

Danville Planning Commission August Meeting Minutes

August 28, 2025 - 7:30PM

PC Members in Attendance: Alison Despathy (Chair), Judy Corso (Vice Chair), David Kyle, Greg Prior, Vince Foy, **PC Members Absent** - Kate Whitehead (Secretary), Dawn Brittian
Public in Attendance: None

Meeting Opened 7:31pm

1. Changes to the Agenda

No changes were made to the agenda.

2. Review and accept minutes from July Planning Commission meeting

Minor wording corrections were requested, Vince Foy moved to accept, and unanimous approval was given to accept the July meeting minutes pending the minor corrections.

3. Public Comment – Beginning Meet

None

4. Chair update and Administrative Check In

Membership - An update was provided regarding Kate Whitehead's membership status; she remains interested and will be reengaging soon. David Kyle reiterated his intention of retiring from his position at the end of 2025. All positions remain filled at this time.

Rules of Procedure – Vince Foy provided his physical signature for this administrative document. The 3-day requirement for minutes delivery within the document was noted.

Town Parking Committees – Greg Prior was tasked with engaging as liaison to the various parking committees and reporting back to the commission with status.

Town Plan Recommended Actions – Tracking of the numerous recommended actions called in the plan, many of which call the Planning Commission as task owner, was spoken to. The location of the Recommended Action List and the manner of tracking will be reported on by Alison Despathy during the September meeting.

5. Continued Discussion and Wrap Up on the Proposed Future Land Use Map

Extensive conversations were once again held regarding the nature and content of the state legislation mandated Future Land Use mapping being performed by the Regional Planning Association. This commission made one more modification request; to remove the West Danville Resource Based Recreation Area for the residential/camps area west of

Point Comfort & Woodward Road, but allow the designation east of there to remain as proposed. The commission also evaluated a proposed letter from Alison Despathy concerning the mapping for potential delivery to the Vermont Development Association.

The mapping process was again identified as a state effort and not a Danville Town effort. Written questions were submitted by the Danville Planning Commission and replied to by the Northern Vermont Development Association following the July meeting. The NVDA response state the mapping will not restrict, amend, or override Danville zoning. Correspondence indexed below. *

6. Discussion on the National Flood Insurance Program and required zoning bylaw updates to ensure compliance

Alison Despathy presented tentative updates to the Danville Zoning Bylaws that she had worked on with a State of Vermont resource to reach compliance with the state's new flood plain regulations. All new wording was evaluated by the commission. There were questions regarding section placement of the new Disclaimer Liability content, modification and possible duplication deletion in the Start of Construction section, and minor punctuation and word modifications identified as outstanding in multiple areas.

A motion was made by David Kyle for Alison Despathy to follow-up on the noted corrections with the state and move forward with completing the compliance modifications as reviewed. The motion was unanimously approved.

7. Review of Planning Commission contribution for upcoming Danville newsletter

Alison Despathy provided a possible contribution to the upcoming Danville community newsletter. The commission submitted a number of recommendations and will work together on fine tuning the submission moving forward.

8. Train Station Update

Train Station Renovation Completion – It was agreed that acknowledgement of the Train Station Committee's hard work and successes prior to or during the open house ceremony would be appropriate. Greg Prior will reach out to Michael Hogue to inquire what manner of recognition would best compliment their ceremony planning. The ceremony is scheduled for September 18 at 4pm, multiple commission members committed to attendance along with the full team's congratulatory acknowledgement.

9. Discussion on Part III of the Town Plan - Jobs and Economic Development

This effort was recognized as having progressed through earlier meeting conversations regarding Recommended Action items in the Danville Town Plan, but it will remain on the Planning Commission agenda for September for additional consideration.

10. Old Business:

This agenda item was agreed upon as a standard during the July 2026 meeting. No activity was addressed during this meeting due to time constraints.

11. Public Comment – End of Meet

None

Meeting Closed 9:23pm

Next meeting scheduled for Thursday, September 25, 2025 at 7:30pm

CORRESPONDENCE INDEX

***Planning Commission FLU Map questions with NVDA reply – Topic #5 above:**

#1) We prefer the transition category to match our existing Village Residential and Route 2 zones (within the village residential) because the existing zones represent the past and present deliberations of the town of Danville. We are hoping this is an acceptable shift in our transition zone so that it aligns with our existing districts, please let us know if this is possible and if not, please give us the reasons why it is not a valid request.

