



THE TOWN OF JAMESTOWN
OFFICE OF THE TOWN PLANNER
93 NARRAGANSETT AVENUE
JAMESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND 02835

Phone: (401) 423-7210

Approved as written
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
August 6, 2025
6:30 PM
Jamestown Town Hall
93 Narragansett Ave, Jamestown, RI 02835

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 6:33pm. The following members were present:
Michael Swistak – Chair
Mick Cochran - Secretary
Dana Prestigiacomio
Not present: Bernie Pfeiffer and Nick Insana

Duncan Pendlebury – Vice Chair
Diane Harrison

Also present:

Lisa Bryer, AICP, Town Planner
Carrie Kolb, Planning Assistant
David R. Petrarca, Jr, Esq., Ruggiero, Brochu & Petrarca

II. Citizen's Non-Agenda Item

III. Correspondence – Review, Discussion and/or Action and/or Vote:

1. None

IV. New Business – Review, Discussion and/or Action and/or Vote:

1. None

V. Old Business

1. Comprehensive Community Plan Update & Re-write 2025 – Review, Discussion, and/or Action and/or Vote
 - a. Future Land Use Discussion

Commissioner Swistak thanked everyone for attending the workshop. He said that the Planning Commission has been going through the Comp Plan for a number of months. He invites Lisa Bryer to give a presentation on the 2025 Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) and Future Land Use

Lisa Bryer explained the Planning Commission has been working on update of 2015 Comprehensive Plan, as dictated by state law. This year the Town of Jamestown is working with the consultant Weston and Sampson. The Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations must match the Comprehensive Plan, within 18 months of the Comprehensive Plan being adopted. Bryer explained the Future Land Use Map in the Comprehensive Plan. The map legend is based on density and general uses.

Bryer explained that they are looking further into an area in the commercial limited district because its primarily residential. There are three commercial businesses in that area currently that are intended to remain commercial.

Bryer explained the metrics of the Commercial Limited District:

Total lots = 101	Total acreage = 35
56 single family	14 acres
12 two-family	4 acres
14 commercial	5 acres
Mixed use (comm/res)	11.5 acres
3 vacant	.55 acres (24,000 s.f.)
1 public (library)	1.75 acres
1 park (corner of Pemberton & Narragansett)	

Land available, either vacant or for conversion to commercial = 13.2 acres

Existing Use Around the Library

Total lots = 39
32 single family
1 two family
3 commercial
2 vacant
1 public (library)
Total area = 5.3 acres (not including the library)

Bryer explained the Planning Commissions has discussed the future vision for the commercial limited area around the Jamestown Philomenian Library to change from commercial limited to high density residential.

Bryer detailed the potential changes to the commercial limited area around the library if changed to “high density residential” could potentially be changed into two districts in the Zoning Ordinance later: R-8 with a residential 8,000 s.f. minimum lot size and R-4.5 with a residential 4,500 s.f. minimum lot size. The exception would be for the 3 commercial lots, which would remain commercial CL.

Bryer explained the reasons for changing commercial limited land use to high density residential:

- Primarily existing residential (90% residential today)
- Commercial setback being applied to houses, creating overly large houses with minimal setbacks
- To become more conforming with current land use/Zoning
 - New State Law regarding non-conforming lots
 - Positive local response to address 5,000-8,000 s.f. lots all over the island
- Eliminate the risk of commercial business in the middle of residential neighborhood
 - Would still allow Home-based Businesses up to 500 s.f.

- On-street parking is already an issue in this neighborhood, additional commercial would increase that need
- CL District is 35 acres with 14% existing commercial, 33% mixed – residential/commercial and 38% opportunity for conversion to commercial use
- Tax rate for commercial and residential is the same

Additional Future Land Use Changes

Address	Existing FLU Category	Future FLU Category
2 Broad St	Low Density Residential	OS-Rec Public
115 Melrose Ave	Moderate Density Residential	Mod High Density Residential
20 Elm St	split-CD/CL/R-8	High Density Residential

Commissioner Swistak explains that the Planning Commission has not come to a conclusion. They are seeking public comments and input. He opened the floor for questions.

Peter Fay of 1 Swinburne Street asked who created this concept? Commissioner Swistak said that these ideas have evolved over the monthly meetings. The Planning commission looks where they can make small or large changes. A complaint/concern that they have heard is about size and volume of residential structures. If a dwelling is allowed to be built to commercial setbacks it would allow building almost to the lot line allowing larger homes than in a residential district.

Lisa Panzini of 4 Swinburne asked about proposed setbacks in a created R-4.5 district? Bryer said that they have not been created yet, but she imagines that they would be somewhere between R-8 and CL district. The setbacks would not be significantly different.

