

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 13, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.
Town of Sandgate Municipal Office
3266 Sandgate Road, Sandgate, Vermont 05250

Board Members Present: Richard Zoppel (Chair), James Aschmann, Jack Blandford, Dan Reap, Rob Viglas

Board Members Absent: NA

Also Present: Pat Hall, Linda Schmidt (Select Board), Shelly Finn, Sheila Kearns, Todd Caldwell, George Caldwell, Julie Robertson, Ebba Pero, Leo Goodman, Mark Neff, Oliver Viglas, Elizabeth Dout, Dawn Frenke.

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:00.
2. No additions or changes to the agenda were made.
3. Conflict of Interest: The Zoning Administrator will not participate in this meeting due to a conflict of interest.
4. Review and approval of the draft meeting minutes from 3/11/2026 were made. James Aschmann made a motion to approve the minutes and Dan Reap seconded the motion. The board unanimously approved the minutes.
5. Enforcement of:

SANDGATE LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT BYLAW (Adopted MAY 6, 2024)
Section 5 Specific Use Standards
5.9 Mobile Home and Travel Trailer Occupancy

Community members Shelly Finn and Sheila Kearns brought attention to the board that a travel trailer is being lived in on a neighboring property. The time has surpassed 30 days of occupancy allowed under the bylaws and concerns over waste removal is a community concern. Another community member asked if similar situations have happened in the past. The Board responded with a statement that an inquiry would be made about this situation and that they would follow up with a notification to the property owner of possible violations of town bylaws.

6. Public Comment:
The Zoning Administrator joined the meeting.

A series of questions and comments were made by Sandgate residents:

Mark Neff: - Raised questions about whether permits have been submitted for a rumored multi-unit rental property at 1285 West Rd.

Todd Caldwell – Asks if this property owner has a history permit applications with violations?

Elizabeth Dout - Expressed further concern over past permit transgressions and how it will be handled by the Board.

Mark Neff - What if the owner wants to place a trailer on the property to rent out?

Elizabeth Dout - Assuming neighbors would prefer to be against large projects like this, is there anything preemptive to be done?

George Caldwell - Can he build on Forest One property?

Linda Schmidt - The Select Board would need to submit a new ordinance for laws to change concerning preemptive changes.

General concerns over the infrastructure of the road and town services being able to handle the influx of vehicles and people to the neighborhood.

Elizabeth Dout - West Rd residents appreciate the current state of the road. Could current users of the road categorize the road? Others worried about upkeep if the road was private.

Ebba Pero - This is an issue for all neighboring properties. This owner monopolize the road. Additionally, there has been an uptick in traffic and trash that is disrupting our neighborhood.

Dawn Frenke - Can we do anything preemptive? Is the owner getting fined for violations?

Elizabeth Dout - Can we do an HOA?

Linda Schmidt - Was the road crew in violation of West Rd? VT DOT visited and approved the work done there.

The ZA stated that anyone interested in documentation on communication with the property owner can see her for more information and that the current permit for a garage at 1285 West Rd. has been signed and posted. That this permit is open to appeal until May 26, 2026. Since a foundation has already been poured for this structure, the permit is an "after the fact" permit. While there are no penalties in the zoning bylaws for beginning a project before the permit is finalized, a valid appeal can require reversal of any non-conforming work. The ZA also stated that no other permits were known to be pending for this property. She also noted that there will be ongoing visits to the property by PC/ZBA members during the completion of the garage. Further comments are presented in the ZA's report below (Item 7.h.).

PC/ZBA Chair Richard Zoppel described the "after the fact" permit that was required when the foundation replacement for an accessory dwelling was found to constitute an addition of a basement to the structure.

Other members of the PC/ZBA noted their awareness of the substantial tree clearing on the property and indicated their intention to stay aware of any development activity on the property.

7. Zoning Administrator's Report:

- a. Permits for new residence and garage: Chunks Brook Rd (Parcel ID: 305000-00L): copy of permit was shown the PC/ZBA members for review.
- b. After the Fact Permit for garage: 1285 West Rd. (Parcel ID: 342000-00L): This permit is subject to appeal by May 26, 2026: was shown the PC/ZBA members for review.
- c. Progress on River Corridor/Flood Hazard related project at 2352 Sandgate Road: I have received information from Jessica Barsaleau (ANR River Corridor & Floodplain Manager) and Julie Cornell (MSK Engineers). ANR has signed off on the project as having minimal. Jessica's review of the project states:
 - i. From a desktop review, it appears the floodplain at this location is intact and functioning and the channel location has been relatively stable in recent time. The proposed development is not situated on land with a history of fluvial damage, nor it is imminently threatened by fluvial erosion, and would not cause the river to depart from the channel width, depth, meander pattern, and slope associated with natural stream processes and equilibrium conditions. The proposed development will not cause an immediate or anticipated future need for stream channelization beyond what exists for the existing residence. These factors indicate that the proposed development is low risk in terms of impacts to the river corridor and adjacent floodplain.
 - ii. The FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) (Panel #50003C0165D, effective 12/2/2015) indicates that the parcel is outside of the mapped 1% Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) Zone A associated with the Green River. The existing home is on a terrace at least 5' above the approximate mapped SFHA, the proposed development is close to the same elevation as the existing home and therefore outside the SFHA. No further permit review is necessary regarding the FEMA SFHA.
 - iii. These comments are provided to the Town of Sandgate as the ANR notification and review/comment in accordance with Section 7.5.4/7.8, D., 7. of the Town of Sandgate LUDB and with 24 V.S.A. § 4424. Additional local, State or Federal permits may be required. Where the community has additional, or more stringent standards, those standards apply.

MSK has sent me a copy of the plan submitted to ANR, which I have filed with the pending permits, and I have requested that MSK attend a PC/ZBA meeting when the zoning permit is fully prepared. I believe that everything about this project will allow me to approve any permits administratively, but I think it would be helpful to PC/ZBA members if they had a chance to go over the details of the project.

- d. Inquiries about possible air bnb on West Rd.: I have received several informal inquiries stating concern that there are plans in the making for a multiple unit air bnb project on West Rd. I have forwarded the formal inquiry that I have received to the PC/ZBA members by email. The most relevant sections of our Bylaws that might apply to such a project are

in section 3 of the zoning bylaws: Sections 3.2 (Rural Residential (RR) District), 3.3 (Forest 1 (F1) District), and 3.4 (Forest 2 (F2) District). Given what I believe to be gray areas of our zoning bylaws regarding multi-unit air bnb development, I will bring to the board's attention any actual development work observed or any permits to carry out such a project before taking any action.

8. No other business was presented to the board.
9. At 6:54, James Aschmann motioned to adjourn the meeting and Rob Viglas seconded the motion. The board unanimously approved adjournment.