

Town of Brookline Planning Commission  
Wednesday, November 12, 2025, at 6:00 PM  
At Town Office and via Zoom

Committee Members Present:

In Person: Mike DeSocio (MD), member; Stanley Noga, Jr., (SN), Chair of the Commission

Via Zoom: Leah Daly (LD); Jon Harris (JH)

Members of the Public:

Via Zoom:; Matt Bachler (MB), Windham Regional Commission (WRC)

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The meeting was called to order at 6:06 PM by Stanley Noga who noted a quorum was present. He further noted the meeting was being recorded.

SN asked for changes to the agenda; there were none. There were no members of the public present with comments.

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the prior meeting. SN asked for comments on the minutes and there were none. SN made the following motion:

MOTION: to accept the minutes of the October 28th meeting as presented.

MD seconded the motion and there was no discussion. The motion was approved by MD, SN and LD with JH abstaining.

***Revisions to the Town Plan***

MB provided an overview of material changes to the Plan following suggested revisions from Commission members.

- Page 30-33, redline draft. MB edited language in energy chapter to discourage commercial wind based on prior feedback from the Commission. He noted that other area towns have similar language pertaining to commercial wind development. For any wind development to be scaled and efficient it would need to be on a ridgeline, which is inconsistent with other town policies related to scenic

and natural resources. An exception is in place for smaller scale and residential facilities.

JH noted the language was appropriate and asked for clarification s to how binding it is in light of the use of the word “shall”. MB said that for these types of alternative energies the Vermont Public Utility Commission (PUC) would be lead on the project. PUC considers language in a town plan in their planning process. Strong language does not mean PUC would deny a project, but Brookline could develop an *Enhanced Energy Plan* (EEP), if it chose to. This functions as an extension to the energy chapter in most town plans.. With one an EEP the PUC provides “substantial deference” as opposed to consideration, so this is considered a stronger statement. Several towns in the have developed this to get additional consideration at PUC. However, it is a more involved process and outside of the scope of the current planning process

JH further asked for clarification on what authority does the Planning Commission has to make decisions in this process. MD said that the Commission’s role is to develop and propose the Plan to the Select Board, who votes to adopt the plan with or without modification. If there are differences of opinion the Select Board can make changes.

- Page 45, redline draft. Additional changes were made to the flood section, including reformatting and merging two previously separate sections into one Flood Resilience Section. He also included additional references back to 2025 Hazard Mitigation Plan and noted that that plan is incorporated by reference into the Town Plan. The Commission had no additional questions or comments on this section.
- Page 69-70, redline draft. MB confirmed that the Brookline draft plan aligns to other local plans and the WRC Plan. There were not many changes in this section. All other local plans have been updated since Brookline’s last plan. Athens is currently developing its first plan. MD reminded the Commission that the goal of this review is to ensure plans align sufficiently, or that there is nothing in one plan that opposes policies in a neighboring town. He reconfirmed that is the case with the current draft plan.

Following review of the more material changes, MB noted some additional things that WRC needs to work on for this plan, including maps (e.g., changes to Greer Rd. designation) and the implementation program for recommended action steps. These items will be revised in the coming weeks and available in the draft for the December 9<sup>th</sup> meeting. At that point the draft and formatting will also be cleaner.

For now, MB will focus on getting the details over to SB shortly or soon and will address formatting issues thereafter.

SN reviewed the remaining agenda and sought clarification from MB on timelines and due dates.

On December 9<sup>th</sup> all items will be available in a cleaner version of the draft plan. At that point, unless there are any more changes, the Commission would be ready to schedule a public hearing.

MB also noted he can share dates by email for clarity.

MB noted that the Commission has to provide 15-days notice in a newspaper and posting in town of the Planning Commission public hearing. The Commission also has to provide surrounding towns with 30-days notice by providing a draft plan and Plan Report to Town Clerks or Planning Commission chairs. MB noted the Plan Report is a summary document that he will provide.

The Commission further discussed deadlines and dates, as follows:

The Planning Commission hearing should be held the first week in February, so notice should be sent the first week in January. If needed, the Commission could have a short special meeting before holidays and set the hearing date.

MD noted we would prefer to schedule meetings as early as possible, knowing the Commission needs to complete work by those dates.

SN asked how the Plan should be addressed in Town Meeting and, specifically, whether it needs to be approved. MB noted that some towns, including Athens, have a requirement to approve the Town Plan, but it is not a planning or state requirement. MB and SN discussed this and SN agreed to confirm whether Brookline has a requirement for approval. MB noted it seemed unlikely given the approval of the last Plan several weeks after Town Meeting.

MB noted the Select Board can hold their hearing – the second public hearing no less than 30 days after the Commission and no more than 120 days. The Select Board can also hold the hearing immediately before the meeting in which the Plan is adopted. The Commission agreed this would be the meeting on March 18<sup>th</sup>. The Select Board could hold the hearing meeting, adjourn and then vote.

The Commission discussed and agreed that the Commission should post to the Brattleboro Reformed by January 10.

The Commission Plan hearing and approval would occur on February 10<sup>th</sup>. The following day the Plan could be submitted by the Commission to the Select Board, which allows more than 30 days before the March 18<sup>th</sup> Select Board hearing and vote.

The Commission agreed the Select Board public hearing could be March 18<sup>th</sup> with a recommended hearing start time of 5:30pm or 6:00pm, followed by the regular Select Board at 6:30. This would be the most efficient process.

The Select Board also needs to provide 15-days notice at Town Office and publish in Brattleboro Reformer by March 3 as well as to post in regular spots. The Commission and MB discussed and agreed the notice of hearing would be posted separately from the regular meeting on March 18<sup>th</sup>.

Once Commission sets the public hearing the draft plan should be made available at the Town Office and posted to the website. The Commission also discussed providing notice of the draft Town Plan via town listserv and the Front Porch Forum, which are common means of communication in town. on plan posting.

LD and JH to confirmed they will join the upcoming Select Board meeting by Zoom on November 19<sup>th</sup>.

MD asked whether notices in the Brattleboro Reformer could be streamlined and posted jointly. MB recommended creating separate notices since the final Select Board hearing should operate separately from the Commission hearing.

JH asked that we please share a consolidated schedule and LD noted she will send it along with the minutes.

Hearing no other business, SN adjourned the meeting at 6:55pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Leah Daly