



Agenda

Planning Commission Meeting

Monday, April 13, 2026 at 5:30 PM

HYBRID MEETING

Join in person: City Council Chambers, City Hall

or

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86226081179?pwd=kDhaf7c4CiXTEgWFACqC4xNRDn0eb1.1>

Meeting ID: 862 2608 1179 **Passcode:** 524427

Phone in: +13052241968,,86226081179#,,,,*524427# US

Members: Aaron Kisicki (Chair), Maria Arsenlis (Vice Chair), Gabriel Lajeunesse, Leah Candland, Sean Linehan, Timothy Sinnott, and Rowan Hawthorne

Please note: Changes in the agenda may occur

1. Call to order
 - a) Review of Zoom procedures
2. Approval of the agenda
3. Consider minutes of March 23, 2026
4. Comments from the Commission
5. Review the introductory liaison form letter to committees/commissions
6. Regulation Revision Process Discussion
7. Discuss amendments to the Regulations based on the Commission's guiding principles

- a) Zoning district consolidation as a potential starting point
- b) Review staff recommended changes
- 8. General business (comments from the public about something not on the agenda)
- 9. Adjournment

PC meetings are open to the public. For questions about accessibility or to request accommodations please call (802) 223-9506.

Montpelier Planning Commission Meeting March 23, 2026

Subject to review and approval

This public meeting was recorded, and the video will be available for viewing at this link:
<https://www.montpelier-vt.org/1094/CivicClerk>

Present: Maria Arsenlis, Aaron Kisicki, Gabe Lajeunesse, Leah Candland, Sean Linehan, Timothy Sinnott, Rowan Hawthorne, Michael Miller, Meredith Crandall, ORCA Media (recording).

Also in attendance: Peter Kelman, Steven Whitaker, Doug Zorzi, Alan Goldman, Dan Wheeler

Call to order by the Chair: The meeting was called to order by the Chair, Aaron Kisicki.

Approval of the agenda: The agenda was deemed approved by consensus.

Consider minutes from March 9 and March 16, 2026: The March 9th minutes from March 9 had comments by Tim and Sean reversed. Also the act referenced should be 250, not 50.

Leah made a motion to approve both sets of minutes, with the corrections. Rowan seconded and the motion carried.

Comments from the Commission: Aaron thanked the commissioners for making themselves available for three weeks in a row for meetings.

Aaron advised the commission that Housing Committee listening session on the developers of Country Club Road will be on April 7 at the Senior Center, if anyone is interested in attending, they can get further information from Mike or Meredith.

Mike mentioned that CVRPC is doing an essentials of planning municipal training online on March 25. He will forward the email to commissioners.

General business (comments from the public about something not on the agenda): Peter Kelman spoke of his appreciation for the commissioners' work. He's glad that they are getting involved in the Country Club Road project.

Peter also mentioned the sprinkler code and how strict they are – he knows it's an agenda item. He expressed concerns with the neighborhood and zoning districts in relation to character of the neighborhood specifics. He also strongly recommended that a commissioner be the city's representative on the CVRPC and not the Planning Director.

Steven Whitaker mentioned that a traffic study needs to consider the full buildout on Country Club Road, as well as concerns with brownfields and prime ag soils. A cross contamination of good soil and cleaning up the brownfields might happen. These and other issues need to be addressed in a master plan for the project that should be written by the Planning Commission.

Designate commission members as liaisons to other city committees and the CVRPC:

Aaron mentioned that Mike is currently the sole representative on the CVRPC. There are two seats – a main rep and a secondary rep. City Council will appoint those two roles. Mike will ask to stay on the CVRPC for at least the next year given the State-required land use changes currently in process. No one asked to be appointed to the second seat.

The Complete Streets committee is also looking for a rep. Maria gave an overview of that committee.

Tim offered to be the liaison to the Housing Committee. Sean offered to be Commission outreach to the Council's CCR Subcommittee. Rowan is interested in the Energy Committee, Maria the Parks Commission, and Leah the Conservation Commission.

Many times, a review of some of some of the committee agendas is all that is needed, unless there is something there that the commission might need to find out more info.

Public hearing – amendments to the River Hazard Area bylaws:

A draft redline version of the proposed amendments may be viewed on the City's website – Aaron opened the public hearing. Mike gave an overview of the bylaw amendments.

After a few questions answered by Meredith, from Peter Kelmen and Commissioners, Aaron closed the public hearing.

Sean made a motion to forward the draft of the river hazard area regulations to City Council for their approval. Maria seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Discuss amendments to the Unified Development Regulations: Mike provided a brief overview, and then started to discuss some specific questions Staff have for the Commission to help move forward with drafting amendments. Gabe asked that the Commission step back, and confirm whether there's agreement on the guiding principles that were distributed, as drafted by Tim and Sean, per discussion at a prior Commission meeting.

Commission reviewed the draft document. Gabe made a motion to adopt the guiding principles document twice, but it wasn't seconded.

Instead, amendments to the guiding principles document were discussed and proposed.

Maria made a motion to approve the guiding principles document as amended, Sean seconded. The motion carried.

Adjournment: There was a motion and a second to adjourn. The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Tami Furry
Recording Secretary

Liaison Introductory Email

The Montpelier Planning Commission is working to encourage communication and collaboration between the Planning Commission and Montpelier's committees, commissions, and boards. I will be the (enter committee or commission name here) liaison for the Planning Commission.

As the liaison, I may attend some of your (committee, commission, board) meetings to understand what your (committee, commission, board) is working on. I am also available for meetings to discuss the work plan of our respective (committees, commissions, boards).

I can answer any questions you might have about the Planning Commission's work or take questions back to the larger commission if necessary. I look forward to working with you.

Guiding Principles for Planning Commission Zoning Regulations Reform

As the Planning Commission begins the next phase of zoning regulation reform, we have identified the following five guiding principles to guide our work and support the long-term goals of the City Plan:

1. Address our city's urgent need to develop new and affordable housing stock.
2. Support the continued vitality and growth of Montpelier's local businesses.
3. Improve the City's aging infrastructure and roads.
4. Zoning should promote the public good, including the protection of public health, safety, and welfare.
5. Zoning in Montpelier should be permissive of housing development to the greatest extent practicable.

With these principles in mind, the Commission will focus on the following objectives as we evaluate potential updates to the zoning regulations:

1. Simplify the zoning regulations by expanding opportunities for housing development that can be approved through administrative review.
2. Consolidate zoning districts where appropriate and streamline standards to improve clarity and predictability.
3. Update "character of the area" language to be less prescriptive and more forward-looking, describing the type of development envisioned in updated zoning districts.
4. Evaluate opportunities to increase allowable building heights in downtown Montpelier.
5. Modernize the zoning regulations by removing local Planned Unit Development (PUD) provisions and relying on applicable state law.

Chapter/Section #	Change Options for PC Direction	Staff Comment
Chapt. 210 & Zoning Map	Merge RES 1500 with RES 3000 District	Staff supports
	Merge RES 6000 with RES 9000 District	Staff supports
	Eliminate "Municipal" District - merge parcels into adjacent Districts	
Urban Center District Options		
	Convert UC-2 (begining Barre St & Stone Cutters Way) to UC-1	This is a more densely built stretch of Barre St, including only one privately-owned parcel on Stone Cutters Way
	Merge UC-2 and UC-3 (School St to Brown section of Main St)	
Riverfront District Fixes		What is special about RIV District requirements that wish to keep? (1) encouraging taller buildings - minimum 24' height for new buildings, same as UC; (2) other dimensions step-down from Urban; (3) increased options for development access to river.
	Carve out Gasoline Alley as own District - Memorial Drive from Taylor St to Main Street, and Berlin St from Main to 51 Berlin St	This cluster of gas stations (6), Montpelier's only drive-through for food (Dunkin Donuts), and Domino's Pizza is a unique section of Montpelier that does not easily fit into other district types
	Change Barre St section to MUR or merge with UC-2	
	Put all of Stone Cutters Way and parcels on river side in a single District - Keep Riverfront OR UC2?	
Chapter 210: Neighborhood ("Character of the Area") Descriptions	Options: (1) Get rid of "neighborhoods" and have District Character Descriptions instead; or (2) make existing Neighborhood descriptions more forward looking and less architecturally/use specific	
	Delete Character of the Area as criteria for Major Subdivisions, so only applicable for Conditional Use review	
Chapts 210, 220, 320: District-Specific Architectural Standards	Delete District Specific Architectural Standards in Chapt 210	Architectural Standards are only used in Major Site Plan review outside of the Design Review District. Removing these from District specifics will reduce potential "character of the area"-style restrictions on future development

	Create 2 tiered Design Review District: (1) Applies Sec. 2201 fully - at least the Designated Downtown, maybe also Registered Historic District; (2) Sec. 2201 only applies to bigger projects (Major Site Plan)	Design review focuses on compatibility, but not sameness, and the Section 2201 standards and Guidelines adopted in recent years are forward looking. The City was purposeful in maintaining a "design" review district overlay, versus adopting the more restrictive "historic" review district overlay.
Raise Downtown Height Limit		
	Add 10 feet to Urban Center height maximums	Very few structures in downtown at max height - 60 ft in UC1; 55 ft in UC2; 45 ft in UC3. The only new build applications approaching the UC height limits since 2018 were the hotel and parking garage.
	Loosen height waiver in Urban Center OR River Hazard Area - currently limited to extra 5 feet in all Districts	Staff recommends. An option to allow for taller buildings where cause shown -- such as with flood elevation projects. Could see assisting future renovations of churches, Federal building, or other large structures, as well as new build options that use lower level for parking.

[illegible]
