

Plainfield Accessibility Advisory Committee DRAFT Minutes, December 3, 2025

Present: Alicia Weiss, Mary Lane, Dawn Fancher, Mitch Pauley

Call meeting to order: called to order at 5:35 pm

Review, propose changes, adopt agenda: adopted as written

Review/edit/approve minutes of draft minutes of November 5, 2025:
approved as drafted

Welcome new attendees, introductions, and description of Committee mission and work: existing members and Mitch, who is interested in joining, go around and introduce themselves outlining professional, personal, and other relevant experience.

Summary of work to date, both completed and in-progress:

Discussion about the variety factors the committee has thought about when considering accessibility

The Committee started in April and since then has:

- Written a mission statement
- Created the accessibility barrier reporting form now found on the town website
- Developed a survey but distribution is being delayed to coordinate with Title II self-study
- Committed to an ADA Title II town self assessment and plan
- Discussed the Town Hall lift, provided accessibility language for grant submitted by Plainfield Arts to replace it that the town did not get, continuing to look for funding
- Discuss concerns with the lack of accessibility of the community center at The Granary

- Developed and promulgated an event accessibility guide which can be found on the website
- Advised the Planning Commission on a sidewalk policy
- Got the approval of the Select Board to partner with the Special Needs Support Center on Title II training and assessment, and grant assistance. Training will be in January or February
- Select Board approved Plainfield becoming a Disability Friendly Town
- Worked with Select Board to develop a grievance procedure and the Committee agreed to serve as an interim basis in the role of ADA coordinator
- Worked with the Vermont Council on Rural Development to increase accessibility of the Plainfield Forward events
- Increasing accessibility awareness, reflected by “Accessibility” coming in third on the priorities voted on at Plainfield Forward
- Discussed accessibility of the Route 2 intersection, an ongoing topic

Brainstorm planning for SB and Town education re: disability voting rights in preparation for Town Meeting day:

Alicia summarizes concerns about lack of accessibility at town meeting leading to people not being able to participate in floor votes; Vermont disability law is more inclusive than the Federal Law, but somehow Vermont voting law prohibits hybrid voting even though federal accessibility law is supposed to supersede state law. Alicia attended part of the state Act 133 Working Group which just finished its work. Alicia shares that not much came of it, as the Committee declined to recommend any actions to ameliorate ADA violation, in favor of further study..

Dawn mentions that since the Town Hall Opera House is near capacity at Town Meeting with only a small percentage of registered voters participating that it really “tells on itself” that Town Meeting is not democratic.

Alicia suggests introducing an article to adopt the model pioneered by the Town of Jericho at Town Meeting this year.

Alicia and Dawn share that Jericho recently moved to Australian Ballot

preceded by a meeting about a month before where articles are discussed and changes could be proposed in an advisory way. This is with the understanding that the select board would make those changes to the articles with the resultant articles to be warned and voted on by Australian Ballot on Town Meeting Day. Since that advisory meeting wasn't an official town meeting there could be hybrid participation. This expands access to people who can not make it in person for other reasons, like care giving, etc.

Discussion about if the committee should try to get an article to move to Australian Ballot with a system like Jericho's in 2026 to go into effect in 2027 or in 2027 to go into effect in 2028. Alicia advocates for 2026 since "justice delayed is justice denied." Dawn argues for 2027 because of the limited amount of time before the 2026 Town Meeting needs to be warned and the need for time for drafting the plan and for education and discussion.

Dawn mentions that our town now has strong norms around hybrid meetings when allowed. Dawn suggests building off of people's frustration with not being able to participate in the discussion and vote on the article relating to the East Village expansion at the last Town Meeting, on both sides of the expansion issue.

Alicia volunteers to reach out to select board members to see what they think about the possibilities of getting a vote this year (2026) at Town Meeting.

Alicia will send committee members relevant documents about various models for inclusive voting.

Mitch asks about other venues for Town Meeting like Twinfield or Goddard, discussion follows about parking and air quality. Dawn mentions they believe you need special permission to have meetings outside of town boundaries.

Adding Mitch to committee: Mitch says he would like to join the committee, everyone agrees. Mitch needed to leave early.

Mitch departs

Tasks updates:

Training scheduling poll: Alicia reports that she found that using a Google poll is considered the most accessible option to use for scheduling polls. She will reach out to Kendra to find out what dates are and are not available.

Alicia still playing phone tag with the regional ADA center

Dawn reports no updates on Resilience Hub since last meeting.

Letter to Special Needs Support Center regarding their proposed training item on “person first language.” Dawn drafted an email saying that the committee is concerned that the training will suggest person first language all the time when numerous communities (Deaf, autistic, etc) and many disabled people use identity first language and the committee would like that reflected in the training. Dawn’s language was discussed and approved with corrected grammar. Dawn will email Kendra and copy committee members.

Meeting Adjourned 7:20 pm