

**Worcester Planning Commission
MINUTES
September 24, 2025, 6:30pm
Town Hall and ZOOM**

Attending: Chani Waterhouse, Rebecca Heinz, Will Baker, Bill Arrand, Amy Thornton, Toni Kaeding

Guests: Niki Sabado, Brian Voigt, Sooz Arrand, John Kaeding

Housekeeping

- Chani called the meeting to order at 6:32pm
- Chani moved to re-arrange the agenda to allow presentation from our guests to be first on the agenda. Bill seconded. Unanimous.

Planning & Mapping - CVRPC

Brian Voigt and Niki Sabado from CVRPC presented background info on Act 181 which seeks to ease Act 250 restrictions that slow housing development. CVRPC is embarking on the development of a regional future land use map and would like to include input from individual towns as part of their planning. This will likely take the form of a newly considered land use map, similar to, but more detailed than, Worcester's current land use plan included in the Worcester Town Plan. Vermont Act 181 provides differing levels of exemption from Act 250 rules depending on Town features:

Levels of exemption:

Tier 1A – full exemption from Act 250

Tier 1B – up to 50 housing units exempt

Tier 2 – follows current specifications in Act 250

Tier 3 – wildlife/natural area protection

Worcester is likely a Tier 2 town with some Tier 3 involvement, signaling essentially no Act 250 change for housing developers. Of note in the discussion was information that the Village Center Designation enjoyed by Worcester and other municipalities is scheduled to sunset in December 2026.

Vigorous discussion about how to ascertain the future housing aspirations of Worcester citizens and how that info would influence changing land use values in the region and state ensued.

Planning Commission Authority

Toni reported briefly on conversations with Lorraine Branbury (CVRPC) and John Brabant re: Planning Commission role and authority. Both concurred that responsibility for Town Plan and CVRPC participation lay with Planning Commissions. Both noted that Planning Commissions have limited decision-making powers and serve mainly as advisory to Select Boards. Planning Commission authority may rise in situations involving zoning and/or public utilities, depending on rules governing individual towns.

Chani moved to adjourn, Bill seconded, unanimous. Meeting was adjourned at 8:27pm.

Next meeting: Oct 21, 2025 at 6:30pm

Toni Kaeding
Secretary