

TOWN OF STAMFORD
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
April 14, 2025
(UNAPPROVED)

Planning Commission: Jim Stimpson, Vice Chair, Alden Finney, Lisa Gramlin, Sheila Lawrence, and Marta Miller.

Peter Greenbush, Daniel Potvin, David Saldo, and David Tatro were not present.

Visitors: Kurt Gamari, ex officio member, and Jedidiah Gramlin.

Jim Stimpson called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Hearing of Visitors: None

MINUTES:

There was not a quorum to review the regular meeting minutes of March 10, 2025 as written. MOTION by Marta Miller to accept the regular meeting minutes of the March 25, 2025 Public Hearing as written. SECONDED by Lisa Gramlin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

DISCUSSION:

1) Solar Project Jim Stimpson has taken on some legwork in researching solar possibilities. He would like to see a community-owned system. He has been speaking with Ralph Miama, a solar designer, formerly of Green Lantern Solar. Three phase connection is an obstacle as well as swampland. Stamford is uniquely positioned in Vermont since the grid goes into Massachusetts. According to Jim, a 5 MW system would supply the entire town of Stamford. Kurt Gamari asked where we might be looking to place a solar project, pointing out that this would be one of the hardest parts. Jim said thought would need 25 acres, not necessarily contiguous, though this would be more costly. Various locations were discussed, including behind the school or on the roof. Lisa asked if solar projects were allowed in wetlands. Kurt stated that he personally wouldn't want to ruin the wetlands with the aesthetics of a solar field. Aldy asked how many panels this would require. Marta pointed out that electricity for Stamford School alone is budgeted for \$17,361 in 2025. Lisa believed that the roof couldn't be touched until the warranty expires. Jim would like to form an ad hoc committee to continue research in the area. Lisa asked how we propose to get people involved. Jim thought we could consider word of mouth, poster, or sending out a flyer. Sheila thought Lori could include something in the with mailings to the public. Jim thought it would be wise to get the Select Board and Conservation Commission involved. Marta asked if Ralph Miama could come in to speak on the topic. Kurt also suggested that this be presented at the Resiliency Fair. Marta liked the idea of a forum for Ralph to introduce the idea, outline requirements, possible ways it could happen, and from there solicit a group of people who would be interested in getting involved. It was agreed that the best first step is to get Ralph here to speak.

2) BCRC:

Lisa Gramlin attended the BCRC regional meeting in Bennington on March 20th. She reported that they received and expressed gratitude for the joint letter from the Conservation Commission, Planning Commission, and Select Board regarding the changes in the new Regional Plan. They indicated that they are taking us seriously and are taking under consideration changing the language naming the Hoosac Range and Stamford as prime wind sites. It was noted that no language is ever permanent with the state.

3) Zoning Bylaw Review:

The Board reviewed changes suggested to the Bylaws by former Planning Commission members to see if we might continue with their work as well as anything in the Bylaws we may want to start working on. Kurt Gamari feels that the Bylaws are good overall but brought up some points he felt are going to be important moving forward that we should take under consideration, including private roads, development, accessory dwellings, road maintenance, coverage, and conditional use in the forest district. The Board discussed each of these areas. Marta agreed that with building in the forest we need to worry about the watershed as well as more cutting in the forests. With conditional use a site plan review is required. It was agreed that the Zoning Administrator is pivotal in the work the Planning Commission is doing.

Lisa reminded the Board that the Town Plan needs to be redone by 2027. For the most part, the Planning Commission needs to follow state statues in both the Zoning Bylaws and the Town Plan.

Another topic Kurt Gamari thought the Board might want to consider is whether or not we would want to move to having a Development Review Board rather than a Zoning Board of Adjustment and Planning Commission.

MOTION by Lisa Gramlin to adjourn. SECONDED by Marta Miller. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 8:16pm.

Lisa Gramlin
Planning Commission Clerk