

TOWN OF WESTMORELAND PLANNING BOARD
Minutes June 1, 2026

Planning Board Members Present: Lauren Bressett (Chair), Bruce Smith (Vice Chair), John Snowdon (Selectman) Liana Capra, Jim Church and Kristen Riley. Alternates: John Stronk and Larry Siegel.

Chair Lauren Bressett called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

The meeting began with a review of the May 4, 2026 meeting minutes. Liana Capra noted a correction to Allison Fissette's last name. A motion was made by Liana Capra, seconded by Bruce Smith, to approve the with correction noted above the minutes of May 4, 2026 as printed. Motion passed 6-0. Kristen Riley Abstained. Jim Church arrived after the vote.

Master Plan Review

- The Board continued its review of the draft Master Plan, focusing on the stated goals and implementation strategies. Members discussed the challenge of balancing residential and commercial growth while preserving Westmoreland's rural character. It was noted that previous Master Plans placed significant emphasis on protecting rural character. However, members acknowledged that the Town cannot legally prohibit all development and must balance growth with community values.
- Discussion regarding economic development. The Board clarified that the establishment of an Economic Development Committee falls under the authority of the Selectboard. The Selectboard has tried to establish one in the past with no volunteer interest. Members referenced neighboring communities' experiences with economic development groups and the challenges associated with enlisting volunteers and maintaining active participation.
- The Board reviewed language within the Master Plan related to residential development on Class VI roads. The Planning Board acknowledged the need to remain current with changing state regulations and development standards.
- The Board discussed infrastructure limitations within the Town, including the absence of municipal water and sewer systems. Members noted that these limitations create challenges for senior housing developments and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).
- The Board also discussed statewide electrical grid capacity issues affecting solar development. It was noted that neighboring communities have experienced restrictions on new solar projects due to limited grid capacity.

Ordinance Definitions

The Board reviewed proposed ordinance amendments relating to the definitions of Development, Storage Containers, and Fabric Covered Structures. A motion was made by Bruce Smith to approve the revised definitions, as amended, and forward them to Town Counsel for review. Once approved by Town Counsel, they will be saved for the March town ballot. The motion passed unanimously.

The approved definitions are as follows:

- Development: Any man-made change to improved or unimproved real estate, including

but not limited to buildings or other structures, mining, dredging, filling, grading, paving, excavating or drilling operations, or the storage of equipment or materials. Any development requires a Land Use Permit.

- Storage Containers: Any vehicle or structure designed and constructed for the transportation and/or storage of goods, equipment, and/or materials, and designed so that it is or may be mounted on wheels and used as a conveyance on highways or streets, propelled or drawn by other motive power. This definition specifically includes storage containers, pods, and steel shipping containers, which shall be considered structures. Trailers with a current registration for travel on public roads are excluded. Storage containers shall be included in lot coverage calculations and require both Land Use and Building Permits for placement on a lot. They must comply with all regulations applicable to the zoning district in which they are located.
- Fabric Covered Structures: Fabric-covered frame structures and prefabricated carports without a foundation shall be considered structures and require both Land Use and Building Permits for placement on a lot. Such structures must comply with all regulations applicable to the zoning district in which they are located.

The board then reviewed the Town Lens analysis kindly provided by Alan Bell. This analysis does identify some topics and ordinances that deserve a closer look including:

- Height limits
- No mention or consideration of seniors and their specific needs, define senior housing, nursing homes or group homes, adult day care (and child care), etc
- Review zoning tables for permitted and special exceptions uses
- Define accessibility modifications (B.2, B.3) and exempt from nonconforming lot restrictions
- ADU's Certificate of Occupancy – while the purpose is clear is it too cumbersome to implement?
- No groundwater protection
- 6.2.1 unregistered vehicle limits
- 4.9 Performance standards and related 6.2 storage possibly poorly defined or too lax, and enforcement not defined and related 6.2 storage
- Establish Impact Fees – note that NHMA webinar on impact fees is June 25
- Review permits and fees
- Camping
- Cottage courts and/or conservation development

Lauren Bressett reminded Board that the Land Use Boards meet June 2, 2026 at 6pm

At 7:48 p.m., a motion to adjourn was made by Liana Capra and seconded by John Snowdon. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Jodi Scanlan