

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of February 3, 2026

6:30 pm at Brown Public Library Community Room

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 pm by Chair Royal DeLegge.

Roll Call: Present for the meeting were Planning Commission members Royal DeLegge, Lucas Herring, Elroy Hill, Brian Massey, and Doug Shiok. Zoning Administrator & PC Clerk Mitch Osiecki was also present.

Others present were Economic Development Director Tom Davis, Kevin Camisa (Chouinard property), and resident Curtis Dudley. Kevin Camisa and Curtis Dudley joined the meeting remotely via Zoom. All other participants were physically present in the Community Room.

Adjustments to Agenda: No adjustments proposed.

Motion: Elroy moved to approve the agenda. Doug seconded.

Vote to approve: 5-0.

Public Participation

Tom Davis and Kevin Camisa in attendance to discuss possible NDA Designation for a section of town off Whetstone Drive (part of the Foran Farm property).

Minutes

Motion: Lucas moved to approve the minutes of the PC meeting on January 6. Elroy seconded.

Discussion: a minor typo was noted (Brian Massey's name was misspelled).

Motion to approve minutes (with typo corrected) carried: 5-0.

Old Business

Neighborhood Development Area (NDA) Designation

Tom explained that some old municipal designations (Village Center & Designated Downtowns) are being phased out. New designations (Tier 1-A, Tier 1-B, and Tier 1-C) are going to be introduced.

Tom noted that certain sections of Northfield's zoning bylaws will need to be amended to comply with new state regulations. Tom shared a document - Management Version, Redlined Draft for Regulatory Consolidation – with the Planning Commission (copy to be attached to these minutes).

Tom has secured a \$16K grant to help cover administrative costs of amending our current zoning bylaws.

Big takeaway: Northfield has some desirable development elements:

1. lots of buildable land, and
2. plenty of water and sewer infrastructure capacity.

Some features of new regulations to keep in mind:

Tier 1-B status – can build up to 50 dwelling units without the need for ACT 20 review.

Tier 1-A status – can build up to 100 dwelling units without ACT 250 review (some conditions apply).

We need to update our zoning map to add a couple of Tier 1-B areas (current Village Centers in downtown & Northfield Falls, and the Foran Farm area near Whetstone Drive).

Tom noted that significant tax credits are available to develop the Foran Farm area, if made a Tier 1-B area (NDA). The tax credits could help pay for necessary infrastructure upgrades (roads, sidewalks, water/sewer).

The Northfield Falls Village Center is also eligible for Tier 1-B conversion, but that area is not as high a priority.

Kevin Camisa shared some background on the Foran Farm property.

The property consists of some 181 acres, which was originally designated Industrial. There has been very little demand for development of this type.

There are seven parcels of land involved. A 12-acre parcel on Whetstone Drive is ideal for a housing development. Land could also serve as an access conduit between Northfield and Northfield Falls.

The owners of the property are interested in seeing the property developed as housing for young families and working people. The state of Vermont often calls this “missing middle” housing.

Another possibility: develop a tract of land for housing specifically for residents in the 55+ age group. Develop single story homes. Such a development could free up existing, multi-story homes currently owned by these residents.

Lucas asked if other lands adjacent to Foran Farms could be added to the Tier 1-B area. Tom discussed the adjacent Doyon Road subdivision.

Homework assignment: PC members are asked to review the Redline Draft and present any questions or comments at our next meeting.

Discussion of Form-Based Code (FBC) draft document. Mitch will share comments with Geoffrey Farrell.

Town Forest

Royal suggests that the PC could propose a new Town Forest District, rather than add an Overlay District.

Motion: Brian moved that the PC proposes the creation of a Town Forest District as part of our upcoming package of zoning bylaw amendments. Elroy seconded.

Motion passed, 5-0.

Vice-Chair Vacancy

Motion: Elroy nominated Lucas to serve as Vice-Chair. Brian seconded.

No additional nominations were offered.

Motion carried, 5-0.

CVRPC Updates

Royal reported that more litigation is likely, due to a dissatisfied Montpelier resident. Recent complaint alleges improper conduct by the Brownfields Committee.

Appointments have been made to the CVRPC's Nominating Committee.

The Regional Plan Committee has a vacancy.

The CVRPC has offered a letter of support for a project in Waitsfield.

Zoning Updates

Mitch provided an update on some zoning issues around town.

Have reached out to developers of the apartment complex on North Main St next to Dollar General. No response yet. Do not expect any activity until spring.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 4 at 6:30 pm.

