

MEETING MINUTES
MUNICIPALITY OF WOODSTOCK, VERMONT
WOODSTOCK PLANNING COMMISSION
31 The Green
Woodstock, VT 05091

The Woodstock Planning Commission held a public meeting at 6:00pm on Wednesday, June 4th, 2025, to discuss the following:

Members present: Benjamin Pauly (Chair), Sarah Glasser Tucker, and Alex Mulley.

Public present: Harry Falconer

Staff present: Molly Maxham and Emily Collins.

Administrative Tasks

1. **Call to Order** – Benjamin Pauly called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. No adjustments were made to the agenda.
2. **Minutes:**

Ben Pauly motioned to approve 05/07/25 minutes as printed.
Alex Mulley seconded.
Vote. 7-0. Approved.
3. **Public Comment: None**
4. **Continuation of Bylaw Analysis and Revision Recommendations:**

Ben Pauly mentioned that Harry Falconer had updated some of his edits and comments on section 4 of the design review. He asked if anyone had specific questions or interests in potentially changing things or looking more in-depth on anything. Harry Falconer stated that he incorporated everything that was asked for last time but didn't change anything additionally. Harry Falconer suggested circling back to that section at the end of the meeting if they made it through the other items. However, due to not everyone being present, he recommended holding off on that discussion.

Harry Falconer asked about the definition of a "false front" when talking about flat roof buildings in corners. It was clarified that a false front is similar to a saloon building facade, typically seen on older buildings in the village. The group discussed the purpose of false fronts, including hiding HVAC equipment, chimneys, and the roof construction. Ben Pauly questioned what defines a false front and how high it needs to be. The group discussed the difference between a parapet and a false front, with a false front being a more exaggerated parapet. They also discussed whether false fronts need to have any kind of detail or if they can be unadorned. The conversation then shifted to looking at existing flat-roofed buildings in the village, such as Maple Fields, the former jail, and the mill building. They discussed whether these buildings would pass current regulations if they don't have a false front or cornice.

Harry Falconer mentioned that they had gotten through one pass of section 4 but hadn't really edited the steep slopes or conservation sections. He noted that the Scenic Ridgeline District, which is the last section of Article 4, didn't change. The group then moved on to discussing Article 5. Harry Falconer provided an update on the status of the municipal planning grant, explaining that Woodstock is slightly too big by Vermont standards to have the RPC as the contractor for the grant. The town needs to do an RFP to hire a contractor, which the RPC will bid on. Harry Falconer mentioned that it probably won't be him personally working on the town plan if they get the contract. Harry Falconer explained that they have two years from when the contract was signed (early May) to complete the work. He mentioned that the timeline depends on how much attention the commission wants to spend on everything in the plan and whether they're doing a complete rewrite or focusing on specific areas.

The discussion then moved to the town plan, with Ben Pauly mentioning that he had recently read through a good portion of it. There were some specific recommendations for the planning commission to invest its time, such as making floodways not buildable in the village. Harry Falconer clarified that the commission doesn't have a mandate to do anything except bring the future land use up to date and set themselves up to make the zoning districts less confusing in the future. He emphasized that everything else in the plan is advisory. The group then discussed the timeline for the RFP process, with Harry Falconer estimating it would take about a month once published.

Moving on to Article 5, Harry Falconer explained that it covers specific standards, while Article 6 covers general standards. He mentioned that there's no hard and fast rule for why something is a general standard versus a specific standard, but it's more about ease of use.

Harry Falconer went through various sections of Article 5, explaining changes and updates he made:

- He moved access and safety to general standards.
- Buffer strips were rephrased for clarity.
- Home occupation and density were moved to general standards.
- Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) were discussed, with Harry explaining the current regulations and definitions.
- The group had a lengthy discussion about ADU size limitations, debating whether to keep the current 50% or 1200 square feet limit or adjust it to match state regulations of 30% or 900 square feet.
- They discussed various scenarios and implications of different ADU size limits.
- The group agreed to change the ADU size limit to 1200 square feet or 30%, whichever is greater.

Harry Falconer then moved on to discussing cell towers and communication facilities. Harry Falconer explained that this is primarily regulated by the state under 30 VSA 248a, similar to citing energy generation facilities. Harry Falconer mentioned that towns can have standards in the town plan or bylaws that the Public Utility Commission must consider, but towns cannot issue their own permits for cell towers. The group discussed the potential need to review and update the cell tower regulations in the future, considering both the town and village together. They also touched on the importance of considering aesthetic and environmental impacts of cell

towers. Harry Falconer continued through Article 5, mentioning changes to sections on daycare facilities, fences, home occupations, and landscaping. He also discussed moving parking regulations to general standards and potential changes to sign regulations. The meeting then moved on to discussing prohibited uses, including outdoor movie theaters, retail stands, and windmills. The group debated whether some of these prohibitions were still relevant or needed updating.

Finally, Harry Falconer introduced the new article on subdivision regulations, explaining that it would help comply with potential Act 250 exemptions. He outlined the basic process for subdivisions and mentioned that he had streamlined some of the procedures compared to other towns' regulations. The meeting concluded with a discussion about the timeline for completing the bylaw revisions and scheduling future meetings. The group agreed to aim for warning public hearings by October, with July and August meetings focused on finishing the review and September dedicated to addressing any remaining issues.

The group discussed the following action items:

- Harry Falconer would revise the ADU size limit to 1200 square feet or 30%, whichever is greater.
- The commission members would review the draft bylaws and come prepared with specific questions and recommendations for the August meeting.
- Harry Falconer would look into whether banning strip malls is allowed under state regulations.
- The group would revisit the cell tower regulations in a future meeting.
- Harry Falconer would research and potentially revise the performance standards section.

The commission would aim to complete the bylaw revisions and be ready for public hearings by October.

Planning Updates: None

The meeting was adjourned at 7:54pm.