

**TOWN OF WESTFORD PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES FOR DECEMBER 8TH, 2025, MEETING
APPROVED ON ***, 2026**

Commissioners' Present: Max Tyler, Will Dunkley, George Lamphere, Ian Gehlbach, Mo Reilly

Commissioners Absent: None.

Also Present: Harmony Cism (Planning Coordinator & Zoning Administrator), Maria Barden (Minute Clerk), Lori Johnson

The meeting began at 6:30pm.

M. Tyler went over the meeting rules of procedure.

Amendments to the Agenda

None.

Citizens to be Heard - *Items not on agenda.*

None.

Approval of Minutes - *October 20, 2025 & November 17, 2025*

M. Tyler made a motion to approve the minutes from October 20th, 2025, as amended, W. Dunkley seconded; Motion passed 4-0.

M. Tyler made a motion to approve the minutes from November 17th, 2025, as amended by G. Lamphere, G. Lamphere seconded; Motion passed 4-0.

Continued Discussion: *Land Use & Development Regulations Updates*

• DRB-Requested Review Topics:

1. Wetland Buffers: **M. Tyler** had done some research on this topic but not enough to come to some sort of conclusion. CCRPC and Lake Champlain Sea Grant came to talk with the Planning Commission recently. It seems the State is regulating more for river corridors and making some changes to the wetland maps.
The Planning Commission will look a bit further at those maps and discuss them further with CCRPC before making any changes or decisions.
2. Agricultural Soils: **I. Gehlbach** did some research and found that some key goals of agricultural soils are to protect agricultural land from development and preserve the best agricultural soils to be used for agriculture. Westford seeks to remain rural and protect agriculture, but DRB asked that this was looked at. There seems to be some conflict with the ask and where the Town sees itself.
M. Tyler feels there isn't much we as a town can do because it is regulated by the State.
I. Gehlbach will send his notes, and they can discuss it further at the next meeting.

3. Campgrounds: **H. Cism** and **I. Gehlbach** looked at the draft regulations and made a few minor edits based on what CCRPC said and what was discussed at the last Planning Commission meeting.

W. Dunkley doesn't want to make regulations on RV's more difficult because there is a terrible housing crisis currently and he doesn't want to make anything more difficult for people who are struggling and might use an RV as a last resort.

I. Gehlbach did some research into other towns and they all do whatever is right for their town, he says there is no one size that fits all and they can decide to do whatever makes the most sense for Westford.

M. Reilly says she has felt some of the same sentiments that W. Dunkley has brought up and appreciates the comments.

H. Cism reminds the Planning Commission that the town's regulations do not allow RVs on campgrounds, they are separate regulations.

M. Tyler came up with something that says, "a reasonable usable area for a campsite (if we want to consider having a dimension) is 2,000 square feet."

I. Gehlbach says there is a range for how many square feet towns are allowing anywhere from 2,000-15,000 square feet with a minimum of 20-30 feet in width. He says Cabot allows no more than ten camp sites or cabin sites per acre and at least 20% of the total area set aside for things such as recreation or conservation.

M. Tyler discussed number 5, he isn't sure the regulations should state that shower/bathroom facilities need to be put in for campgrounds. He would like to see the first sentence of item 5 removed.

The commissioners continue their discussion on acreage and density in relation to campgrounds.

***I. Gehlbach** will propose some language and bring it to the rest of the commissioners about lot size and density. **H. Cism** will contact the district office to get a clearer answer from the State on regulations surrounding people living in RVs. **H. Cism** will remove the "and shower" portion of number 5, and remove the first sentence from number 5.*

- Small Businesses: **M. Tyler** discusses whether or not Westford needs as many regulations on small businesses as they currently do. Wonders if they can simplify some of the regulations. **M. Tyler** feels this is something they should think about when working on regulation changes and future town plan but not take any further action on changing anything currently. **G. Lamphere** feels this is a reasonable approach and says they're always open to getting feedback.

- Subdivision Review Procedure: **H. Cism** drafted this section on minor subdivisions, most towns allow up to 2 or 3 lot subdivisions to be approved administratively, and this change is proposing that Westford also allow the Zoning Administrator to approve 2-3 lot subdivisions without DRB review. **H. Cism** does not feel it would be wise to have a new road be approved administratively. **H. Cism** says it takes her much less time to approve something like this administratively rather than pull together and write up what is needed for the DRB to approve it.

H. Cism will propose new language so the Zoning Administrator can approve up to a 3-lot subdivision administratively and they can adopt it at the next meeting.

Update: FY2027 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

H. Cism says this is the official solicitation for projects and CCRPC is ready for applications. **M. Tyler** sent an email to the SB letting them know this process was underway and that the Planning Commission is suggesting reinvestigating the pedestrian path on Brookside Road and possibly an application to support public outreach related to 1705.

H. Cism says the UPWP has two paths, the transportation projects which is a true grant with a 20% match, and the other route which is essentially hiring CCRPC to be a project manager for things such as outreach, at a \$70/hour rate. This might be necessary if SB does not hire a Town Planner.

H. Cism and M. Tyler will be meeting with Elaine from CCRPC Tuesday, December 9th along with Julia Andrews from the SB.

Announcement: Essentials of Land Use Planning Training by CCRPC

January 5th there will be a special meeting with training from CCRPC, **M. Tyler** would like to add to the end of that meeting a time to discuss any other proposals and projects for the UPWP. *The Planning Commission will think about what projects they would like to discuss with CCRPC and bring it to that January 5th meeting.*

Public Comment

None.

Correspondence

Update from Cambridge for their subdivision regulations. They're having a public hearing on Monday, December 15th and are required to let all surrounding towns know. **H. Cism** says there is nothing that will affect the Town of Westford.

Work Plan Review & Prioritization

- Ian will give proposed language on density and campgrounds.
- Harmony will investigate RVs at the State level.
- Agricultural soil will be added to the agenda for the next meeting.
- Max will connect with CCRPC on the wetland maps and will be discussed at the next meeting agenda.
- Harmony will tweak the language for administrative approval on subdivisions and add to next meeting's agenda.
- They will touch on the CCRPC training again.
- All will review the UPWP application information.

M. Tyler moves to adjourn, W. Dunkley seconds; Motion passes 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:23pm.