Note: Meeting moved to Wednesday, as scheduled meeting date falls on Town Meeting (Mitch has a schedule conflict).

Adjournment: Elroy moved to adjourn; Brian seconded.

Motion carried, 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:02 pm.

MANAGEMENT VERSION: REDLINED DRAFT FOR REGULATORY CONSOLIDATION

Document Status: Working Draft for Planning Commission Review

Revision Date: February 3, 2026

ARTICLE I. ENACTMENT AND INTENT

Section 1.01 Enactment

--This Regulation shall be known and cited as the "Northfield Zoning Regulation" or "Northfield Zoning Bylaws."-- **These bylaws are hereby enacted as the Northfield Land Use Regulations** in accordance with 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117. ¹

Section 1.02 Intent

It is the intent and purpose of these bylaws --to encourage the appropriate development of all lands in Northfield with the aid and assistance of the state, in a manner which will promote the public health, safety against fire, floods, explosions, and other dangers; to promote prosperity, comfort, access to adequate light and air, convenience, efficiency, economy, and general welfare; to enable the mitigation of the burden of property taxes on agricultural, forest, and other open lands; to encourage where designated by regulation appropriate architectural design; to encourage the development of renewable resources; to protect residential, agricultural and other areas from undue concentrations of population and overcrowding of land and buildings, from traffic congestion, from inadequate parking, and the invasion of through-traffic, and from the loss of peace, quiet, and privacy; to facilitate the growth of villages, towns, and cities, and of their communities and neighborhoods, so as to create an optimum environment, with good civic design; to encourage development of a rich cultural environment and to foster the arts; and to provide means and methods for Northfield to plan for the prevention, minimization, and future elimination of such land development problems as may presently exist, or which may be foreseen, and to implement those plans when and where appropriate.-- **to implement the goals of the Northfield Municipal Plan and 24 V.S.A. § 4302, focusing on concentrated village growth, protection of rural resources, and the promotion of public health, safety, and general welfare.** ¹

Explanation: The previous intent statement was a verbatim list of state goals that created significant linguistic bulk. Consolidating this into a single sentence that references the Municipal Plan and the state statute ensures legal compliance while improving readability.

Redundant mentions of the document name in 1.01 were also removed.

ARTICLE II. ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Section 2.05 Zoning Permits

~~(G) Every application for a permit under this section shall be accompanied by a \$15 recording fee.~~ **(G) All applications shall be accompanied by the applicable fees as established in the Northfield Municipal Fee Schedule, as adopted and amended from time to time by the Selectboard.** ⁴

Explanation: The \$15 recording fee was repeated individually across dozens of permit types (signs, home occupations, etc.). By centralizing this into a single reference to a "Municipal Fee Schedule," the town can update fees via Selectboard resolution without requiring a full bylaw amendment process.

ARTICLE IV. GENERAL REGULATIONS

Section 4.01 Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

~~Accessory Dwelling Unit (Permitted Use): An efficiency or one-bedroom apartment that is clearly subordinate to a single-family dwelling, and has facilities and provisions for independent living, including sleeping, food preparation, and sanitation, provided there is compliance with all the following: (i) The property has sufficient wastewater capacity. (ii) The unit does not exceed 30 percent of the total habitable floor area of the single-family dwelling. (iii) Applicable setback, coverage, and parking requirements specified in the bylaws are met.~~

~~Accessory Dwelling Unit (Conditional Use): An efficiency or one-bedroom apartment that is clearly subordinate to a single-family dwelling, and has facilities and provisions for independent living, including sleeping, food preparation, and sanitation, provided there is compliance with all the following: (i) The property has sufficient wastewater capacity; (ii) The unit does not exceed 30 percent of the total habitable floor area of the single-family dwelling; (iii) Applicable setback, coverage, and parking requirements specified in the bylaws are met; and that involves one or more of the following in its creation: (i) A new accessory structure; (ii) An increase in the height or floor area of the existing dwelling; or (iii) An increase in the dimensions of the parking areas.~~

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). A single efficiency or one-bedroom apartment subordinate to a single-family dwelling is permitted if it meets state-mandated size and wastewater standards. (A) Administrative Review: Required for units within existing

structures. (B) Conditional Use Review: Required for units involving new structures or increased building footprints. ⁵

Explanation: The original text repeated the core definition of an ADU twice, covering nearly two full pages. Merging these into a single "Accessory Dwelling Units" section with two review tracks reduces text by 80% while maintaining the same regulatory outcome.

