

8.6.25 meeting minutes PC

This meeting was held remotely via Zoom.

Members present: Alison Anand, Ian Bender, Virginia Clarke, Mark Fausel, Chris Granda

Members absent: Rebecca Connell, (*one vacancy*)

Others present: Keith Osborne (Director of Planning and Zoning), Tom Astle (MMCTV)

1. Welcome

Clarke welcomed everyone, and opened the meeting at 7 pm.

2. Review agenda and public comment on non-agenda items

As there were no changes to the agenda, the meeting proceeded with the posted agenda. There was no public comment.

3. Review minutes of 7/16/25 meeting

As there were no corrections or additions to the minutes, they were accepted into the record as written.

4. Continued discussion of Planned Unit Development (PUD) revisions

Clarke reminded the commission that we had taken up this subject because of the conflicting statements within the current PUD section about whether fully residential PUD's were allowed in the C, VC and I/C Zoning Districts, or whether they had to contain 50% commercial uses. She continued: most uses of this term envision a single entity that is a PUD which conforms to the underlying district's density and use allowances, but which may vary the dimensional or other requirements. She suggested that the simplest way of resolving the conflicting statements is to assume that a PUD contains only the uses allowed in the district, unless a special provision is made for something different, and to remove the term "Residential PUD" from the ordinance. This makes it clear that when the term "PUD" is used, all PUD's are included. If a district only allows residential uses, no special provisions need to be made to ensure that the only PUD's allowed in that district would be those containing only residential uses. If a district allows both residential and commercial uses, but one wished to restrict PUD's to only residential (or only commercial) uses, then a special "call-out" would be required in the PUD section. For example, in the VC district there are no residential uses allowed. So, if we wanted to have anything other than a fully commercial PUD, we would have to add "dwellings as part of a PUD" to the list of uses in the district, and a special call-out in the PUD section if we wanted to specify how much of a mixed-use PUD could be residential vs commercial, like the statement that we have now that says "50% must be commercial." Call-outs would likely be the exception rather than the rule.

Granda thought this made sense, and used the Jolina Court District as an example in which we had done just that. The district allows both residential and commercial uses, so you could develop a PUD with any mix of uses, but there is a small "call-out" that says that the

20% of any building fronting onto Bridge St must be commercial. This strategy seemed less complicated to him than having a number of different definitions for different kinds of PUD's. Osborne then shared the screenshot of "Section 5.12.8(e)" which contains the special call-outs for districts that do not just want to allow PUD's with all of the uses allowed in that district (that would be the default), but that want something special. Clarke reviewed the call-outs that we already have: VD with commercial only on the first floor; JC with commercial only in 20% of Bridge St-facing buildings; I/C with residential only on lots that are already residential (named parcels); C, VC and I/C with a 50% commercial requirement. Districts which we should think about, include the HDR and the A/R districts – PUDs with commercial uses are currently prohibited in those districts - do we want to keep that special call-out in those districts or should they be allowed whatever uses are allowed in the district? In answer to Fausel's question, Osborne replied that getting a use variance would be extremely difficult if the use was not listed as allowed.

The Commission concurred that this one-PUD solution would work, and that we could still have a discussion about what special call-outs we would want to put in place for the different districts. Clarke said it was important that we have the PUD section and the individual district sections saying the same thing. She suggested inviting the business owners in the VC and C districts, and discussing the HDR and the A/R, as well as the MHP district, which isn't currently discussed at all. She suggested also revising section 5.12 to include a process for amending a PUD, including having a category of "minor" and "major" amendments that could be handled by the ZA and DRB respectively. Osborne said the DRB would certainly have to review any critical permit conditions or conserved land issues. We can also reconsider the way a PUD that is not a subdivision still has to be processed as if it were subdivision, which is kind of awkward and confusing, since we now have PUD's that aren't subdivisions. Osborne said he was looking forward to making this less confusing. As there were no further comments or questions on this plan to remove the term "Residential PUD," and revise the PUD section and the districts accordingly, Clarke said she and Osborne would work on it.

5. Town Plan 2026: discuss the CCRPC FLU map, revision 2.0. and its relation to our 2018 FLU map and our new 2026 FLU map

Clarke started the discussion by saying that, since our new FLU is required to be "compatible" with the CCRPC FLU map, we might want to start with their map as the basis for our map. She said she's hoping we can make some minor changes to put our own spin on it and still have it be considered "compatible." The land use categories were defined by the legislature and must be used on all the regional FLU maps. She described the 3 categories of "Rural" areas; the Resource-based recreation area (Cochran's Ski) and the floodplain and river corridors which also have special conservation requirements, and said this categorization may be useful to us in going forward with our land use regulations and revisions to the large A/R Zoning District. She said the Conservation working Group knew of conserved parcels that were not shown on CCRPC's map, and they would like to suggest changing those, at least on our own FLU map.

Then Clarke talked about changing the designation of the neighborhoods surrounding our village core, called “Planned Growth Areas” by CCRPC, to another one of their terms, “Village Areas,” which she feels is more politically acceptable to Richmond residents, even though both designations seem equally applicable. The Tier 1b designation approved by the Selectboard, with its advantages for housing developers, would still be applicable to “Village Areas.” She said that it’s unclear exactly how they arrived at their map, and also whether it will have regulatory significance in the future. It is not currently a zoning map. Clarke and Osborne agreed that this kind of map is a step forward from the “fuzzy” map of 2018, and may help us refine our thinking about how we can better preserve our working lands, farm and forest, and our natural areas, and still have residential growth. We can now tailor our regulations to areas that have been defined for us using the extensive mapping of all the municipalities that ANR has done in recent years. Clarke invited the commissioners to let her and the Steering Committee know of any thoughts they have on this FLU mapping issue.

In other news from the Steering Committee (TPSC), Clarke said the committee members were taking the outreach information received and working it into an update for their assigned sections of the Plan. Bender added that there had been discussion about whether the outreach efforts had been effective or not. He said the committee was now focused on some draft writing before seeking more outreach, and that a draft might generate more public interest. He also said we should be mindful of the fact that federal funding is very uncertain right now, and we should be thinking about how that can be referenced in the 2026 Plan. Clarke added that we are also emphasizing planning for increased flooding and incorporating the new state laws that have been passed that affect municipal planning.

Granda brought outreach to underserved communities into the discussion by saying that in Richmond we have mostly defined “underserved” in economic terms, and that the neighborhood of Riverview Commons might be a place to have outreach activities as we did in 2018. Clarke added that Jonesville might be considered another underserved community or neighborhood. Further discussion ensued about whether Jonesville constituted a “hamlet” as described on CCRPC’s FLU map, or a Commercial District as on our zoning map. Clarke agreed that the TPSC might take the draft to these neighborhoods.

6. Other business

The commission agreed to cancel the August 20th meeting due to vacations and ongoing work on the Town Plan. Granda announced his resignation from the commission due to lack of available time for this work. The other commissioners thanked him for the 6 years he has spent on the commission. Osborne stressed the need to recruit more PC members, as it will start to be difficult to form a quorum. September 3rd was discussed as the next meeting date, and Clarke said they could consider inviting Dan Noyes from the VC zoning district to come and weigh in on the issue of residential uses in the Village Commercial district. In response to a question from Bender, Osborne said it would be up to the Selectboard to decide if parking should be banned on a particular town road right-of-way.

7. Adjourn

As there was no further discussion, Bender made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Granda. There were no objections, so Clarke adjourned the meeting at 8:26 PM.

Minutes submitted by Virginia Clarke