

I. Call to Order

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

City Staff Present: Ravi Venkataraman, Director of City Planning

Guests Present: Elsie Goodrich, City Councilor; Brian Colombini

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

Sarah questioned whether members were properly attributed for what was said. Ravi said that he can make corrections accordingly based on feedback from the commission.

Motion by: Sarah

Second: John

Decision: 5-0 (Brendan abstained)

V. Discussion: Building Typologies Project

Geoff Ferrell gave an overview of the draft report in the meeting materials. Sarah suggested using a word other than "character" in the introduction of the report and consider terms like "context". Mike suggested using terms like "scale". Sarah suggested more description to define the "context" and "DNA" of Winooski in the introduction. Geoff said that they intend to add more images to help explain the context of Winooski.

Geoff responded to the comments Abby Bleything provided to the Planning Commission ahead of tonight's meeting. Geoff pointed out that with townhouses are significantly more massive than single-unit houses, duplexes and stacked flats, and the much longer façade would be street-facing. Geoff said that therefore, they would recommend townhouses in areas closer to the urban core than in all of the residential zoning districts. Keith said that they aimed to keep the building frontage to no more than 40 feet as this would maintain the existing building form, considering the narrower lots in the City. Mike said that townhouses for sale is a building type

the City is eager to see. Geoff discussed typical lots for townhouses, which involve a lot line through a shared wall, and footprint lots.

Geoff said that three stories may be out of context of a neighborhood depending on the location and its existing conditions. Geoff highlighted front porches as a distinguishing characteristic of Winooski.

Geoff discussed the reason for increasing the amount of units per building to eight because of the potential impacts to livability in having a four-unit building placed behind a four-unit building. Ravi said that for projects involving buildings behind buildings, the Public Works Department will require applicants to have a single connection on the lot and the utilities to go through the building in the front. Ravi said that the Public Works Department recommends having more units in one building and having only one utility connection to the building. Ravi said that Public Works has raised questions about the effects on operations if lots with multiple buildings are condominiumized. Trevor asked about the reasoning for the limit to four units in a building and the possibility to limit the minimum size of the dwelling units. Ravi said that he was not sure about the rationale for the limit to four units in a building, and that currently, the minimum size of dwelling units is based on building code. Mike said that the limit to four dwelling units per building was to limit building size. Geoff said that adding multiunit buildings behind multiunit buildings wouldn't protect the neighborhood. Geoff said that they are testing out limitations to the number of 500-square-foot dwelling units in a project, in order to encourage a better dwelling-unit-size mix and more permanent occupancy.

John asked about Geoff and Keith's recommendation for eight-unit buildings and their models showing a maximum of six dwelling units. Geoff said that the original intent of the study was to test the current priority housing incentives, and that increasing the dwelling unit limit per building was in reaction to a conversation they had with a local developer recently.

Mike suggested regulating density. Geoff said that he wouldn't recommend regulating density because of its unpredictability, and that context would determine density limits.

Mike asked about the building height and referred to public comments received for the review of the Armory project. Matt pointed out the need for affordable housing in the City, and that the commission should regard density and aesthetics separately, considering the deep need for affordable housing.

Sarah asked for more realistic buildings instead of the blocks in order to show how the proposed building type would fit with the street. Keith said that they used the information they had for building footprints, and projected a 22-foot building height. Keith added that with the information they have and the variability of actual buildings, setting up an example streetscape would be challenging. Sarah said that the models look much bigger than the blocky buildings adjacent to them. Sarah suggested more examples in the current environment of three-story buildings next to one- and two-story buildings. John said that the aerial angle skews the perception of height and suggested adjusting the view to the street level.

Geoff recommended setting a first-floor elevation set at three feet above the adjacent sidewalk to create more privacy between the public realm and the first floor of a building.

Geoff discussed their recommendations for roof line requirements and roof pitch requirements. John asked that based on this recommendation, if the D1 model would still be doable. Sarah asked about buildings greater than two stories and how the recommendation would apply. Geoff said that edits and revisions will need to be made to clarify this recommendation. Geoff suggested limitations on dormers to cut possible loopholes to use dormers to create a third story.

Mike asked about front porches. Geoff said that the front porches in the models were set at the five-foot setback, but were not counted towards lot coverage. John asked if the models were in conformance with the regulations or if they are suggestive of changes. Geoff said that the models were more so suggestive of changes, such as removing front porches from lot coverage. Ravi pointed out model B1 as a suggestion to increase the base lot coverage to 55 percent to accommodate building out all the requirements. Sarah questioned the incentive for building a front porch, and said the commission would have to balance requiring front porches with the effect on affordability. Geoff said that they are suggesting requiring front porches. Geoff said that such a requirement for multiunit dwellings can be affordable, but it would have a larger effect on single-unit houses.

Mike asked about the viability of 75 percent lot coverage. Geoff said that to get 75 percent lot coverage incentive is such a high bar, that it wouldn't be much of a factor, and that if a developer were able to get 75 percent lot coverage, it would be beneficial to the City. Ravi added that based on the current dimensional requirements and the typical lot sizes in the city, most lots would not be able to take advantage of the 75 percent lot coverage allowance because of the amount of land in the setbacks. Ravi added that only larger lots in the City could benefit from a 75 percent lot coverage allowance and meet the setback requirements.

Geoff said that they will be making revisions and will provide a finalized draft for the Planning Commission to review.

VI. Discussion: 2027 Winooski Comprehensive Plan – Draft Land Use Goals and Objectives

Ravi reviewed the Comprehensive Plan open house event on May 28th, and the forthcoming Comprehensive Plan open house event on June 16th at the Senior Center from 5 pm to 7 pm. Ravi said that there will be ways for people to participate if they're not able to attend. Ravi added that there will be open houses in July and August on different sections of the Comprehensive Plan.

Ravi overviewed his goal with the structure of the Comprehensive Plan, stressing that he hopes to make the document more accessible to the community.

VII. Discussion: Update on Petition of Green Mountain Power for a Certificate of Public Good

Ravi said that this letter is to fulfill a statutory requirement to notify the Planning Commission of the filing to the Public Utility Commission, and that the Planning Commission discussed this item during their February 12, 2026 meeting.

VIII. City Updates

A. Updates from the Mayor

Councilor Goodrich reviewed City Council's recent approval for the condemnation of the Woolen Mill parcel for the bridge project, the public hearing to update the Unified Land Use and Development Regulations, the approved amendments to Chapter 15 (Parking) of the Winooski Code of Ordinances, and the assignment of the remainder of the TIF reserves. Councilor Goodrich noted that the Finance Commission is eager to assist and volunteer with the upcoming Comprehensive Plan open house.

B. Updates from the Inclusion and Belonging Commission

C. Updates from City Staff

Ravi said that the Unified Land Use and Development Regulations amendments regarding Character of the Area went into effect on June 8, 2026, and that City Council will be holding a public hearing on the Gentle Infill amendments on June 15, 2026.

IX. Other Business

The Planning Commission highlighted that the next meeting will be on Wednesday, June 15, 2026 at 6:30 pm.

X. Adjourn

Motion by: John

Second: Brendan

Meeting End Time: 8:08 pm