5/19/2026 - Minutes

I. Call to Order

Members Present: Shaun Gilpin, Chair; Jack Commo, Vice Chair; Dillon Hamil, Bryn Oakleaf, Deputy Mayor / City Council Liaison; Jazmine Hurley, Housing Initiative Director (Staff)

Names of Guests: Michael Moser, UVM Center for Rural Studies; Cymone Bedford, CCRPC Economic Mobility Officer

Call to Order by: Shaun Gilpin

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

II. Changes to the Agenda

No changes to the agenda were proposed.

III. Public Comment

No public comment was received.

IV. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion to table approval of the March 24, 2026 minutes to the next meeting due to quorum concerns.

V. Discussion: Equitable Housing Needs Assessment Stakeholder Interview with the Housing Commission

Jazmine Hurley provided brief context on the Equitable Housing Needs Assessment (EHNA), and Michael Moser of the UVM Center for Rural Studies led a structured stakeholder interview with Commission members.

The EHNA is funded through a State of Vermont Municipal Planning Grant and is being conducted in partnership with UVM CRS. The project emerged from the City's desire for more detailed housing data about underrepresented communities, supplementing census and ACS data with qualitative, community-centered narratives. UVM will synthesize findings into policy recommendations for City Council.

Phase 1 (2025) involved review of existing literature and data. Phase 1.5 (March 2025) involved partner kickoffs and planning for community engagement. The project is currently in Phase 2, engaging approximately 50 community voices through interviews and focus groups organized by linguistic group, with separate groups for youth and seniors. Connecting Cultures, a mental health practitioner group working with refugees, is co-facilitating focus groups in a trauma-informed manner. Phase 3 is planned for fall/winter 2026 and will involve drafting priority areas, public meetings, and a final policy report to Council.

Key themes from the stakeholder discussion:

- Housing equity was described as essentially inseparable from the Commission's core

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work. Commissioners noted that affordability, safety, and unit size are all equity issues rooted in historical patterns of exclusion from quality housing.

- Preventing displacement was identified as a top priority. Many residents want to remain in the community and school district but feel priced out or forced out.
- Availability was raised as a primary concern, encompassing price, unit size, and overall suitability. The need for larger units (4 and 5 bedrooms) is heard consistently from schools and community members, but is difficult to quantify from existing data.
- Coordination with the Planning Commission has improved, though time constraints at joint meetings limit depth of discussion. Commissioners expressed interest in more proactive, forward-thinking convenings rather than reactive responses.
- Public engagement with the Housing Commission is limited. Commissioners acknowledged this gap and discussed potential technological or alternative engagement approaches. Commission members noted they would wonder how many residents even know the Housing Commission exists.
- The school district's active community liaison role was noted as a significant strength, as was having a dedicated Housing Initiative Director, which Cymone Bedford noted is uncommon across the region.
- Data needs raised included: quantifying overcrowding and latent housing demand, understanding preservation barriers (maintenance costs, code compliance), and tracking new American community members relocating within the region after initial resettlement. Cymone Bedford noted the regional value of understanding this movement pattern for designing solutions.
- Intersectionality of housing with other life factors, particularly transportation access and frequency, was raised as an underappreciated dimension that housing data and policy often fail to capture.

Staff noted the City's annual landlord survey, rental registry, and annual inspection program as existing data sources, and suggested inviting Code Enforcement to a future meeting to share inspection data as a proxy indicator of housing stock condition.

Staff also noted concerns about ACS data reliability for a municipality as small as Winooski, particularly for tracking new American community members, and emphasized the importance of the qualitative, community-centered approach this project is taking.

All responses will be aggregated with input from other stakeholders and community focus groups and synthesized by UVM CRS into the EHNA final report, expected through fall 2026.

VI. Discussion: Meet the CCRPC's Economic Mobility Officer

Cymone Bedford introduced herself as the region's first Economic Mobility Officer (EMO), a position jointly funded by Winooski, South Burlington, Shelburne, and Essex Junction and housed at CCRPC. The program is sponsored through the International City Managers Association's Economic Mobility and Opportunity Program and is informed by the Urban Institute's Upward Mobility Framework.

The regional vision is to be a place where everyone has access to civic participation, entrepreneurship, and attainable housing, focused on three framework pillars: rewarding work, opportunity-rich and inclusive neighborhoods, and responsive and just governance.

VII. Discussion/Approval: Cap on Non-Owner Occupied Short-term Rentals

Staff presented current data on the City's short-term rental (STR) registry for the FY26 license year and a recommendation on the FY27 non-owner occupied cap.

