

I. Call to Order

Members Present: Mike O'Brien, Chair; Abby Bleything; John Baker; Trevor Thomas; Sarah van Ryckevorsel; Matt Gile

City Staff Present: Ravi Venkataraman, Director of City Planning

Guests Present: Bryn Oakleaf, Brian Colombini, Michael Moser

Call to Order by: Mike

Meeting Start Time: 6:30 pm

Minutes Recorded by: Ravi

II. Changes to the Agenda

None

III. Public Comment

None

IV. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion by Sarah, seconded by Matt, to approve the March 26, 2026 minutes. Voting: 4-0 (Abby abstained)

Motion by Trevor, seconded by Sarah to approve the April 23, 2026 minutes. Voting: unanimous. Motion carried.

V. Discussion: Equitable Housing Needs Assessment Focus Group

Michael Moser introduced himself, the Equitable Housing Needs Assessment project, and the role of the Planning Commission in this project. Michael said that the intent is to look into the disparities in housing opportunities, and whether there are subsets of the community unable to access housing opportunities compared to other parts of the community. Michael added that this could be based on unit size, and ownership and renting opportunities. Michael said that he and the project team are looking to understand progress, challenges, and gaps the Planning Commission sees in the current housing landscape related to equity. Michael said that the first phase of the project—the literature review—has been completed, and the second phase of the project—community engagement—is currently ongoing with guidance from the project advisory committee. Michael said that the final report will be presented to City Council when the project is completed in the winter. Michael said that the engagement will be focused on older residents, younger residents, Somali-speaking residents, Swahili-speaking residents, Arabic-speaking residents, Nepali-speaking residents, and Burmese-speaking residents. Matt suggested the project team speak to Spanish-speaking residents and that that community has grown significantly in the past year.

Michael asked how the Planning Commission's work intersects with housing equity. Mike mentioned work on the incentives for priority housing and inclusionary zoning, Mike added that the commission has been looking to spur the development of family-sized housing, affordable housing, and housing for sale. Matt noted the need for large public investment in order to build the affordable housing the community needs, and the aim of the commission to enable the needed housing development when developers have the means to develop affordable housing. Abby said that redevelopment removes housing that is naturally affordable due to the age of the housing unit, that families are leaving because of the lack of options for family-sized housing to buy, and that investor ownership of properties is concerning. Mike questioned the amount of housing still needed in the City, and the viability of building more housing considering how dense Winooski is. Mike added that the capacity of the schools and Champlain Housing Trust's waitlists should be used as indicators for housing demand. Abby said that the goal should be to help as many people into homeownership as possible to cultivate intergenerational wealth.

Mike noted the challenge of having community members engaged in the process, that community members typically engage specifically for controversial items, and that engaging with the Planning Commission process is challenging because of the technical language involved. Commission members highlighted that for some, coming to City Hall in itself can be intimidating.

Michael asked about the Planning Commission's interactions with other City boards and committees. Mike said that the Planning Commission has had joint meetings with the Housing Commission, that the Mayor is the link between the commission and City Council, and that attendance from the Inclusion and Belonging Commission liaison isn't consistent. Mike said that more public facing meetings that have childcare and food typically generates more interest.

Michael asked about knowledge gaps with data, and whether he can provide data to the commission. Mike and John said that they could use more data on household size, ownership-rentership splits, and who in the community can afford to purchase housing. Mike discussed regulations to maintain larger-size housing units, and the role of historic preservation.

Michael asked about the commission's priorities regarding housing. Mike said that he sees the commission's priority is to maintain a well-rounded housing stock. Matt said that addressing housing insecurity is a priority, as there are families in the community that want to stay in the City and can't afford to do so.

Mike asked for the meaning of "housing equity". Michael said that housing equity can be about physical and financial accessibility as well as size. Ravi added that housing equity is to ensure the equality of opportunity to housing adjusted to the individual's housing needs and socioeconomic status, and the abundance of opportunities across the board for different wants, needs and means.

VI. Discussion: Debrief from April 23, 2026 Meeting

Ravi said that the intent of this item is to discuss possible regulations changes in the list, and the discussions with Geoff Ferrell and Keith Covington from the previous meeting. Ravi said that he is working with Geoff and Keith to find a time for them to return to the Planning Commission. Ravi added that with the list of possible changes, he did not add the replacement units section because he is waiting for the equitable housing needs assessment project to finish to provide better direction, and he does not recommend pursuing such regulations since the regulations cannot shift as quickly as market demand.

Mike said that he would like to discuss the list and the schedule going forward considering Ravi's availability and the ongoing Comprehensive Plan work. Mike added that he's not able to

decipher Section 5.14. Ravi concurred, saying that clarifying that section should be considered going forward. Abby and Sarah asked about regulations addressing environmental impacts and buildout of the transportation network. Ravi said that the landscaping and screening changes would cover past discussions on environmental impacts, and that the Public Works Department is working on updating our stormwater ordinance. Ravi explained that the regulations currently require sidewalks for new developments to improve pedestrian access and safety, that enacting impact fees is challenging.

Mike discussed scheduling future meetings. Ravi reviewed the intent of the Comprehensive Plan open house on May 28th. The Planning Commission came to consensus to meet on June 11th and June 17th.

VII. City Updates

A. Updates from the Mayor

Bryn said that City Council has recently discussed the roles, work, and functionality of the City's boards and commissions. Bryn highlighted the Main Street Parade on June 6th. Bryn reviewed the City Council retreat held on May 11th.

B. Updates from the Inclusion and Belonging Commission

C. Updates from City Staff

Sarah asked about the 802 Homes project. Ravi reviewed the 802 Homes project managed by the State Agency of Commerce and Community Development, and added that a survey is now live to provide feedback on the building designs.

VIII. Other Business

IX. Adjourn

Motion by: Abby

Second: John

Meeting End Time: 8:39 pm