Section 4.03 Home Occupations

~~(A) No more than one non-resident employee may participate in a home occupation.~~ ****
1

Explanation: The participation limit was repeated in the Business Guide and multiple sections of the bylaws. Moving this standard to the definition of "Home Occupation" in Article VII ensures it is applied consistently across all districts without repetition.

ARTICLE VI. ZONING DISTRICT REGULATIONS

Section 6.01 - 6.08 District Use Standards

~~Allowed Uses: Single-family dwellings, Two-family dwellings, Agriculture, Forestry, Accessory Structures...~~

~~Conditional Uses: Multi-family dwellings, Retail, Professional Offices...~~

Refer to Table 6.1: Land Use Matrix for all permitted and conditional uses by district. All development is subject to the General Regulations in Article IV. ⁷

Explanation: Previously, every district description (Urban Residential, Mixed Use, etc.) included long, repetitive lists of "Allowed" and "Conditional" uses. Replacing these narrative lists with a single "Land Use Matrix" allows applicants to see all requirements on one page and eliminates hundreds of lines of redundant text.

ARTICLE VII. DEFINITIONS

Section 7.01 Use of Terms

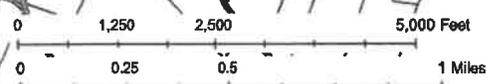
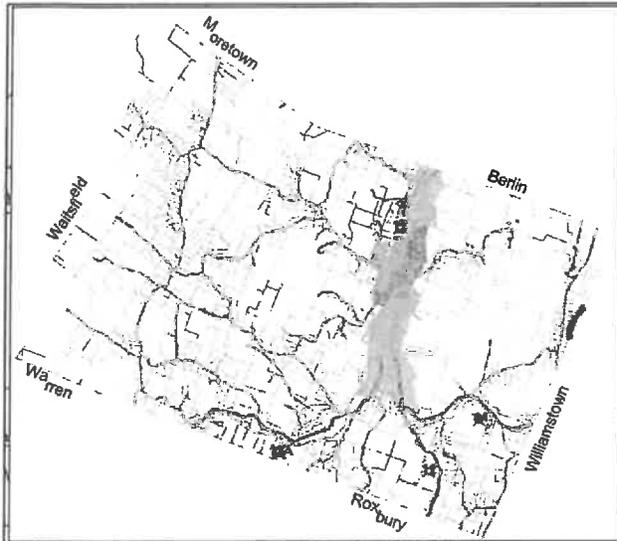
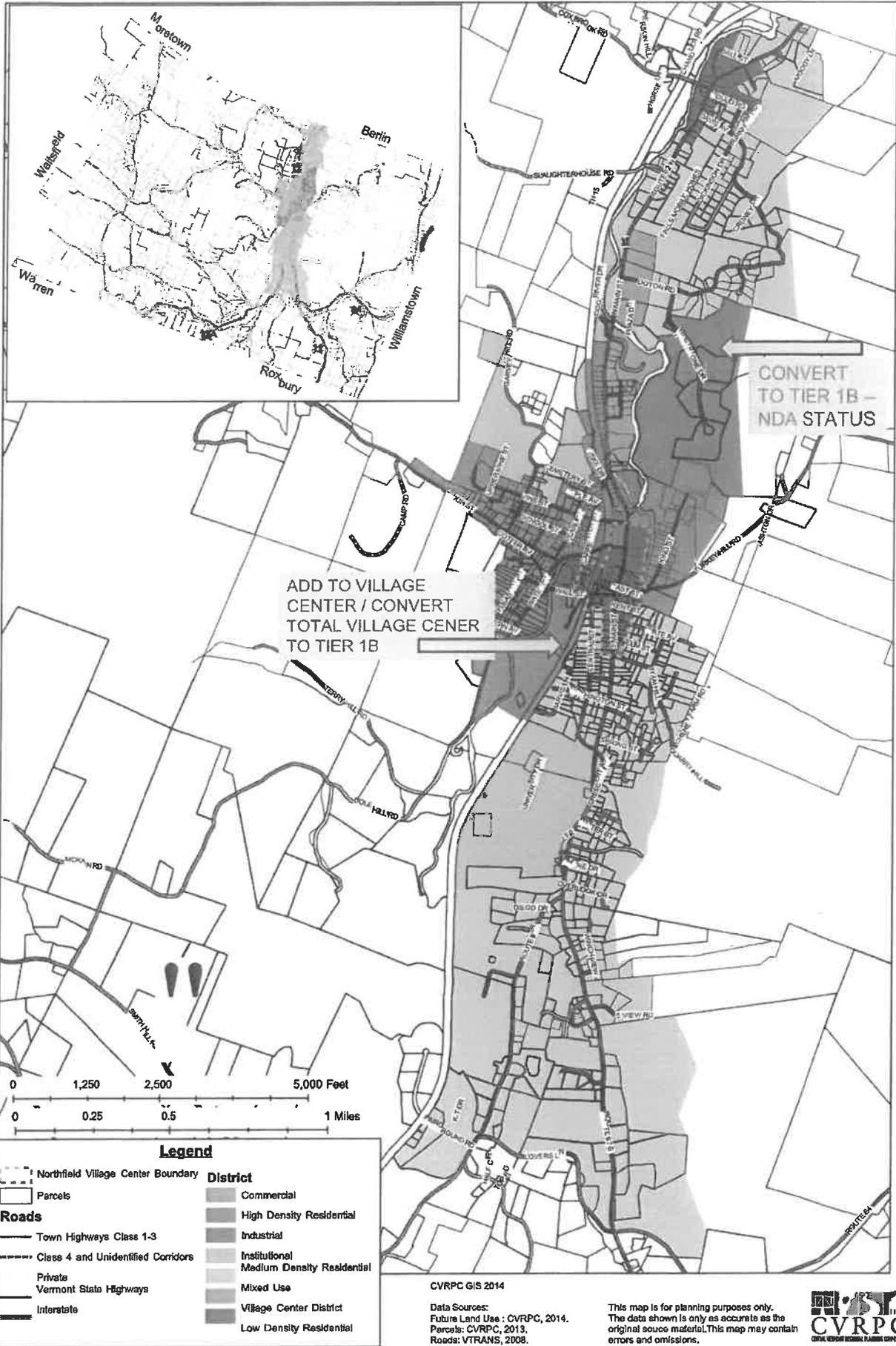
~~Any list of prohibited uses contained in any section of this Regulation shall not be deemed to be an exhaustive list, but has been included for the purpose of clarity and emphasis... Any use not allowed by this regulation shall be deemed to be prohibited.~~ **Any use not specifically listed as "Permitted" or "Conditional" in a district is prohibited.** ¹

