

Plainfield Planning Commission Minutes

Monday February 23rd 2026

Present: Will Colgan, David Scheckman, Karen Storey, Nicko Rubin, Genesse Grill, Michael Birnbaum, and Clarice Cutler

Will called the meeting to order and asked for a motion to the minutes of the last meeting. David made the motion and Karen seconded it. The motion was approved.

Under the public comment there was a discussion of a proposal to conserve 15 acres of farmland on Country Club Road, with Clarice Cutler explaining that the conservation easement would prohibit residential, commercial, and industrial development while promoting agriculture. Karen raised concerns about a right-of-way accessing the farm and suggesting further research into its implications. Will asked Clarice to do some research into how the right of way will work for future transfers of the land. She said she would. David asked if the parcel is being used for now by Tamarack Hollow Farm and if the transfer will continue the farming which is currently under a lease agreement. Once the transfer was complete the farm would own the two abutting parcels. Nicko said it was a great project getting land to farmers and was glad organizations like the Vermont Land Trust was doing this work.

Moving on to the support letter for the Plainfield Community Development Corporation (PCDC) CDBG-GR grant proposal. Michael Birnbaum suggested that concerns expressed by commission members should be included in the letter rather than as a separate exhibit for the application. Will said that will be discussed.

David asked if other that he and Will, had other members of the commission reviewed the grant proposal and map. Karen and Nicko said they hadn't. Will said he would send the copies to them.

David expressed his concerns about the factual information in the grant proposal not reflecting the true situation. He mentioned numerous inaccuracies and incomplete information in the proposal. He criticized the application's misstatements, lack of detail, and potential non-compliance with zoning regulations. David emphasized that the statement of 39 housing units lost due to floods was incorrect, as only 26 buildings (16 livable) applied for buyouts, with some residents already declining the offers. He also pointed out issues with the map's clarity, the proposed road's slope, and the town's infrastructure management plan. David highlighted the divisiveness of the project and incidents of bullying against critics from the recent past.

Genese Grill expressed worries about the lack of transparency regarding future phases of the project and the vague budget. She had questions about how any future housing would need new roads and impact the wetlands.

Will noted that while a letter wasn't mandatory, they could choose *not* to write one due to insufficient information. He said his thought was that the letter was supporting the concept of the town applying for money to construct roads and utilities that would serve affordable housing on the proposed site. The details of the project would be worked out with the Development Review Board (DRB) and Zoning Administrator. (ZA)

David said he could not endorse supporting the project due to factual inaccuracies, He said he needed more accurate information in the grand and more details to support it. Nicko said he needed to look at the grant but from what he knew, he thought that the project aligns with the town plan. He said he trusted the members of the PCDC to make something positive in the town. He did think compliance with zoning regulations remains a key consideration.

Michael said he thought that if the PC members wrote individual letters they should not identify themselves as PC members. Will suggested that they write as members of the public. Nicko thought identifying themselves as PC members is appropriate and Michael agreed and the letters should just say the member is speaking as an individual and not for the Planning Commission.

Karen said she worried about the cart coming before the horse. The plan should come to the ZA before the application and she would need to review the plan before making a decision. She was concerned, as the ZA, that no one had talked to her about the grant proposal and how it relates to the zoning. She said she would not support the letter without more information.

David said that Karen Hatcher needed the letters had to be in by February 25. Will said he thought there wasn't enough time to consider a letter at this time and would need another public meeting to create one.

David suggested the Planning Commission not write a letter and that any commission member who wants to could write a letter stating their concerns. This is what was the decision on how to proceed.

Karen provided an update on the search for her replacement, noting that three people have expressed interest, and the Commission agreed to review applications and forward their recommendation to the Select Board. Will mentioned that warnings for an upcoming hearing on the 16th have been posted and distributed, and he will send the current draft to an AI program for review on formatting.

The next Planning Commission meeting will be Monday March 2nd at the second floor meeting room and via Zoom.

The Zoom AI program assisted in compiling these minutes.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00