NVDA's Answer: *We don't know what is meant by "past and present deliberations," but our interpretation of your planning and zoning efforts align with statewide planning goals. As you probably already know, one of the overarching planning goals in Vermont is to "plan development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside." Each successive iteration of your municipal plan -- which establishes the rational basis for your zoning -- has been found to be consistent with the regional plan, as well as statewide planning goals. By "consistent," (which is actually defined in statute), the plan "makes substantial progress toward attainment" of those goals."*

Danville's zoning, which was revised nearly two decades ago in partnership with Smart Growth Vermont, and updated just last year to comply with the HOME Act and "modernize" the regulations, makes substantial progress to support this core planning goal by following a classic transect approach – a continuum that puts the highest densities and intensities at the village core, radiating outward into gradually stepped down densities, until you reach the lowest densities, which include the areas that include in "rural general" on our maps.

Although the regional future land use map does not necessarily have to align with zoning districts, we feel that in and around the village, the future land use map and Danville's zoning map are fairly consistent. The future land use map designations follow a transect approach, as do Danville's zones surrounding the Village Core – Historic Neighborhoods, Village Residential, Route 2, and the Medium Density Residential 1 District. All these districts reflect an intentional and gradual transition away from the core, where development is most intense. These areas are included in the regional category "transition area" because of their location relative to village areas, they allow for infill development, AND they are served by water or wastewater or both. While the areas might include some pockets of existing low density commercial development, they don't include or encourage strip development, and the allowable densities are higher than what you would find in the "rural general" lands.

That said, the future land use map does NOT carry zoning restrictions, and would NOT override the carefully written objectives and standards that are stated in your zoning districts. For example, while the Historic Neighborhoods District aims to be "compatible with and maintain or enhance the form of the surrounding built environment", being included in the transition area does not change the district's primary focus on residential infill development, nor does it expand on the limited commercial uses that are allowed there. Context and siting considerations are determined by your zoning bylaw, not a designation on the future land use map.

We are assuming that some of these objections are stemming from a fear of density and that a future land use map designation in the regional plan will usher in development that is neither planned nor zoned in your community. While it's important to remember that the HOME Act mandated densities of at least 5 units per acre in areas served by water and sewer, it's also important to recognize that Danville's zoning districts surrounding the village have already allowed for higher densities and a broader range of uses in pursuit of the classic transect approach. There are ways to ensure that infill development is ultimately compatible with the historic context of the community, and your zoning regulations (district objectives, land use tables, and dimensional standards) are thoughtfully constructed to ensure this happens. Again, the "transition area" designation is NOT zoning, nor does it override or amend your zoning. It simply indicates where these neighborhoods are along the transect.

#2) We want to acknowledge that the enterprise zone designation on the Danville map, which includes the quarry, is in a low density residential zone and conservation zone. We understand that the quarry is what determined this category but it does not align with our local zoning districts. Any thoughts you can share on reasoning, impacts, etc on this are helpful.

NVDA's answer: *As previously stated, the regional future land use map does not have to align with your zoning, nor does it amend or override your zoning. Although earth extraction typically occurs in rural lands, they are highly intensive uses. The quarry is in the conservation zoning district but if it hypothetically closed, it would require significant remediation before it could be used for anything else. For this reason, we have classified all quarries, gravel pits, and sand pits of over 20 acres as enterprise areas. This is one of the five largest gravel pits in Caledonia County. You may recall that in our March meeting with the LURB, we ran this by them.*

#3) We are wondering what the top concerns are from other towns that are reviewing the maps. If you could share issues that keep resurfacing and maybe the top ten or more (if there are more) that you are hearing from towns about the maps. We want to make sure there are no issues or questions that we are not asking that should be discussed.

NVDA's answer: *Some towns have no feedback. While there are not 10 recurring concerns, here is some common feedback:*

To identify hay fields and other farmed land as rural ag/forestry rather than rural general, particularly for fields that tax/parcel data classify as residential but still are farmed/hayed

Some towns want a bigger or smaller village center than initially mapped by NVDA as part of the FLU mapping process, based on their vision for the town and opinion of DHCD's village center benefits.

In towns eligible for neighborhoods, 4 towns have wanted neighborhoods that are as large as possible

Walden and Newark did not want a village center even though they have land use patterns that align with one. A few other towns (outside of our region) also did not want a village center. This issue was discussed by all the regional planning commissions, which resulted in the attached memo from the VT Association of planning and development agencies (VAPDA).