Explanation: The bylaws contained redundant "clarity" lists of prohibited uses. Under Vermont law, if a use is not listed as allowed, it is prohibited. Removing these lists prevents legal conflicts and simplifies the document.

Works cited

1. www.northfield-vt.gov, accessed February 3, 2026, https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/bylaws/Bylaws%20and%20Plans%20Approved/Northfield_ProposedRevisions_ZoningBylaw_October_2016.pdf
2. Northfield - Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, accessed February 3, 2026, <https://centralvtplanning.org/towns/northfield/>
3. accessed December 31, 1969, https://www.northfield-vt.gov/files/ugd/13fb68_20eb18201962483c8c71e540d9272ba8.pdf
4. Northfield Business Guide, accessed February 3, 2026, <https://northfieldvtbusinessguide.org/business-guide/>
5. ZONING REGULATIONS, accessed February 3, 2026, [https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/bylaws/Bylaws%20and%20Plans%20Approved/Northfield_Adopted_\(zoning\)Bylaws_March_2010.pdf](https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/bylaws/Bylaws%20and%20Plans%20Approved/Northfield_Adopted_(zoning)Bylaws_March_2010.pdf)
6. Guide to - Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, accessed February 3, 2026, https://centralvtplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/CENTRAL-VT-ADU-Guide.docxFinal3_25_24.pdf
7. Proposed Amendment to the Zoning Regulations of the Town and Village of Northfield, accessed February 3, 2026, https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/bylaws/Bylaws%20and%20Plans%20Approved/Northfield_AmendmentProposed_Bylaw_September_2013.pdf
8. Planning Commission Minutes | Northfield, VT, accessed February 3, 2026, <https://www.northfield-vt.gov/planning-committee-minutes>

Northfield, VT Zoning District Map



Legend

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Northfield Village Center Boundary | District |
| Parcels | Commercial |
| Roads | High Density Residential |
| Town Highways Class 1-3 | Industrial |
| Class 4 and Unidentified Corridors | Institutional |
| Private | Medium Density Residential |
| Vermont State Highways | Mixed Use |
| Interstate | Village Center District |
| | Low Density Residential |

CVRPC GIS 2014

Data Sources:
 Future Land Use : CVRPC, 2014.
 Parcels: CVRPC, 2013.
 Roads: VTRANS, 2008.

This map is for planning purposes only.
 The data shown is only as accurate as the
 original source material. This map may contain
 errors and omissions.

