

**TOWN OF WESTFORD
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES FOR AUGUST 17TH, 2026
APPROVED ON ***, 2026**

Commissioners Present: Max Tyler, Will Dunkley, Kirsten Tyler, Ben Bornstein, Art Woolf

Commissioners Absent: None.

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

The meeting began at 6:30pm

Amendments to the Agenda

None.

Citizens to be heard – Items not on the agenda

None.

Approval of Minutes – July 20th, 2026 & August 3rd, 2026

B. Bornstein motioned to approve the July 20th minutes as amended. M. Tyler seconded, motion passed 4-0.

K. Tyler motioned to approve the August 3rd minutes as amended. A. Woolf seconded, motion passed 3-0.

Continued Discussion – Updates to Land Use and Development Regulations

a. Review of Proposed Amendments:

M. Tyler would like to limit the discussion to the changes that are in the document H. Cism provided, and anything that has been identified more recently or is on the commissions TBD list, be something they address later so they can move forward to the hearing phase.

The Commissioners discussed how they could make the numbering of the Regulations easier for everyone to understand and use. Some commissioners felt it would make sense to consecutively number the regulations and others felt it was an unnecessary task at this time.

M. Tyler discussed 308.A - Campgrounds. His thought was, since we already have a definition on campgrounds, we can remove one of the definitions if the language is the same. He did minor research on parking spaces regarding camper vans, etc. He feels they can make it easy if they set a size limit for parking spaces. "Self-propelled RV's of less than some length" or something of the sort would be allowed.

M. Tyler wanted some clarity regarding the regulation discussing domestic animals. Are these just small animals? What about horses?

H. Cism says if you have four or more horses, that will fall under the State Agriculture rules.

B. Peck says there is a difference between animals when they're considered pets and considered stock, four or less horses can be considered pets, four or more would be

considered a different status as stock. If you have a certain amount of chickens, you can get farm status, same thing with rabbits and goats, sometimes they can be pets and other times stock. It all depends on the number that you have, when it comes to horses, it can even go as far as considering if you have a gelding or a mare.

H. Cism says our definition didn't include a number; we have someone in town who boards dogs, they were confused since there wasn't a number and felt it shouldn't be considered commercial, but they were making money from it. H. Cism feels adding a number will make things less confusing when brought up in the future.

M. Tyler motions to move that the edited land use regulations as reviewed at the August 3rd and August 17th meetings with the amendments discussed at the August 17th meeting move to a public hearing phase. K. Tyler seconds, motion passes unanimously 5-0.

b. Schedule Public Hearing:

The public hearing will be held October 5th.

Updates

a. **Town Planner** – There was a committee that was made and there were proposed interview questions created. However, there has been a proposal about possibly going forward with a joint Town Planner with the town of Fairfax. This is just in the beginning phase right now, it has not been discussed at a SB meeting, it's just a discussion that our Town Administrator has been having with Fairfax's Town Manager to get all the information.

b. **UPWP Projects** – K. Tyler, B. Bornstein. M. Balassa and A. Nelson Stoner will be meeting tomorrow morning at 10am to discuss this some more.

H. Cism said CCRPC has contracted with Hoyle Tanner, Hoyle Tanner sent an updated budget for the brookside pedestrian pathway project. They also recommend the town does a supplemental, historic and archeological resource assessment which would bring the cost to \$41,759. The Town would be responsible for \$8,351.80. Our Town Administrator would like to know if the Planning Commission is amenable to allowing up to a certain amount of money to come out of the special projects reserve to be used for the 20% match for the Pedestrian Path Project.

M. Tyler says he would like to see the write-up from Hoyle Tanner and find out a little more information before deciding on funds.

B. Bornstein wonders if we can use BGS grant funds for something like this.

H. Cism says they need to decide on whether they want to release some of those reserve funds soon. If the Planning Commission doesn't want to use the funds, the SB will have to figure out where to get the funds before the 27th because CCRPC would like to get the contracts drawn up and ready.

M. Tyler would like to talk with CCRPC first to see if they will qualify for grants before deciding.

B. Peck asks why there hasn't been a courtesy to ask people who live along the brookside road what their thoughts are to the pedestrian pathway?

The Planning Commission assures B. Peck that will be part of the scoping study.

M. Tyler moves that the Planning Commission approves the allocation of up to \$10,000 from the special projects reserve, to cover the towns 20% match required for the Brookside Road pathway scoping report through CCRPC's FY'27 Unified Planning Work Program; assuming no other funding mechanisms are found after a vigorous and timely search. W. Dunkley seconds, motion passes 5-0.

M. Tyler talked with M. Balassa about the Planning Grants; they would like to start planning since the Municipal Planning Grant application window is coming up. He and **H. Cism** will coordinate some dates to meet with her.

Communication

a. **Front Porch Forum Posting:**

W. Dunkley is posting Planning Commission updates to FPF for residents who don't attend the meetings. There was some discussion to whether these posts should be approved by the whole Planning Commission rather than just one member.

M. Tyler says we have the meeting minutes which are posted on the town website. He discussed W. Dunkley being a resident and says he can post to FPF as himself; if he's posting as the Planning Commission, M. Tyler feels that it should be coming from the Planning Commission as a whole.

K. Tyler feels it's appropriate to summarize the minutes, she thinks it's easier to read the summarized posts sometimes, rather than the minutes, but she would like to have the Planning Commission all agree on the posts before they are posted.

W. Dunkley feels when it's timely some people may decide to come to the following meeting. If there were two people who were involved that could be a good idea, so they can still get the posts out quickly. They can try out the two people and then revisit it at a future meeting if the Planning Commission doesn't like it.

B. Bornstein says it can also be a rotating thing where they take turns posting and working together.

A. Woolf thinks it's great W. Dunkley is taking the initiative on these posts and feels that it's important to have the same person posting each time because people will get used to that. Maybe rotate the helpers but keep W. Dunkley the author.

B. Peck thinks W. Dunkley is doing an excellent job summarizing the meetings.

L. Johnson says the Town has a non-written policy that has been discussed before, that if you're posting an opinion and it's not been approved by the whole board that you make sure you start the post stating that it is your opinion as a resident.

M. Tyler would like to take advantage of more than just FPF and the minutes. He's used the newsletter before, if other commissioners want to think about that and think about other ways they can get information out to the public.

Correspondence

- a. Building Community Grants.
- b. Bens suggested edits for Land Use & Development Regulations.

Work Plan Review

- a. The next Planning Commission meeting will be on September 21st.
- b. W. Dunkley & K. Tyler will be working together to post the next FPF post.

- c. K. Tyler, B. Bornstein, and some members of CCRPC have a meeting tomorrow morning.
- d. H. Cism will get the public hearing warned and finish up the amendments to the Land Use & Development Regulations to give the Planning Commission the final copy at the next meeting.
- e. The public hearing will be held on October 5th.
- f. M. Tyler will finish Harmony's review.

B. Bornstein motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:24pm. W. Dunkley seconded, motion carried 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:24pm.