of I-89 (across from the Upper Valley Aquatic Center) is proposed by TRORC as Rural General and Rural Agriculture and Forestry (RAF). The Town Future Land Use Map designates the area as residential and Forest Reserve. The zoning is R-3 and further west is FC. Since Town water and sewer are nearby, Town staff recommends it be changed to Transition to be consistent with the Town FLU Map and the R-3 zoning boundary. **PC Review**: The PC agreed with the staff recommendation.
- IV. Quechee Lakes Section 5C: (7-83 & 7-83-1) is slated for development under the Quechee Lakes Master Plan. TRORC is proposing the area be designated as Rural Conservation. In the Town Plan, it is identified as Rural Residential. **TRORC Response**: TRORC only changed a portion of 5C to Rural General since it is a high priority wildlife connector and forest block. Since it is clear that the 1988 Quechee Lakes Master Plan (QLMP) designates the area for residential development, there is a conflict that should be addressed in the letter to TRORC. **PC Review**: Colin stated that he supports the wildlife corridor. Bruce stated that the PC needs to uphold the QLMP. Toby agreed and said we should make sure the Quechee Lakes Landowner's Association is aware of the designation. Matt noted that the QLMP designates in a very general way pods of development for Section 5C. To develop 5C, the developer must seek PC approval with a specific layout. This will be an opportunity to orient the development away from the wildlife corridor. Lori suggested inquiring if Section 5C had Act 250 approval.
- V. Quechee Lakes Ski Area/Golf Course: The Resource-based Recreation area proposed by TRORC around Lake Pinneo and the Golf Course includes many condominium complexes. Should those areas be changed? **TRORC Response**: The map identifies the predominant use (substantial majority use) in the area and does not isolate individual properties. TRORC Planner Kyle Katz indicated that it doesn't change what can be done related to housing. **PC Review**: The PC accepted this response.
- VI. Quechee Lakes Polo Field: 13-93-Q-POLO (site of Polo events, golf driving range and Scottish Festival) is proposed by TRORC as Rural Agriculture and Forestry (RAF). It might be more appropriate to classify as Resource-based Recreation. **TRORC Response**: TRORC changed to Rural General as the predominant use in the adjacent area. It does not impact events on the site. **PC Review**: Bruce suggested addressing TRORC response in the PC letter to TRORC. The PC agreed.
- VII. Quechee Interstate Interchange area: Quechee Interstate Interchange zoning district is proposed by TRORC as Rural Agriculture and Forestry (RAF) or Rural General (RG). In the Town Plan Future Land Use Plan, the area is identified as Gateway Commercial. **TRORC Response**: TRORC changed the RAF area to Rural General. RG allows limited commercial but there is a restriction on principal retail. **PC Review**: The PC accepted this response.
- VIII. Properties with Conservation Easements: Several properties in Hartford have conservation easements on them. Most are proposed by TRORC as Rural Agriculture and Forestry (RAF) or Rural General (RG). Examples include Hemlock Ridge (RAF), Hazen Brookside Farm, (RG), Maanawaka Conservation Area (RG), Hillside Road Conserved Land (RAF), Safford Road Conserved Land (RAF & RC). **TRORC Response**: TRORC changed several of these properties to Rural Conservation if they were adjacent to Rural Conservation areas. Others are classified as RAF. **PC Review**: Colin noted that the Brookside Farm has a conservation easement on the entire property and yet a portion of the property along Route 5 is designated as Transition. He suggested designating the entire property as Rural Conservation. The PC agreed.