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Current FY26 data:

- 57 total STR licenses on record; 55 active, 2 pending issuance
- 45 non-owner occupied licenses; 12 owner-occupied licenses
- 17 licenses rescinded since program inception: 14 converted back to long-term rental, 3 sold, 1 unknown
- $139,000 in total fees collected ($73,500 in FY25; $66,000 in FY26); $104,250 directed to the Housing Trust Fund, $34,750 to Code Enforcement
- 96% compliance; 2 properties currently out of compliance

Staff noted that STR activity has declined from its first-year peak, the pace of new applications has not accelerated, and a new hotel opening in Winooski this summer is expected to absorb some short-term lodging demand. Reducing the cap would create significant administrative burden on the Clerk's Office if the program reached capacity and required a waitlist. Staff will monitor the effect of the hotel opening and may revisit a lower cap for FY28 if STR activity continues to decline.

Staff Recommendation: Maintain the non-owner occupied STR cap at 50 licenses for FY27.

Commissioners expressed support for the program's performance, noting it has generated meaningful Housing Trust Fund revenue and successfully disincentivized conversion of long-term rental units.

Motion to recommend maintaining the non-owner occupied STR cap at 50 for FY27 and forward the recommendation to City Council: motion by Jack Commo, seconded by Dillon. Motion passed 3:0.

VIII. Discussion: FY27 Landlord Survey Questions

Staff introduced the annual landlord survey process and invited Commission input on variable questions for FY27. Approximately 75% of the survey remains consistent year to year to track trends in rent, unit composition, and voucher utilization. The remaining questions rotate based on current priorities.

Prior variable question topics have included: landlord challenges (FY26), infill housing interest and opportunity (FY25), and short-term rentals (FY24).

Commissioners discussed several potential directions for FY27. A question about parking supply emerged as the preferred new topic, specifically asking landlords how many off-street parking spaces they provide per unit. This data would complement ongoing conversations about parking requirements and what the market is actually demanding from tenants. Staff will draft a multiple-choice question on this topic for inclusion in the survey.

Commissioners also discussed whether to retain the existing challenges question (rising costs, vacancies, late/non-payment of rent, etc.), with staff noting that cost has been the consistent top response and suggesting it may be more useful to revisit that question in a few years to track change over time rather than repeat it annually.

No formal vote was required for this discussion item.

IX. City, Council, and Inclusion & Belonging Commission Updates

Deputy Mayor Bryn Oakleaf provided the following updates:

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City Council:

- Council held its annual retreat focused on FY28 priority areas rather than FY27 work plans, with department heads presenting current-year progress. A compiled summary will be shared once complete; the meeting was also recorded.
- A four-hour Council meeting was held recently, focused largely on the Burlington-Winooski Bridge replacement project. The project website and email notification list are the best resources for up-to-date information. An open house was held in April at the school and was well attended.
- Council voted to officially repeal "character of the neighborhood" language from the zoning ordinance. Initial proposals for additional ordinance changes were also presented; Council accepted the proposed changes, moving them to a public hearing. Changes are effectively in place during the interim period.
- Commission recruitment is underway for all boards and commissions. Members were encouraged to refer interested residents; the Chair, Council Liaison, and Jazmine will coordinate brief interview calls with applicants in June.

Community Events:

- Comprehensive Plan open house: Thursday, June 5th, 5–7 PM at the school.
- Main Street Revitalization Parade: June 6th. Community members and non-residents are encouraged to sign up as banner holders.
- Downtown Winooski Farmer's Market has launched with strong attendance.
- Regional Infill Housing (Info Housing) event: June 22nd, 5–7 PM, South Burlington Public Library. The most recent event drew approximately 35 attendees with strong engagement.

Housing Updates:

- The City's Home Improvement Program (HIP) has been formalized in partnership with Champlain Housing Trust, which will conduct a full mailing to all Winooski homes about income-eligible program access.
- A modular housing development by Huntington Homes on Main Street (approximately 12 units) was recently completed. Staff noted the efficiency of the construction timeline and the project's potential as a model for small-scale infill development; a time-lapse video will be shared at a future meeting.
- The Armory project is awaiting a DRB decision from a second hearing; a ruling is expected within the next few weeks.
- The BTV Airport Sound Insulation Program, funded by the federal government in response to F-35 noise levels, is now active in Winooski. Approximately 1,100 Winooski homes are in eligible sound contour areas. Work includes window replacement, wall insulation, and HVAC installation. Fifteen homes are currently in various stages of the process, with one under construction. A Council presentation is being coordinated. Residents can find eligibility information and sound contour maps on the BTV sound website.

Inclusion & Belonging Commission: No update. The current liaison is stepping down following the birth of a child; a replacement liaison will be identified.

X. Other Business

Staff noted the next Infill Housing Campaign event on June 22nd in South Burlington. Staff also

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indicated that the June 23rd meeting will return to the Commission's regular schedule and will aim to include a data-focused presentation, potentially including landlord survey results and Code Enforcement inspection data.

XI. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Shaun Gilpin, seconded Dillon.

Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned.

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