

Fair Haven Planning Commission
Town of Fair Haven - November 5, 2025 - Regular Meeting

Commissioners Present: Robert Richards - Chair, Ann Finley, Linda Sienkiewicz - clerk,
Deborah Laiacona - Vicechair

Commissioners Absent: Sam Lucci

Others Present: Phil Adams - Zoning Administrator, Jennifer Jackson - Minute-take

Agenda

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:31 pm by Chair Richards.
Mrs. Laiacona motioned to add approval of the October 23rd special meeting minutes to the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Sienkiewicz. All were in favor and the motion passed

2. **Review of Minutes of Previous Meeting:**

Approval of Minutes: Regular meeting - October 15, 2025

Special Meeting - October 23, 2025

Mrs. Finley motioned to accept the minutes of October 15th with the correction discussed. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Sienkiewicz. Discussion included changing the date in minutes approval to "October 1st" Page 2 second line changing "ZA. Admans" to "ZA Adams" Page 2 third paragraph second line "midnovember" change to Mid-November" All were in favor and the motion passed.

Mrs. Sienkiewicz motioned to accept the minutes of the special Meeting held on October 23, 2025 as written. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Finley. All were in favor and the motion passed.

3. **New Business:**

- a. **Discussion of the current status of the Downtown Designation application process for Fair Haven.**

Chairman Richards stated the PC had received the email below and that the process of gaining Downtown designation for Fair Haven was in "limbo".

From: Logan Solomon <logan@rutlandrpc.org>

Date: Fri, Oct 24, 2025 at 4:11 PM

Subject: Fair Haven Downtown – RRPC Status Update

Hi all,

I wanted to provide an update on the Downtown Designation application. I've attached a spreadsheet outlining the status of each of the 23 deliverables, which highlights just how extensive this application has truly become. After reviewing the remaining requirements and consulting with Gary from the state, RRPC has concluded that completing the full Downtown Designation under the legacy program is unlikely within the current 2025 timeline (due November 3). While the legacy Downtown route initially seemed simpler, it is now clear that the process is more time-intensive and complex than anticipated. I recently learned the Hardwick example application took several years to complete.

We recommend shifting focus to pursuing a Step 3 "Designated Center" designation under the new framework which relates to the regional future land use map. This designation offers benefits equivalent to a legacy Downtown. In discussing with Gary, much of the work already completed for the Downtown application, such as the Historic District and creation of the Downtown Organization (EDDP), can carry forward to meet Step 3 requirements. This means that the Town will be well positioned to submit a Step 3 application, minimizing duplication of effort and leveraging the work already completed. Gary is working on the guidance document for the Step 3 "Designated Center" and I'd expect it will be up by the end of this year. This approach allows the Town to submit a strong application under the new framework without the pressure of a tight deadline.

RRPC will continue to support the Town in preparing for the Step 3 Center designation and will keep you informed as the State finalizes the new process.

Please let me know if you'd like to schedule a call or have me attend a meeting to review next steps and answer any questions.

Best, Logan

The entire Planning Commission expressed their frustration in receiving this notice and general feeling of anger at all the work the town has put in to not be able to finish the application. Chairman Richards stated he learned that Fair Haven is the only town to have tried the application process in 7 years and was shocked to hear it took Hardwick, which was sited as the example application, 3 years to complete. Mrs. Laiacoan stated she didn't feel Fair Haven was as "behind" as the spreadsheet made it look. FH is taking a different approach than Harick took.

Chairman Richards stated the new structure would have similar incentives for towns to gain the designation. He understood that the new guidelines will be released in December. He stated the both Mr. Solomon and Mr. Holloway were confident that many of the components that FH already completed would transfer to the new application.

Mrs. Sienkiewicz asked how this news affects the Subdivision regulations and Historic district work that had been completed. Chairman Richards stated they are still created and in place. He stated the Downtown project is still attainable just the timeline has been moved further into the future and stated it would have been nice to know the deadline wasn't "real" as a lot of stress was put on many people to have it all taken away.

Mrs. Laiacona suggested because there is momentum, maybe the entities that have been working on the application could still continue with their work as it must be something the new application would approve of. She suggested she speak with Mr. Holloway to see if he can give any incite into the new application and requirements as the town is still really interested in gaining the status and completing the work.. Chairman Richards stated he didn't want to spend too much of any group's time on things that might not be required of them. The PC in general was ok with Mrs. Laiacona reaching out to Mr. Holloway for information.

Chairman Richards stated he would talk to Mr. Neary about the grant that was received to complete this work as he has concerns on how it was used.

ZA Adams asked about future meetings agendas; if there were no applications should he put on the agenda to work on reviewing town goals? Chairman Richards was in agreement with the plan. ZA Adams stated that budget planning needs to be presented to the Selectboard

and that at the last meeting he had asked Mr. Lucci to keep an eye out for the PC. Chairman Richards stated he would ask the town office for an electronic budget sheet concerning the PC.

4. Other Business:

- a. **Public Comment: None**
- b. **Review of Mail: None**
- c. **Other: None**

5. Adjournment:

Mrs. Sienkiewicz motioned to adjourn at 8:07 pm. Mrs. Finley seconded the motion. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Jackson, Minute-taker

The Next Commission Meeting will be held on November 19, 2025 at 7:30 pm