TOWN OF SUTTON
167 UNDERPASS ROAD
SUTTON, VERMONT 05867
PHONE: 802-467-3377 / FAX: 802-467-1052
e-mail-townclerksutton@gmail.com
Website: Suttonvt.org

Sutton Planning Commission & Development Review Board Meeting
at the SUTTON FIRE DEPARTMENT
November 4, 2026 @ 5:30 pm

Meetings are also held via Zoom. See the Town's web site for the link.

- **Open Meeting:** Rob called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm.
- Members Present: Rob Simms, Adam Bruggeman, Mark Hoffman. Scott Cunningham. And Jamie Crooks.
- Members of the public present: None
- Rob asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2026 meeting. Motion proposed by Jamie, seconded by Scott and approved by all.

New Business

- **Town Survey Results**. Rob reviewed the Town survey results which had been previously emailed to members. Respondents mostly clustered around satisfied / somewhat satisfied / neutral about the town's direction; few extreme positions. On the pace of development, the plurality said it is about right. Housing: almost 50% prioritized starter homes, while ~30% selected none, indicating mixed interest in new housing types. Environmental priorities: ~40% said protecting natural resources is extremely important, ~30% very important, and ~24% somewhat important — conservation is a clear community concern. Local services/businesses: preferences included a general store/post office and farm/local food options, reflecting desire for small-scale, locally-focused amenities. Overall outlook: the survey signal is conservative — "keep on keeping on"; nearly half expect the town to remain unchanged in 10 years.

Town Plan content and approach. The PC members agreed that the existing plan is comprehensive (72 pages) and covers multiple technical topics; group agreed it serves as a strong roadmap Recommended editorial approach: create a concise, measurable strategic front section (cliff notes) and relocate excessive technical/historical detail to an appendix for archival/reference use. Actionable goals should be concise, measurable, and achievable (analogy to IEP goals was used to emphasize measurability). Several statutory and programmatic changes (Act 174, Act 181, Act 250, land use review board) are in flux; the commission will avoid overcommitting on items that may change under new state rules. The following chapter format

will guide the revision (organized around the required municipal plan elements of **24 V.S.A. § 4382):**

1. **Authority & Vision**
2. **Land Use**
3. **Transportation**
4. **Utilities & Community Facilities**
5. **Natural Resources**
6. **Education & Community Facilities**
7. **Intermunicipal Relationships**
8. **Energy**
9. **Housing**
10. **Economic Development**
11. **Flood Resilience / Hazard Mitigation**
12. **Plan Implementation**
13. **Future Land Use Map & Growth Management**
14. **Capital Planning & Municipal Investment**
15. **Appendices, Maps, and Supporting Data**

There was discussion of several specific Chapter content areas: **On education and school facilities** the current reality is that local school operations are dominated by regional decisions (Kingdom East / Kingdom East arrangement noted) and broader consolidation pressures. The school is seen as a community hub, but declining enrollment and regional consolidation pose fiscal and operational constraints. Uncertainty exists about ownership/transfer terms if the regional body ceases using the building (anecdote: purchase-for-$1 arrangement mentioned). Recommendation: acknowledge the school's community role in the plan, but seek updated data and precedent from nearby towns rather than prescribe a firm local-only solution. **On Land Use:** physical and logistical constraints (no interstate on/off ramp, limited road capacity for heavy trucking, surrounding towns with better access) make major industrial/distribution growth unlikely in Sutton. Farming and working lands are expected to remain significant; preservation programs already play a role. Housing demand is mixed: there is interest in starter homes, but a notable share prefer no new housing. The plan should reflect realistic development expectations and prioritize support for small business, home-based business, agriculture, and forestry. **On energy and climate change mitigation**: The 2021 energy amendment (Act 174) added about 20 pages of content; much of the energy section is technical data (e.g., BTU consumption) that could be summarized. The practical focus agreed on: support town-owned facility upgrades (town hall retrofit and solar funded by a $200,000 grant) and promote residential energy efficiency via state programs and awareness (insulation, window improvements). Ambitious numeric targets (e.g., high EV adoption) were considered unrealistic locally; priorities will be education/awareness and maximizing feasible town facility improvements.

- **Plan implementation**: The commission emphasized divide-and-conquer: assign sections to members, produce high-level consolidated drafts, then develop actionable detail. Time pressure: draft needs community input and selectboard review ahead of December; Thanksgiving reduces available time. The group prefers to defer commitments on items that require clarity from state-level rule changes (Act 181, land use reforms housing targets) and focus on achievable, short-term deliverables. Section assignments were agreed and members will prepare draft sections for internal review: the group will consolidate those drafts into a high-level working draft to present for public input. The commission scheduled a planning meeting on November 18th at 4:30 PM (ahead of the Grieves hearing) to review member submissions and advance the draft; plan to meet every other week if needed to meet the December timeline. Members will reference recent town plans (Burke, Newark, Westmore) for structure and language to avoid reinventing the wheel; if a plan section appears satisfactory it may be retained with minor edits.

Timeline: Short term: produce a concise strategic draft by mid-November, solicit community input (open house) after the draft, and present to the selectboard in December.

At the conclusion of the discussion. Adam moved to adjourn the meeting. Rob seconded and all concurred.

Next meeting: Wednesday, November 18, 2026 @ 4:30 pm