

Minutes Rochester Planning Commission
March 3, 2026 - Rochester Town Office and via Teams

Present: Dan McKinley, Sandy Haas, Mary Fratini, Dave Curtis, Julie Martin, Christine Masaba-Meagher, Greg White (Teams), Pat Harvey (Zoning Administrator)

Guests: none

Call to Order: Dan McKinley called meeting to order at 6:31pm

Permit inquiries, if any

Julie Martin recused herself from a discussion about the proposed cell phone tower at 1030 Route 100S. Dan noted that the lawyer hired by the Selectboard and the Planning Commission had raised the question of whether or how subdivision rules might apply to this project because section 1.4-Extent of Regulations included the word “lease”. After a lengthy discussion about the origin, intent, and application of this language in general (vs. just for this project), the board agreed on the following principle: *“If the land is leased for development (as defined by the subdivision bylaws on page 25), then subdivision bylaws may apply.”*

Sandy Haas made a motion authorizing Dan to act on behalf of the Planning Commission while working with the lawyer in this process. Dave Curtis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by the remaining voting members.

Julie Martin rejoined the board.

Sandy said that she had received new information about a previous subdivision inquiry for the Gendron camp at 3425 Brandon Mountain Road. Currently, access to the property is via a woods road crossing the property of a private landowner and also of the Forest Service; the road is only 16.5’ wide vs. the 30’-wide requirement. The applicant had sought and received permission from the USFS to use the road, to begin as of July 30, 2026. The board discussed two different approaches to this subdivision—whether the applicant should request a waiver, or should identify a different deeded right-of-way attached to the subdivided property, even if their current access continued along the existing woods road. Sandy will follow-up with the applicant.

Administrative Officer Report: Building and Zoning Applications

1640 Middle Hollow Road, Ray and Cheryl Harvey – approved an addition to the existing barn/garage.

Approval of minutes - Minutes from February were approved as submitted.

Public Comment -- limited to 3 minutes each - None

Other

Mary recused herself from a discussion about the listing for sale of the Sunshine Valley Berry Farm. Dan noted that there had been several inquiries to the town office about possible future uses for the lot. The parcel is sited across two districts – comm/ag and con/res. He said he directed people to the subdivision and zoning bylaws, as we as the sections on home occupations and businesses. Sandy noted that historically, when the board worked on zoning in the 1980s, that location was seen as a place for potential commercial development as local businesses were looking for places to expand.

Mary rejoined the board.

Adjourn - Meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm.