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Town of Shaftsbury

Municipal Offices

Meeting Minutes

PO Box 409
677 Vermont RTE 7A
Shaftsbury, VT
05262-0409
(802) 442-4038

Planning Commission

June 10, 2026

Shaftsbury Town Offices and teleconference

Attendees: Planning Commission: Tim Scoggins, Pracilla Sachs, Mike Algus; BCRC: Callie Fishburn, Scott Grimm-Lyon; Operations Coordinator Jen Holley; there were no attendees on teleconference.

The chair, Tim Scoggins, called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

A motion was made to approve the minutes for May 13, 2026 by Pricilla and seconded by Mike. The motion passed 3-0-0.

Callie Fishburn and Scott Grimm-Lyon of BCRC returned to continue the discussion of their plan to help Shaftsbury develop a new town plan. They had sent ahead documents suggesting ways to reach out to citizens, businesses, and town officials to gather their thoughts on the new plan. Callie and Scott reviewed the documents and received comments and suggestion from commissioners. The discussion covered:

- A citizen survey of roughly 20 questions plus a few demographic questions.
- Two planned gatherings to solicit comments from town staff and local business. These are planned to occur at regular PC meetings on 7/22/26 with town officials and on 8/12/26 with businesses.
- Suggested changes to the current plan including new requirements and map updates.
- Making the citizen survey available in hard copy and online. They discussed handing out the survey at a potential ribbon cutting event for the new town offices.

At 7 pm the commission moved on to discuss an issue involving some people who want to build a large house in Shaftsbury that is planned to be slightly taller than the 30' limit in the current bylaws. Zoning Officer Carlyn Mickle had researched the issue and concluded that 35' is more in line with neighboring towns. 35' allows for a three story building with a peaked roof. She also consulted the Shaftsbury Fire Dept. and other neighboring fire departments and was assured that the additional height posed no fire fighting issues.

A motion was made by Mike and seconded by Pricilla to change the maximum building height in the zoning bylaws from 30' to 35'. The motion passed 3-0-0.

Tim updated the commission on a recent meeting about fire safety with solar farms. The meeting was in response to the solar arrays that blew down on Waites Cemetery Rd this last winter and began sparking in the spring. There were issues with access and contacting the array owner. Shaftsbury Fire Chief Joe Vadakin said that his volunteers had recently driven around town to locate all existing solar farms and confirm fire fighting access. Joe now feels that he knows where the solar farms are and how to handle access in the event of a fire. This response from the Joe and the volunteers is commendable.

Joe brought up the issue of solar farms possibly not being designed to allow fire fighting trucks to access the entire perimeter of array. If solar panels are installed too close to fences, stone walls, or other hard property boundaries, trucks may not be able to drive around them. Selectboard chair Zoe Kearns offered to raise the issue with the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), which oversees solar farms. Joe offered to bring up the issue with neighboring fire departments. The group planned to share whatever information Zoe and Joe are able to gather via email and reconvene as necessary.

Tim presented a first draft of a bylaw/ordinance regulating short term rentals (STR) such as Airbnb. The approach presented was to mainly collect information on STRs in town and not get too deeply into pushing local regulations. The bylaw provides information on state regulations governing STRs, offering just a few local requirements:

- A local permit for STRs with an annual fee of \$150 for resident owners and \$600 for non-resident owners
- A nearby, on-call manager to respond to issues at the STR
- Off-street parking
- Observance of the local noise ordinance

The draft bylaw is included in these minutes.

The last topic of the evening involved a heads-up from Carlyn that the legislature had recently passed a bill that seemed to conflict with the commission's recently drafted bylaw on poultry. The bill states that municipalities may not set limits of less than 12 chickens. The new draft bylaw seeks to limit chickens to 6 in Village Center and Village Residential districts. Tim recommended that the commission not act to change the draft as yet. The new law, by Tim's reading, seems to allow regulation of few than 12 chickens for parcels less than one acre. Also the bill has yet to be signed by the governing. The commission agreed to wait and see if the bill gets signed into law and to possibly get a legal opinion on the issue.

8.19 Short Term Rentals

- Definitions: “Short-term rental” (STR) means a furnished house, condominium, or other dwelling room or self-contained dwelling unit rented to the transient, traveling, or vacationing public for a period of fewer than 30 consecutive days and for more than 14 days per calendar year. (18 V.S.A. § 4301)
- State Requirements: STRs are governed by the following State statutes and regulations
 - [18 V.S.A. § 4466: Inspection](#)
 - [18 V.S.A. § 4467: Posting contact information](#)
 - [18 V.S.A. § 4468: Educational materials](#)
 - Residential Rental Housing Health and Safety Code (<https://firesafety.vermont.gov/sites/firesafety/files/documents/RRHHS%20Code%202022%20.pdf>)
 - Health Considerations of Short-Term Rental Operators (https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/ENV_FL_Health_ConsiderationsofShortTermRentalOperators.pdf)
 - **Short Term Rental Safety, Health and Financial Obligations checklist** (a copy must be submitted with permit application) (https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/ENV_FL_ShortTermRentalObligations.pdf)
- Local Requirements
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 - STR requires an annual permit and fee, submitted to the zoning administrator by March 1 each year.
 - Fees
 - \$150 for Shaftsbury resident owners
 - \$600 for non-resident owners
 - Owner must submit a copy of Short Term Rental Safety, Health and Financial Obligations checklist (see above) with permit application
 - An STR permit is not transferable. A new owner requires a new permit.
 - STRs are permitted in all zoning districts except FR
 - STR permits for camps require approval from the DRB due to wastewater considerations.
 - The owner of the STR or the owner’s designated manager must be geographically proximate and available and on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week to respond in the event of an incident whenever there is an active rental.
 - The owner of the STR is responsible for renter compliance with the noise bylaw in Shaftsbury Land Use Regulations 3.4.b (<https://shaftsburyvt.gov/all-docs/archived-docs/zoning/shaftsbury-land-use-regulations.pdf>)
 - All vehicles associated with the STR of a property, including guests of the short-term renter(s), shall have designated off-road parking and not use shared private driveways, private roads, or public highways, unless public parking is readily available.

- Compliance
 - Failure to register for a STR permit is subject to a \$50 late fee.
 - Failure to follow Local Requirements may result in:
 - Submission of an adverse report on STR listings such as Airbnb and VRBO.
 - A fine of \$100 per incident.
 - Cancellation of STR permit
 - Referral to town attorney for possible court action
- Authority
 - This ordinance is adopted pursuant to the enumerated powers of the Selectboard to regulate the operation of STRs, outlined in 24 V.S.A. § 2291(29); and the power to enforce municipal ordinances outlined in 24 V.S.A. § 1974a.