Town of Panton Chartered 1761

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Planning Commission/Development Review Board

Meeting Minutes
February 12, 2026

Committee Members Present: Jamie Dayton, Chair, Gretchen Bailey, Vice Chair, Logan Roth-Longe, Dennis Mueller
Citizens present: Kathy Kennett; Chuck Kennett; John Viskup; Sharon Ashcraft; Lorraine Kayser; Danelle Birong, Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC); Jolyon Larson, ACRPC; Leslie Cadwell, Panton Attorney
On Zoom: David Martini (left after giving his report), Chris Wyckoff

Development Review Board

Jamie called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

1. Jamie called for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2025 meeting. Logan made the motion, Gretchen seconded. ALL IN FAVOR
2. Jamie called for discussion of the change from meeting every other month on the second Thursday to meet every month on the second Thursday in 2026. There was no discussion. Jamie called for a motion to accept the change. Gretchen made the motion to accept the change to meet monthly, seconded by Dennis. ALL IN FAVOR
3. Public Comment. There were no comments.
4. Zoning Administrator monthly report. David reported that there was no zoning business in the past month and had nothing to add.
5. Other Business. There was no other business to discuss.

Jamie called for a motion to adjourn. Motion to adjourn was made by Dennis at 6:04 p.m., seconded by Logan. ALL IN FAVOR.

Planning Commission

Jamie called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

1. Jamie called for a motion to accept the minutes of the Special meeting of the PC on January 22, 2026. Motion was made to accept the January 22 minutes by Dennis, seconded by Gretchen. ALL IN FAVOR.
2. Jamie called for discussion of the change from meeting every other month on the second Thursday to meet every month on the second Thursday in 2026. There was no discussion. Jamie called for a motion to accept the change. Gretchen made the motion to accept the

change to meet monthly in 2026, seconded by Logan. ALL IN FAVOR

3. The PC then took up discussion of the update to Panton's Enhanced Energy Plan (EEP). Jolyon Larson of Addison County Regional Planning Commission introduced himself and said we are initiating the process of updating the EEP. ACRPC, having received several grants, is assisting several other municipalities to write their EEP. He noted that he brought with him a list of the requirements that must be addressed in the plan. Approval and compliance with the requirements will produce a Certificate of Public Good for the town. Approval means we comply with the State energy policy. Panton, however, has already met State targets for energy. The plan we will write should address targets for the future, e.g., 2030, 2035, 2050. In answer to a question, he said that our current energy plan will remain in force until it expires. The new plan will then be in force. He also brought with him a copy of the suggested outline of the plan, however, he said plans he has reviewed all look different. Elements can be rearranged and need not be in the order outlined. He explained that our draft plan can be approved by either the Public Service Department or by the Regional Planning Commission, provided the RPC's EEP has been approved. When asked if we would be starting from scratch, Jolyon said we could use parts of what we already have and should be identified ahead of time.
   Although he did not bring planning maps with him, he said that in our past plan, Slang Road was prime area for solar development, but moving forward, the town center would become prime locations for solar energy. We will have to revisit Panton maps.
   Logan asked if the EEP is required within the Town Plan. Jolyon explained that a chapter on energy in the Town Plan is important, but the longer, more comprehensive EEP receives substantial deference which is a more restrictive standard.

4. Kyle introduced Leslie Cadwell, the town attorney. She clarified the substantial deference standard. When a town plan is approved as compliant with the requirements, the EEP as well as the entire Town Plan receives substantial deference. This includes land conservation measures and specific policies in the plan. Jolyon raised the issue of Shaftsbury, where the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) approved a large solar project. Cohesion in the plan between energy and land use is important. The energy plan must be connected to how endangered species and their habitats must be protected. Leslie commented that the PUC must see clear and convincing evidence that the state should not override. Wording is extremely important.

5. Questions were welcomed from the audience. In answer to a question from John Viskup, Jolyon confirmed he is from the Regional Planning Commission. Then, John questioned Leslie regarding who she represents and who pays her: the company that wants to put the large solar array in Panton or the Town of Panton. She confirmed that she is paid by and represents the town of Panton. John raised concerns regarding how the land is Panton is being used and who gets to say how that is determined. Jolyon responded saying he is eager to see what we can glean from the survey we are preparing. He offered to provide his email address for those who have more questions about the plan and what we need to see in it. Although Panton has met 2050 targets, these targets are not a maximum, but a suggested target. The State has an energy requirement based on Global Warming guidelines that are distributed amongst municipalities.
   Jamie commented that we need to update our EEP because we are facing new challenges. We need to strengthen our EEP. Jolyon hopes we can also learn from the Supreme Court in the Shaftsbury case. This information will better guide Panton in siting where developments are less invasive in our agricultural, scenic areas.

   Sharon Ashcraft asked where the new maps might be reviewed. Jolyon said they are available but not on our website due to their large size. He will look into how they can be shared. Sharon also raised concerns about the use of nuclear power in Europe and other locations. Jolyon explained that we cannot expressly forbid particular types of energy in a town plan, but we can do our best

to link it to our land use goals. Nuclear is expensive and can be land use intensive, so we can focus on addressing those issues and focus on clean energy. We cannot focus on one type of energy.

Kathy Kennett asked whether the standards have changed from the last time we wrote our plan. If so, is it possible they could change again? Jolyon said that he isn't sure if the standards have changed between 2016 and 2022 when the last comprehensive energy plan was released, but the checklist is different. The Department of Public Service needs to determine what meets the requirements. They need to meet a statewide goal of 90% renewable energy by 2050. Guidance is available on the Department of Public Service website. The State will not be working on another plan until 2028. A plan produced now would be grandfathered in until they expire. Although we are at 170% over 2050 targets, thermal and transportation targets are lagging. We need to make progress on these targets. For example, we need to educate people about ride sharing and other options. There is a group called Energy Navigators that go to homes to help people identify how to upgrade their homes and save money.
Jamie asked about next steps and whether Jolyon can join us next time. Jolyon said he could, and that we need to have a fleshed-out idea of what we want in terms of energy goals. We should be open minded.
Kathy Kennett asked that Jolyon's email be included in the minutes of this meeting or on Panton's website. Jolyon Larson's email is jlarson@acrpc.org.
There was some discussion of whether we can identify the size and scale of an installation in our Town Plan. Jolyon said it was a matter of interpretation, and we would have to be very careful of how this was broached in the plan.

6. Danelle then reviewed the current draft of the survey. She noted the introductory statement and that the demographic questions are at the end. The survey will be launched at town meeting. There was some discussion of whether to have a long list they rank vs. the most important. Sharon said there is a bill in the legislature (S287) that may make questions #5-7 about the bypass null and void. Danelle said that at the time we launch this survey it won't matter. Jolyon asked about whether some of the questions in the community involvement section would cause the survey to not be anonymous. It was noted that the balance between gathering useful data and privacy was being walked, and that access to the raw data would be controlled.

7. Public comments. Sharon Ashcraft said she prefers that we maintain the landscape layout of our last plan, which is more spacious. Danelle said they would do their best to keep it since it is more restrictive.
Jamie called for a motion to approve the survey as distributed, taking the comments made into consideration. The motion to approve the survey in its current state, with comments made during discussion was made by Logan, seconded by Dennis. ALL IN FAVOR.

A motion to adjourn was made by Gretchen, seconded by Logan. Adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Oliver
Assistant Town Clerk