

**Sandgate Planning Commission Minutes**  
**Wednesday, May 21, 2025 7:00 p.m.**

**Board Members Present: Richard Zoppel (Chair), Jack Blandford, Rob Viglas**

**Board Members Absent: James Aschmann**

**Also Present: Sheila Kearns (Zoning Administrator-ZA), Samantha Page and Nick Zaic (Bennington County Regional Commission--BCRC)**

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. The agenda was updated to include additions to the Zoning Administrator's report: 2089 W Sandgate Rd.-new porch; 64 Walsh Road; 493 West Rd. –storage/garage
3. No conflicts of interest were reported.
4. Samantha Page and Nick Zaic, BCRC Planners, presented an overview of the process of drafting of future land use maps in compliance with Act 181. This mapping process is a requirement for all VT regional planning commissions and will be reflected in the next iteration of the BCRC Regional Plan. The presentation emphasized that this mapping process does not require revisions of current municipal zoning maps and that future zoning maps will not be required to conform to the regional land use maps. After reviewing the 10 land use categories created by Act 181, Samantha & Nick presented a draft of what the regional land use map would look like for Sandgate. On this draft map only 4 of the 10 land use categories were shown to be applicable:
  - Village Center: Traditional and historic mixed-use centers bringing together economic activity and civic assets;
  - Rural – General: areas with lower residential density, working landscapes, natural features;
  - Rural – Agriculture and Forestry: blocks of forest and farmland, home to natural resources, working lands, and scenic beauty;
  - Rural – Conservation: areas of significant natural resources that require special protection.

While Board members acknowledged the general appropriateness of the draft map, they noted the concern that they did not wish to see increased density along town roads that would negatively impact the open nature of the landscape. It was also noted that there might be an over representation of Rural – Agricultural and Forestry Areas, where use has more traditionally been in the Rural – General category. Nick and Sam agreed that they would take a closer look at the Rural Residential areas on the municipal zoning maps and explore extending some of the Rural – General areas of the draft map.

BCRC will continue to work with the PC/ZBA as they refine the maps.

5. No members of the public were present

6. After a review of the draft meeting minutes of the May meeting Rob Viglas moved to accept the minutes as written. The motions was seconded by John Blandford, and the motion was approved by unanimous consent.

7. Zoning Administrator's Report:

- 3402 Sandgate Rd: (Green River Inn) work in the Flood Hazard Area and River Corridor: Richard Zoppel (PC/ZBA Chair) reported that after discussions with the property owner and the contractors the determination was made that the excavation and pouring of concrete for these areas did not violate the Flood Hazard Area (FHA) and River Corridor (RCO) zoning regulations and that if as described, the planned pool is at current ground level it would also be compliant. Sheila Kearns (ZA) noted that any fencing around these areas would be subject to review to determine that it conformed with FHA and RCO. Rob Viglas asked about any regulations regarding pool safety requirements such as fencing, The ZA noted that Sandgate has no such regulations, though it would be at the discretion of the PC/ZBA to establish such regulations. Additionally, the ZA requested the direction of the PC/ZBA to create more explicit means to assure that any work (not just the building of structures) in the FHA and RCO is reviewed by the ZA. The ZA will draft language and possibly a checklist that will allow property onweres to report the nature of the work that they are doing in these areas.
- 2089 W Sandgate Rd.-new porch: An after the fact permit was accepted after the Chair discussed the need for a permit with the property, who was not aware that the expansion of the the existing porch required a permit. The permit was prepared with the assistance of the Chair and the ZA.
- 64 Walsh Road: Once again work has begun on the construction of a residence on this property without a permit. The Chair discussed the matter with the contractor and obtained details about the size and location of the structure that indicate that it would be in compliance with current zoning regulations, but a permit has not yet been submitted. The ZA noted that once the permit is received in will be posted in accordance with the bylaws and will be subject to the normal appeals process. Any appeals that the PC/ZBA deems appropriate will have to be addressed by the property owner and failure to do so may result in zoning violation proceedings.
- Permit issued for camp at 4401 Sandgate Rd. (Property ID 12550-00L)
- 2352 Sandgate Rd permit research: Flood Hazard Area and River Corridor. The ZA had a conversation with a representative of MSK Engineering about conditional permit requirements, including the need for a public hearing. Once a permit has been submitted, the ZA will schedule the hearing and make the necessary notifications.
- 4498 Rupert Rd.: permit review for a 8' X 16' shed. During a discussion with the property owner, the ZA determined that a variance would be needed because the planned structure will not meet the side setback requirements. The hearing will be scheduled for the June PC/ZBA meeting,
- 493 West Rd. –storage/garage with no residential use. The ZA noted that there is no existing residence on the property though there is an existing State Water &

Wastewater permit in place. Board members requested that the permit clearly state that the use will be strictly for storage and noted that any use for residential purposes (short or long term) would require a change of use permit. The Chair and ZA will schedule a site visit and a properly drawn plot plan will be required before the permit can be approved.

8. There was no other business and at 8:15 p.m. John Blandford moved to adjourn the meeting. The motions was seconded by Rob Viglas and by unanimous consent, the meeting was adjourned

**Notice concerning the next meeting of the Sandgate Planning Commission will be posted on the town website and at the Town message boards during the week before the proposed meeting.**