Westfield Planning Commission

Agenda

Wednesday, April 29, 2026, 5:00pm

Westfield Community Center, 59 North Hill Rd., Westfield, VT

1. Call Meeting to Order

2. Additions/Changes to the Agenda

3. Approve 041426 Minutes

4. Meet with NVDA staff RE: Town Plan update
   - Compliance with new statutes since last update
   - Compliance with updated Regional Plan
   - Suggestions for Survey questions
   - Review draft survey
   - Updated Town Plan timeline for completion

5. Other Business

6. Next Meeting

8. Adjourn

Westfield Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
April 29, 2026 5:00pm
Westfield Community Center, 59 North Hill Rd., Westfield, VT

Attendance: Brian Dunn, Kitty Edwards, Ellen Fox, Loren Petzoldt, Pat Sagui
Visitors: Alison Lowe and Molly Dockter, NVDA

1. Call Meeting to Order
Pat called the meeting to order at 5:08 pm

2. Additions/Changes to the Agenda
Kitty Edwards reappointment to the Planning Commission for another term.

3. Approve 041426 Minutes
Loren made a motion to table approval of the minutes until next meeting because members haven't had copies of the minutes to review. Kitty seconded, motion passed.

4. Meet with NVDA staff re: Town Plan (TP) update
-Compliance with new statures since last update
-Compliance with updated Regional Plan
-Suggestions for survey questions
-Review draft survey
-Updated Town Plan timeline for completion

Alison mentioned the importance of acknowledging and celebrating milestones and accomplishments in the updated Town Plan. We discussed including the following:
-revision of the Zoning Bylaw
-the wastewater study results
-Energy plan to ensure the Town has standing in application proceedings for energy projects
-Progress with floodplain regulations
-Progress toward fuel switching targets

There was discussion of housing needs in Westfield and the current reality that much of the real estate in Westfield is held for long periods of time and it is very difficult for people who may want to move to Westfield to buy a building lot. Real estate transactions are available through the VT Dept of Taxes PTTR filings. The housing targets that NVDA has developed are a range, and there is no punitive action if the targets are not met. The housing targets are planning goals and they are included in the Regional Plan.

Alison recommended the Craftsbury Town Plan as an example to define rural character and the importance there of multigenerational lands and how that comes to bear on housing development and subdivision there.

We discussed Act 121 and the transition that all development in the floodplain and river corridor will go through state review and management. The level of reimbursement available to towns through ERAF is currently keyed to elements of town regulation of the floodplain. If the state regulation makes the town floodplain regulation redundant, ERAF support is likely to be

reduced or eliminated. It will be important to find a way for towns to pya for hazard mitigation. An additional financial stressor is the possible limitation on FEMA support in a disaster with the current federal administration.

The group discussed health questions that might be included on the survey. Distribution and sources of health information, and access to services for an aging population are of interest. There is interest in both gathering data on residents' experience through the survey, and possibly sharing info about access in the revised Town Plan as a way to disseminate information on how to access health services such as rides to appointments.

It will be important to acknowledge school mergers and pending actions at the State level that will impact our young people and our schools.

Molly Dockter noted that the current State Bridge and Road standards were adopted on January 21 and so if the Selectboard passed the Town standards before January 21, then the Town would be out of date and need to pass the updated standards.

For a future land use map, the town could use NVDA's draft or our natural constraints map or some combination as a starting point. The land categories can match NVDA's, though they don't need to match. The town's potential future land use map will fulfill 4302.

Pat pointed out that location of rare and endangered species will appear in general locations on the map and will be included in Town Plan section on scenic and natural resources.

Alison will send a document authored by her colleague, Allie, which contains language the Town can use regarding qualifying for standing in Section 243 proceedings.

Molly described survey questions to evaluate the impacts of drought and flood situations. PC members discussed how power stations or power storage facilities might impact town resources.

There was some discussion of the road rule, and that it is not being implemented. Pat noted that Westfield's legal trail ordinance would be included as progress and noted in the Town Plan. Alison mentioned that Westfield may want to adopt subdivision regulations.

It was noted that agriculture was high on the list as an important feature in Westfield in the current Town Plan, and the Planning Commission will consider additions to the Plan to support adaptation to new kinds of agriculture, how to attract new farmers, how do we support investments in infrastructure such as food hubs and distribution and what currently exists. Amish families have recently relocated to our communities and make a significant contribution to keeping land in agriculture.

The timing to draft the updated Town Plan is to initiate the adoption process AT LEAST 60 days before expiration of the current plan. The Planning Commission intends to have the survey ready to go out in tax bills in August, collect and analyze results through September, and have a first public meeting for the proposed updated Plan around October 15, 2026. Alison mentioned it might be helpful to have an information session along with a potluck for an informal discussion of the Town Plan.

5. Other Business
Kitty affirmed that she is willing and able to serve another term on the Planning Commission and on the Development Review Board. Ellen made a motion to recommend to the Selectboard that Kitty be reappointed to both the Planning Commission and the Development Review Board. Loren seconded. The motion carried. Pat will also contact some people in town who might be interested in serving as an alternate.

6. Next Meeting
The next meeting of the PC is May 12 at 5 pm.

7. Adjourn
Ellen made a motion to adjourn. Loren 2nd the motion and the meeting adjourned at 7:17 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ellen Fox