

Town of New Haven
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
New Haven Town Office
Monday, September 9, 2024
Meeting Minutes

[Approved by unanimous voice vote at October 14, 2024 PC meeting.]

Planning Commission (PC) Members Present: Co-chairs Kathy Cahill and Rob Litch, Maggie Eaton, Benj Putnam.

ABSENT:

Bev Landon, Megan Ooms

Staff Present:

Peggy Connor, Zoning Administrator & Minutes

Visitors Present:

None.

I. Call to Order:

Kathy Cahill called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

1. Adjustments to Agenda

Citing page 63 of the current Town Plan on "Signs and Junk," Maggie Eaton requested that the Planning Commission consider recommending a Junk Ordinance be adopted by the Selectboard. The zoning administrator was asked to research language in junk ordinances in neighboring towns for the Planning Commission to review at their next meeting in October.

2. Visitors' Business

None.

II. Zoning Administrator Report

ZA Peggy Connor noted that a significant number of the Goals and Objectives cited in the current Town Plan are identical to those in the 2006 and 2011 Town Plan, indicating that much of the wording is mandated by statute.

Peggy shared a recent article in the *Addison Independent* on New Haven Neighbors, a newly formed organization that focuses on community-building efforts, and suggested the Planning Commission consider including information on the group's work, in addition to New Haven River Anglers Association and New Haven River Watch in the Town Plan.

The neighboring Town of Waltham will hold a public hearing on September 23, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. to solicit public feedback on proposed revisions to the Waltham Town Plan.

Timeline for completing work on updated Town Plan:

- Prior to sending statutorily required notice to adjoining municipalities, PC must prepare a report on the proposed updated Town Plan;
- 30 days prior to first public hearing, notices must be sent to adjoining municipalities, Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC), and the Vermont State Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD);
- All public hearings must be warned in accordance with V.S.A. §4384 and §4444 (at least 15 days prior to hearing);
- December 23, 2024 is the last day for submission to Selectboard to allow 30 days' notice of public hearing;
- At least 30 days but no more than 120 days after the PC submits proposed Town Plan to Selectboard, a public hearing will be warned;
- Last possible lawful date to hold a public hearing and take action putting the plan on the Town Meeting warning is January 25, 2025, assuming the Selectboard makes no changes to the proposed plan after public hearing.

62 In an effort to meet these deadlines, PC members agreed to consider meeting twice per month
63 through the end of the year.

64
65 **III. Update on Maps Provided by Addison County Regional Planning Commission**

66 **Kathy Cahill**

67 Kathy will continue to reach out to regional planning to obtain updated maps and graphs;
68 specifically:

69
70 --Clarification on Soils Map (i.e., define “local,” “prime,” and “state agricultural soils;”
71 specify “cultivated land,” and legibly show street names)

72
73 --Add two different sets of data for Vital Statistics and Population, since current
74 numbers do not match

75
76 Kathy and Maggie will also reach out to the Conservation Commission, which is currently
77 working on updating a map showing wildlife crossings.

78
79 **IV. Continue Work on Town Plan Update**

- 80
81 ➤ **Review Draft Language for Chapters 6 & 8: Land Use & Flood Resiliency**
82 ➤ **Review Implementation Matrix: Goals and Objectives**

83
84 PC members agreed on the following changes/additions:

85
86 --Add to “1.2 Education” on page 7 of 2025 Town Plan Draft: “As of August 28, 2024,
87 there are 55 New Haven high school students and 22 New Haven middle school
88 students attending Mount Abraham Union High School in Bristol. Total number of
89 students enrolled at Mt. Abe as of August 28, 2024 was 577, and the total number of
90 students enrolled at the Beeman Elementary School in New Haven was 82 in grades K-
91 6.

