

I. Call to Order

Members Present: Mike O'Brien, Chair; John Baker, Vice Chair; Matt Gile; Brian Colombini; Ruby Tetrick; James Paradissis; Trevor Thomas

City Staff Present:

Guests Present: Thomas Renner, Mayor; Sam Mathisson; Amelia Kennedy; Wyatt Knowlton; Adi Shore; Owen Fellows; Theo Murphy; Bre Hetzer

Call to Order by: Mike

Meeting Start Time: 6:32 pm

Minutes Recorded by: Ravi

II. Changes to the Agenda

None

III. Public Comment

None

IV. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion by Brian, seconded by Matt, to approve the September 10, 2026 meeting minutes. Voting: 4-0 (John abstained). Motion carried.

V. Discussion: Winooski Comprehensive Plan – The draft Land Use goals and actions

Ravi said that this item is a continuation from the previous meeting's discussion on the future land use map and that the focus will be on the draft text of the land use section of the Comprehensive Plan. Ravi said that he will be talking to Burlington and Colchester to check alignment of the future land use map with neighboring municipalities. Mike suggested reaching out to South Burlington.

Mike asked about the demographics. Ravi said that he pulled the demographics data from the compilation the consultants put together for the Equitable Housing Needs Assessment. Ravi said that the consultants, UVM Center for Rural Studies, averaged years of US Census American Community Survey data to get a better generalized estimate of demographic data. Mike asked about the utilization of 2010 and 2020 Census data. Ravi said he thinks that the 2010 and 2020 Census data may be incorporated in this compilation.

Ravi said that UVM Center for Rural Studies will be presenting the Equitable Housing Needs Assessment to the Housing Commission and City Council. Mike suggested that they present to the Planning Commission for the explanation of the data methodology and the project recommendations. Mike also suggested including the 2020 and 2010 US Census data in the text as well to show growth, and using more current data.

Ravi reviewed the projected population growth that consultants compiled for the the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission regional plan. Ravi said that he can distribute background on the methods for this population projection after the meeting.

Mike and Ravi reviewed the household size data. Mike noted that the data appears to align with the overall national trend of shrinking household sizes.

John asked if this draft is how the final product will look. Ravi said no and that he will work with Communications Director Paul Sarne to package the plan later this year.

Ravi reviewed the edits to the future land use map the commission suggested during the last meeting. Trevor asked about discussing Gilbrook further, considering the amount of wetlands in Gilbrook. Trevor asked about the ownership of lands in Gilbrook and whether the Town of Colchester owns lands in Gilbrook. Mike said that 20 years ago, the City had been interested in maintaining the flexibility of that portion of Gilbrook in case of an opportunity for development. Ravi showed the commission the location of possible wetlands in the northern portion of Gilbrook. Mike suggested continued conversations about Gilbrook, and reviewing feedback. Trevor suggested reviewing the Parks and Open Space Master Plan recommendations for Gilbrook. John recommended maintaining the flexibility of having the northern section of Gilbrook viable for conservation and potential future development. Ravi said that if flexibility is the intent, keeping the map as-is would be the best path forward, because if the City identifies the area as conservation in the future land use map, the City wouldn't be able to allow for development because this is incompatible with the future land use map.

Brian suggested changing the word "divide" in the description of the future land use map to "identify" or a similar term that is less harsh.

Ravi gave an overview of the draft text, and asked if the commission has suggestions for defining "transition/infill". Mike suggested keeping the description open ended.

Ravi and the commission reviewed the draft goals and objectives. Mike asked about building height limitations in the Gateway District. Ravi said that the height limit is 4.5 to 5.5 stories. Thomas asked about Federal Aviation Administration limitations. Ravi said that there aren't any such limitations. Mike and Ravi reviewed the height limitations for the downtown core. John talked about the potential for neighborhood commercial uses outside of the downtown area. Ravi reviewed the zoning allowances for neighborhood commercial uses, and suggested identifying potential neighborhood hubs. Ravi and the commission discussed the need to not restrict the uses on properties to particular locations but to encourage particular intersections into neighborhood hubs.

Brian mentioned that neighboring municipalities have had discussions about increasing building height along corridors, such as Essex Junction. John discussed the incompatibility of tall buildings directly adjacent to smaller-scale buildings, and suggested a transitional zone between the corridors and lower intensity residential areas.

Mike asked if the Local Resources Advisory Board has reviewed the draft goals and objectives. Ravi said they have and that he can share this with them during their next meeting.

The commission discussed the draft objective on walkability. John asked about the status of Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) in the circle. Thomas said that more will be installed as part of the bridge project. Brian asked if City Council has thought about the possibility of using the circle for different types of events considering the traffic pattern shift with the bridge construction, and asked if such a goal could be identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

Mike asked the audience if they had any questions. Sam Mathisson asked for more information about the Local Resources Advisory Board. Ravi reviewed the Local Resources Advisory Board's role and responsibilities. Wyatt Knowlton asked about maintenance requirements for buildings. Ravi pointed out the minimum housing complaint form one can fill out for possible safety issues.

Brian asked for clarification on adaptive reuse. Ravi said that the Local Resources Advisory Board has been more focus on maintaining the integrity and feel of buildings with the improvement and reuse of historic buildings. Brian suggested adding a term similar to "adaptive reuse" to the objective on infill development, such as "thoughtfully adapts to the existing neighborhood" to indicate the desire for compatibility.

VI. City Updates

A. Updates from the Mayor

Thomas reviewed recent City Council discussions, including the longevity bonus pay policy, the Burlington Airport noise mitigation program, and permission to the fire department for fundraising.

B. Updates from the Inclusion and Belonging Commission

C. Updates from City Staff

Ravi said that the ribbon cutting for Main Street will be on Wednesday, September 30th from 10 am to 12 pm, that the Development Review Board continued the public hearing for the Armory to October 15th.

VII. Other Business

VIII. Adjourn

Motion by: John

Second: Matt

Meeting End Time: 7:52 pm