

**SPECIAL SELECTBOARD MEETING
JOINT SELECTBOARD/PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MAY 13, 2025
MINUTES**

Selectboard Members Present: Casey Mathieu, Pat Haller, Nick Nichols, Julia Andrews, Deb Jorschick

Selectboard Members Absent: None.

Planning Commissioners Present: Max Tyler, Ian Gehlbach, George Lamphere

Planning Commissioners Absent: Mo Reilly, Will Dunkley

Also Present: Holly Delisle (Town Administrator), Harmony Cism (Zoning Administrator & Planning Assistant), Maria Barden (Minute Clerk), Ben Bornstein, Carol Winfield, Brenda Steady, Lori Johnson, Dave Gauthier, Barb Peck, Maureen Wilcox, Maura O'Brien, Francis Cusack, Glenn Rogers, Mark Letorney, Darren Schibler (CCRPC), Taylor Newton (CCRPC)

This meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. This meeting was held in person and via zoom.

Amendments to the Agenda:

None.

CCRPC: Act 181 - Regional Plan findings, recommendations & next steps

D. Schibler and Taylor Newton gave a brief update and addressed questions and concerns from the public regarding Act 181. They discussed what Westford qualifies for and the different requirements regarding ACT 181. CCRPC provided information about their ECOS plan update and the Future Land Use Map (<https://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/our-plans/ecos-regional-plan/ecos-engagement/#future-land-use-map>).

CCRPC requested a formal recommendation from the Planning Commission on the Tier 1B area that was proposed by the working group and a formal resolution by the Selectboard.

G. Lamphere made a motion to recommend to the Selectboard that they request Tier 1B status on the Regional Future Land Use Map for the areas included in Westford's existing Neighborhood Development Area Designation. **M. Tyler** seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

P. Haller motioned to adopt the resolution provided by CCRPC in accordance with the Planning Commission recommendation to include Tier 1B area that overlays what is and will no longer be the neighborhood district area. **N. Nichols** seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

C. Mathieu asked what Westford's housing targets were.

H. Cism answered that mid-level is eight per year, twelve on the high end and four on the low end. She noted that we've had anywhere from six to ten per year for the past five years or so.

M. Tyler said that the Town already makes the low end of the target with natural growth. He further stated that the working group discussed other transition zones but since we don't have that reflected in our Town Plan it is not a realistic option at this time. If we want to consider this in the future, he thought we should start discussing that now.

G. Lamphere thanked the Select Board, the working group and CCRPC for meeting and bringing this information to the Town.

L. Johnson was on the working committee and wanted to add that one of the discussions was, although Westford has been meeting the housing targets, many of them haven't been in the Town Center. She felt we should think more about those transitional areas where additional housing is being built now. The committee also considered outreach, and they felt strongly that the community should know what is going on.

M. Letorney said Westford's current Town Plan and Land Use Development Regulations fits well with CCRPC's growth pattern. Traditionally Westford has been a town that has chosen to keep its working lands open and concentrate development in the village. Although wastewater didn't work out, it doesn't mean we can't look for an alternative to accommodate more housing within our village center area.

G. Lamphere acknowledged that with the help of CCRPC and the working group we've identified the areas in the town plan that could be revised. He would like to revisit this because it will require quite a bit of outreach.

1705 Property Discussion

The Selectboard and Planning Commission discussed 1705 and what they thought the priorities would be and what they could do to move forward. Priorities might include a septic for the Town Office and Library, river access, and potential expansion of the Town Office, as well as stormwater management, brownfields correction plan and potable water. Steve Willard had suggested a fire hydrant to provide pressurized hydrant in case of a fire in the village center.

The public suggested reaching out to the historical preservation to see if there was any possibility of the historical preservation of the Pigeon house. Some residents feel it's important to see about preserving, while others felt it would cost too much.

G. Lamphere would be curious to see if the town has funds to help with community outreach. Back in 2019 they conducted a two-phase community outreach with over one hundred people attending the meetings at the school. This was funded by the VT council for rural development.

C. Mathieu said no funds are allocated right now.

G. Lamphere thought it worth pursuing, and we should investigate other resources that have bandwidth and experience with this type of outreach.

M. Letorney agreed it will take considerable outreach. He felt there are three components: Site work, brownfields corrective action plan, and deciding about the buildings. He recommended determining what the Town office needs and starting there. The site layout comes later with whether to restore the house, move it, or get rid of it.

N. Nichols said it seemed that the intention was for septic when buying the property. That being the case, he felt more comfortable moving forward with prioritizing that. He wondered if the potential demolition of the house would need to happen before or after wastewater?

H. Delisle said the house would not need to come down before wastewater was put in.

H. Cism noted that with the 1705 project and the Town Plan work, it would be important to have a Town Planner. Planner work has been split between her, Holly and Ron.

C. Winfield reminded the Selectboard that the Vermont River Conservancy (VRC) was still interested in working with the Town not only for providing public access to the river, but also other aspects like the stormwater drainage. Carol recalls that VRC would reimburse some of the costs of the property purchase.

H. Delisle agreed with **H. Cism**. She believes that a 10-12 hour a week person would be helpful. She shared that CCRPC was looking to hire someone that they would share with towns; the Town would pay CCRP. **H. Delisle** and **H. Cism** will talk with Taylor Newton. CCRPC wanted to give this program a six-month trial first. **H. Delisle** stated the Town could repurpose Ron's contracted amount to cover this person's position. She said she would let the board and commissioners know what came of their meeting.

H. Delisle received a message from Wiemann Lamphere regarding the town office feasibility study. They recommended doing a survey now that we own the property because the two different site plans have conflicting wetlands boundaries.

P. Haller said we needed a survey to do a boundary line adjustment.

C. Mathieu said it will be on the Selectboard to figure out funding, and they would reach back out to the Planning Commission when they're ready for outreach.

The Selectboard and Planning Commission would like to see the historical preservation work that **M. Letorney** worked on previously.

M. Letorney said he would get that together and send it over to them.

N. Nichols felt it would be helpful to have a working document that lays out the history, etc.

H. Delisle was already working on this.

M. Tyler said 1705 is the priority but wants to reflect on the beginning of the meeting and his attendance in those ACT 181 sessions. His number one concern is that we need to figure out how we want the Town to grow or not grow.

P. Haller believed a town planner would help with this as well.

Public Comment

None.

D. Jorschick motioned to adjourn the joint Selectboard and Planning Commission meeting.

J. Andrews seconded; motion passed 5-0.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Selectboard Meeting
May 13, 2025

ADOPTED THIS 22nd TH DAY OF May 2025

WESTFORD SELECTBOARD



Casey Mathieu, Chair



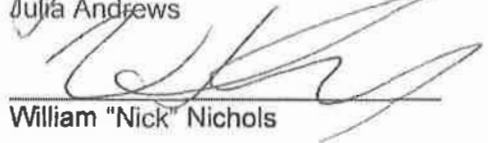
Pat Haller



Deb Sawyer Jorschick



Julia Andrews



William "Nick" Nichols

APPROVED BY THE WESTFORD PLANNING COMMISSION
JUNE 16, 2025



Max Tyler, Planning Commission Chair