92
93 --Add the following language to page 21 of the 2025 Town Plan Draft on the Triangle
94 Bike Loop: “The Triangle Bike Loop (TBL) is a bike route on local roads connecting the
95 Towns of Middlebury, Vergennes, Bristol and New Haven. The route also passes
96 through portions of the Towns of Weybridge, Waltham and Ferrisburgh. The TBL uses
97 South, Munger, East and North Streets; Halpin, Sawyer, Plank and Pearson Roads in
98 New Haven. Signs at intersections instruct cyclists which way to turn for the destined
99 town. For maps and route updates online, go to: [Triangle Bike Loop - Walk-Bike
100 Addison \(walkbikeaddison.org\)](https://www.walkbikeaddison.org)

101 --Reword and add to page 22 of the 2025 Town Plan Draft on “Natural Areas, Section
102 5.1”: “The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife has identified six examples of
103 “significant natural communities” in New Haven:

- 104 1) Red maple northern white cedar swamp
105 2) Red maple black ash seepage swamp
106 3) Mesic clay plain forest
107 4) Northern white cedar swamp
108 5) Wet clay plain forest
109 6) Mesic maple ash hickory oak forest

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111 More information can be found in the book entitled, “Wetland, Woodland, Wildland: A Guide to
112 the Natural Communities of Vermont” by Elizabeth H. Thompson and Eric R. Sorenson, and on
113 line by visiting: <https://anrmaps.vermont.gov/websites/anra5/>.”

114 --Delete “Zoning Districts Table” and “Table of Allowed Uses” on pages 28-29 of 2025
115 Town Plan Draft and replace with additional language under “Land Use” beginning on
116 page 63 of current Town Plan: “Lighting: Dark Sky Policy – The Town hereby adopts a
117 Dark Sky policy to support the rural nighttime environment. Dark skies create a restful
118 nighttime environment conducive to human health and the natural nocturnal ecology.
119 Dark skies at night play a contributing role in rural culture, including star gazing, the
120 sense of open space, and the opportunity to observe nocturnal wildlife.”

121 --“All outdoor lighting in the Town shall be designed and installed to minimize glare, light
122 trespass, and sky glow. Lights shall be aimed downward to illuminate paths, doorways,
123 driveways or roadways rather than lighting up the sky, and shall be appropriately
124 shielded, screened, and limited in duration by use of timers or motion sensors to contain
125 the light to the area where it is needed, and when it is needed. The Town has amended
126 its Zoning Regulations to incorporate specific lighting standards consistent with this
127 policy.”

128 --Also add to “Land Use” chapter: “Noise. Like the dark night sky, quiet surroundings
129 contribute to the rural environment of New Haven. Noise from individual or transient loud
130 events as well as noise which arises out of cumulative increases in traffic and machinery
131 use degrade this important element of the Town and diminish the rural character and
132 quality of life. The Town has revised its Zoning Regulations under Design &
133 Performance Standards to ensure that this policy is enforceably imposed on all future
134 development.”

135 --Add Section re: “Signs and Junk” from current Town Plan: “Inappropriate signs as well
136 as ‘junk’ such as garbage or an excessive number of unregistered vehicles diminish the
137 aesthetic beauty, quality of life and property values of the Town. It is the Town’s policy to
138 protect the aesthetic elements of the community in all zoning districts, and not only in
139 designated scenic viewsheds or noted scenic resource areas.”

140 --Add to “Objective C” on p. 30 of 2025 Updated Town Plan to coordinate with Energy
141 Plan: “....of local food, agrivoltaics, and other value-added....”

142 --Add to “Objective C” on p. 36 of 2025 Updated Town Plan: “....of local food,
143 agrivoltaics, and other value-added....”

144 --ZA Peggy Connor will reach out to Andrew L’Roe, Emergency Management and Land
145 Use Planner at Addison County Regional Planning Commission, regarding the status of
146 updating maps identifying flood hazard and fluvial erosion hazard areas for “Chapter
147 Seven: Flood Resiliency.”

148 --Review of Implementation Matrix continued to October meeting.

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151 **V. Approve PC Meeting Minutes for August 12, 2024**
152 Rob Litch moved to approve meeting minutes for August 12, 2024; Maggie Eaton seconded.
153 **MOTION PASSED** 4 in favor, 0 opposed. **MOTION PASSED**. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.
154
155 **NOTE:** The Planning Commission will meet twice next month on Monday, October 14th and
156 Monday, October 28th.
157
158 Respectfully submitted,
159 Peggy Connor, Zoning Administrator