

PUBLIC HEARING

Town of Brookfield Public Forum on Selectboard Changes to New Town Plan

Monday October 27, 2025

5:00 – 6:00pm

Brookfield Town Office, 40 Ralph Road, Brookfield, VT

MINUTES

Present: John Benson, Chair; Keith Sprague, Curtis Koren, Stuart Edson, Laura Rochat, members. Vicki Blanchard, Administrative Assistant. Sandra McLaughlin and Martha Judy, Planning Commission. Susan Shea, Vice Chair Conservation Commission; Jon Binhammer, Chair Conservation Commission. Ted Vogt. Kathy Kinter and Larry Thompson were not able to attend and requested in an email that their comments be on record.

Call to Order – Mr. Benson called the Hearing to order at 5:00pm

Comments on Proposed Town Plan – Comments from members of the planning and conservation commissions raised concerns over changes in the language of the proposed town plan that they felt weakened recommendations for change. For example:

- The proposed Plan reading “*Establish* a Conservation District to protect priority forest blocks” (p. 90) was changed to “*Consider* creation of a Conservation District to protect priority forest blocks.” It was felt that the language in the previous version was stronger and more in conformance with the state statute requiring Town Plans to reduce forest fragmentation.
- Under Land Use Policies, the original read “*Limit* the length of driveways to minimize forest fragmentation.” (p 14) It was changed to “*Consider limiting* the length of driveways to minimize forest fragmentation.” (p 13) It was felt that the stronger wording is a good

tool to keep new development closer to the road and reduce disturbance to unbroken forests.

- Under Wildlife Corridor Recommendations, the changed Plan proposes to “Minimize the adverse effects from the fragmentation of wildlife corridors by discouraging forest clearing and driveway length or by establishing length or by establishing maximum setbacks” (p 18-19) instead of “limiting forest clearing and driveway length” that was in the earlier version (p.21).

Further comment: “The original recommendations, made with guidance from some members of the Conservation Commission, were based on sound science with a vision to the future. The continued and intensifying effects of climate change are inevitable, and resilient landscapes will be of the utmost importance. The wording of the plan prior to your weakening of it, addressed these impacts. It is our hope that the planning commission will restore the plan to its prior wording regarding the above sections.”

After comments were heard, Mr. Benson thanked everyone and the Board went into a deliberative session at 5:20pm, finishing at 5:59pm.