Susan Lyn Viera Sheehan owns lot at 29 Douglas Street. She explained that several years ago her parents owned property that were two lots that were combined into one lot. They have future plans to build a 2-family home on the lot for her and her husband on one side and her brother on the other side. The changes would inhibit the ability to build a 2-family home. They asked that this be taken into consideration when making changes.

Steven Viera owns lot at 29 Douglas Street. He explained that their plans are to build a 3,000 sq ft duplex and right now they have the space needed to build a duplex. They do not have the space required for a R-8 due to the size requirement for a duplex in the R-8 district. A variance could be requested. He said that he has concerns about changing to residential designation due to property value.

David Sheehan of 33 Laurel Rd in Exeter is the brother of Susan Sheen. He said that his parents owned two lots that were each 50x100 feet. One was built on and has been demolished. The second buildable lot was combined into one 10,000 sq ft lot. They need 8,000 sq ft. to build a duplex in Commercial Limited. A R-8 would require 12,000 sq ft for a duplex. He said that the value of the land would be diminished a second time.

Karl Cressotti of 32 Douglas Street asked for more information about the hired consultant company? Commissioner Swistak said that Weston and Sampson was hired to help rewrite the

Comp Plan. The consultants were not intimately involved in this change to Future Land Use. This change was done with the Planning Department and Commission. Ashely Sweet is the lead for the project and she grew up in Jamestown.

Christine Cocca, Executive Director of Jamestown Art Center at 18 Valley Street. She asked if the area is switched to residential, how would it impact parking? Bryer said that the Art Center would not be changed from commercial and their current use would not be impacted.

Wendy Cressotti of 32 Douglas Street spoke of her concerns for parking in the area. There have been times when emergency services could not get to someone. Parking is an absolute nightmare. JAC events have lots of street parking. When there is commercial during the day, parking is not a problem at night unless they have events. She has huge water pressure issue at house and water will be an issue soon.

Peter Fay of 1 Swinburne Street said that he is very happy that the Planning Commission is addressing the issue. He said having commercial activity in a residential area is problematic. He said that he is not sure why this area was zoned commercial originally. These problems are not going to go away and now is the time to head this off.

Commissioner Swistak asked Bryer if she knew why the CL zone boundaries were set where they are? Bryer said no because they were set more than 30 years ago. Wendy Cressotti said they were set for the coal company.

Karl Cressotti of 32 Douglas Street said that he has done work on the house since it has been purchased. He talked about a covered front porch being able to encroach a setback by 50%. He sees the commercial districts following the main arteries in town. He said the town lost their dry cleaners, but it doesn't need another gas station. If the town starts removing commercial overlay there will be no place for new business to come.

Heather Lopes of 13 Swinburn Street said that the commercial limited area is the best area for commercial. She wants a middle ground.

Diane Grippi of 82 Narragansett Ave and 9 Fowler Street said that she was against 19 condos on Narragansett Ave. She wants people to think about all the resources that get taken up, especially water, when there is a 6-7 bedroom house next to cottages. She is against overbuilding. She said that we really need a drugstore, not another 10-bedroom house. We need to take care of our island. The charette from 2007 is a long time gone. It's time to re-evaluate the whole downtown area.

Lisa Panzini of 4 Swinburn Street asked how the house on Fowler was able to build up to 35%. Bryer said they did not require any variances but were almost at 35%.

Commissioner Swistak asked about the next steps. Bryer said that the Planning Commission has not made a concrete decision on Future Land Use. The Town Council and Planning Commission will have public hearings on the Comp Plan. The second workshop on September 17. The consultant is in the process of putting the 8 chapters with goals, policies and actions together.

Then the Comp Plan goes up to Statewide Planning for review and then updates. Then there will be another a workshop or two with the updated draft. Then Town Council/Planning Commission will have a public hearing with input and then adoption. Commissioner Swistak asked everyone to stay involved with the process for the next two to three months.

b. Comp Plan Workshop #2 on September 17 at Recreation Center at 5:30pm. Bryer said at the next meeting Weston and Sampon will present the boards and tables for the September 17th meeting. We will have advertising in the Press. We will send emails to everyone in the public engagement plan and everyone who attended and/or registered for the first workshop.

VI. Reports - Review, Discussion and/or Action and/or Vote

1. Planner's Report

a. Future meetings – topics and applications

Bryer let the Commissioners know that the Town Council has created new committees for Fort Getty, Eldred Field and re-invigorated Bike Path Committee. The next meeting is scheduled for August 20, 2025.

VII. Approval of Minutes - Review, Discussion and/or Action and/or Vote

1. July 16, 2025

Commissioner Swistak tabled the minutes from July 16, 2025 meeting until the August 20, 2025 meeting.

VIII. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn at 7:48pm was moved by Commissioner Cochran and seconded by Commissioner Prestigiacomio. All in favor.

Attest:

/s/Carrie Kolb

Carrie Kolb