- IX. GCR Zoning District: The Town GCR zoning district across from the VA Hospital was rezoned in 2022 to allow for mixed-use development. The GCR district is located in the growth center. Since then, one of the hotels was converted to multi-family housing. We hope to see additional housing and mixed-use in this district. The proposed Regional land use designation for this area is Enterprise. We think this area should be designated as Transition. **TRORC Response**: TRORC changed the area to Transition. **PC Review**: The PC accepted this response.
- X. Wright's Sawmill: Wright's Sawmill property is proposed by TRORC as Rural Agriculture and Forestry (RAF). In the Town Plan Future Land Use Plan, the area is identified as Gateway Commercial. **TRORC Response**: TRORC changed a small portion of the property from RAF to Enterprise. The existing Regional Plan Future Land Use Map designated half of the property to rural and the other half mixed-use. Town staff recommends changing the entire parcel to Enterprise. **PC Review**: There was some discussion about the suitability of housing for the property. Matt noted that there is a sawmill on the property and is adjacent to an industrial park. The PC concurred with staff's recommendation.
- XI. Route 5 South: Route 5 South consists of the Maxfield Sports Complex (14-109), Northern Nurseries (14-94 & 14-108), the Army National Guard (14-109-1), the Hartford Transfer Station (14-103 & 14-106) and the Leisure Living Mobile Home Park & Sales Office (16-12 & 16-13). Zoning in the area is either RC-2 or RL-10. The area is designated in the Town Future Land Use Map as either Rural or Mixed-use. The Regional Plan proposes the area as Rural General. **TRORC Response**: TRORC believes that Rural General is the most appropriate category for this area. The only restriction would be an exclusion of principal retail or large-scale development. **PC Review**: It was noted that limited commercial is allowed in the Rural General category. However, the TRORC methodology leaves out commercial. The PC was concerned about this and requested that this be mentioned in the letter to TRORC.
- XII. Development in RAF & RC Areas: Is development allowed in the Rural Agriculture & Forest and Rural Conservation areas? **TRORC Response**: Yes. **PC Review**: The PC requested that TRORC provide clarification on what types of development would be allowed.
- XIII. Existing Commercial Business in Rural General: What about existing commercial operations that are located in areas proposed as Rural General? Are they allowed to expand?
- Nott Excavating, Parcel 8-21, 2591 Route 14 Zoned IC.
 - CBQ Auto Repair, 8-129, 421 Route 14 zoned RL-3.
 - Merchand Auto Repair, 14-36, 917 N. Hartland Road zoned R-3.
 - Klampert Dentist Office 14-33, 1049 N. Hartland Road zoned R-3.
 - Casella 8-187, 1544 Woodstock Road zoned RC-2.
 - Quechee Service Center 12-138, 8727 Woodstock Road zoned RL-3.
- TRORC Response**: Yes, as long as they don't have principal retail or trigger substantial regional impact which is identified in Chapter 13 (Implementation) of the Regional Plan. **PC Review**: The PC expressed concern about the term "trigger substantial regional impact". They also expressed concern about the future of these businesses under this category. The PC requested that this be included in the letter to TRORC.
- XIV. Rural Agriculture & Forestry Regional Goals: Under Rural Agriculture and Forestry, it refers to regional goals. What are TRORC regional goals for this category? **TRORC Response**: Agricultural & forest-based resources and no principal retail. **PC Review**: The PC accepted this response.

John Heath stated that the PC priority should be seeking opportunities to develop more housing. Others agreed. Bruce stated that the Town should be looking at where to expand Town water and sewer. Others agreed.

Bruce expressed concern about development in proximity to the White River. Many properties are in the 100-year flood zone and it is important to protect the riparian buffer and view corridors of the river. He suggested considering a river overlay district to be incorporated into the Zoning Regulations.

Lori noted that TRORC will be conducting public hearings on the draft FLU Maps for all their member communities. Colin stated that we need to get the word out to the public about the hearings. Staff agreed.

Lori stated that she will be doing a briefing for the Selectboard.

4. **Next Workshop:** Matt noted that the PC agreed to a place holder on December 8th if another workshop was needed. He asked if PC members would like to hold another workshop before concluding their remarks on the draft Future Land Use Map. The consensus of the PC was that another workshop wasn't needed. Staff agreed to prepare a letter to TRORC on behalf of the PC. There also was concurrence on getting information to the Hartford community regarding the new statewide and TRORC processes and public review and hearing opportunities.
5. **Adjournment:** Bruce Riddle made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Colin Butler seconded the motion which was approved. The meeting adjourned at 8:22 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.