

Elmore Planning Commission Meeting

Jan 16, 2025

5:30 pm

Link to meeting recording: <https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/bOn1H4grclov19QxOg6610JDo2r98ej3nF3xXuFDohknVJ-1X-Mc0yqHpkFZ2xwU.XBhVSbQIAMzCl6j4?startTime=1737066419000>

Passcode: g2FxAU\$A

Attendance:

- EPC members: Bruce Olsson, Michelle Greeson, Dawn Kress, Glenn Schwartz, Nancy Davis
- Town Citizens: Warren West (Select Board), Marc Mastrangelo (LCPC), Meghan Rodiet (LCPC)

Conflict of interest: None

Minutes approved from late month: Glenn motions to approve the meeting minutes from December. Nancy seconds and all members vote to approve minutes.

Agenda additions: Bruce would like to discuss a grant opportunity for planning commissions

Agenda Items:

- **Issue:** Initial Review of Town Plan Chapter 4
 - **Discussion:** General discussion of chapter 4
 - **Action items:**
 - Next month the EPC will review the Health and Wellness Amendment.
 - Meghan will send the chapter to the EPC
 - After Meghan sends Chapter 4 with all the proposed edits it will be posted in the meeting minutes
- **Issue:** Review of Town Plan Chapter 1 -3 edits
 - **Discussion:** Current draft copies remain as is
 - **Action items:** Next month Dawn would like to work on some of the flow in these chapters.
- **Issue:** Grants
 - **Discussion:** There is a prospective grant available to towns to help with updating town plans. Meghan said that there is no additional cost for the LCPC to help us with the Town Plan so we will not need to apply for the current grant.
 - **Action Items:** None

Attachments:

Meeting Adjourned: Bruce motions to adjourn at 7:38 pm, Glenn seconds the motion, and all EPC members agree.

Next meeting: Feb 20, 2025

CHAPTER 4: Utility and Facility Plan

Public Buildings and Public Facilities

Overview

Approximately ~~1,831 one thousand six hundred and ten~~ acres of Elmore are public lands. Figure 3 below shows existing public land in Elmore including the lake, state park, state forest and municipal lands. Additional semi-public facilities in town include the Elmore Church site, situated on 1.2 acres of land used to hold community gatherings. (See Map 6 for the location of community facilities, services and public land in Elmore.)

Lake Elmore School and Schoolyard	.25 acres
Town Clerk office building	.25 acres
Town Hall	.25 acres
Fire department building	3.1 acres
<u>Town garage</u>	<u>18 acres</u>
Cemetery lands	<u>3.5 acres</u>
State park and forest	<u>1,806604.14</u> acres

Figure 3: Public lands by acreage in Elmore.

Commented [MM18]: Additional 102

Commented [MM19]: Add town garage 18 acres

Hospitals

The area is served by Copley Hospital in Morrisville, VT, [University of Vermont Medical Center](#), ~~Fletcher Allen Health Care~~ in Burlington, VT, Central Vermont Medical Center in Berlin, VT and the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center located in Lebanon, NH.

Libraries

The Morristown Centennial Library serves the area. The Stowe ~~Free~~ Library also serves the residents of Elmore with an annual \$20 usage fee for access to all library resources.

Water Supply and Wastewater Treatment

The Town of Elmore reconstructed its public drinking water system in 2014. The system now ~~has 18 subscribers and services residences, the Elmore School, Store, Town Office, and Town Hall.~~ The springhouse that supplies this water cooperative must comply with the State of Vermont Water Resources Department regulations. Currently, Elmore has only limited public drinking water supply and no central wastewater treatment facility. The existing Town water system has limited expansion capacity.

Commented [MR20]: This still true?

Most ~~Many~~ of Elmore's rural residential homes are served by private water systems supplied by shallow springs and wells. Some of these are gravity-fed systems that can be located on a neighbor's property or some distance from the homes they serve. These types of springs can be adversely affected by nearby development that can pose a threat to water supply by

the construction of new wells or water potability, by the installation of septic systems. All new construction will conform to state regulations in relation to water sources and water supply matters.

Sewage Disposal

Elmore has no central wastewater treatment facility. Sewage is treated in individual on-site septic systems. State regulations govern new and replacement systems ~~(i.e., perk tests and septic designs)~~. With the changes implemented in 2007, all wastewater permitting responsibilities shifted to the state level, eliminating the need for local septic permits unless towns voted to take over the permitting process.

Refuse Disposal

Refuse disposal is handled on an individual basis by residents who either make private arrangements or transport their own trash and recyclable products to a local small transfer station ~~(Morrisville and Stowe offer local stations)~~. Elmore is a voting member of the Lamoille Regional Solid Waste Management District and complies with district rules and regulations. Burning of trash is prohibited in Elmore. It is the district's policy to try to avoid burying ~~refuse~~ in the ground by recycling and composting as much as possible.

State and federal laws govern the disposal of hazardous waste. Salvage yards and the open storage of junk and vehicles are is regulated locally through zoning.

Public Safety

Fire Protection

Elmore has a volunteer fire department, which was formed in 1983. The Elmore Fire Department operates from a station located ~~adjacent to the town's garage, located on Beach Road~~. Elmore is a participant of the Lamoille County Mutual Aid Network for dealing with large fires. Elmore and Wolcott have a special arrangement whereby both departments respond to each other's fire calls.

The Fire Department provides the following services listed below.

- Fire suppression
- Search and rescue
- Water rescue
- Hazardous Materials (Haz Mat) protection
- Emergency management
- Fire prevention
- Education
- Auto extrication
- Vermont rural fire protection
- Carbon monoxide alarm investigations
- Home inspections for fire insurance companies
- Residential Dry-hydrant testing
- Permitting for brush burning

Police Protection

Police protection as well as 911 emergency dispatch is supplied by the Vermont State Police Department whereas traffic enforcement is provided by the Lamoille County Sheriff's Department. As a result of the Town's reliance on state police (Williston barracks), Elmore residents face longer response times (1-2 hours) to local crimes.

Emergency Rescue

The Morristown Rescue Squad responds to most Elmore medical emergencies. Lamoille Rescue Squad is available as a backup service. Additionally, the Vermont State Police Search and Rescue Team and the Elmore Fire Department respond to reports of missing hikers. During the winter months, the Stowe Hazardous Terrain Team responds to emergencies dealing with hazardous terrain. Elmore has a Fast Squad of one person.

- Commented [MM21]: look into FAST squad
- Commented [MM22R21]: It looks like FAST squad is in Hyde Park
- Commented [MM23]: Look to see if they exist
- Commented [MM24R23]: Lamoille Ambulance Service?

Emergency Shelters

The Fire Station and Town Garage serve as emergency shelters for catastrophic events. Elmore planning and preparedness efforts include monitoring of emergency shelter(s) for basic sleeping supplies, and food and water. For more information view the Elmore Local Hazard Mitigation Plan at: <https://elmorevt.org/>.

Commented [MM25]: The PC Listed many specific services it can provide, do we have a list of these? I think another sentence going into specifics will help round this out

Water Safety

The Vermont State Police and the Elmore Fire Department respond to boating accidents. ~~There are currently no public boats maintained locally for water rescue.~~ The Elmore Fire Department has a water rescue boat.

Recreation Facilities

Overview

Lake Elmore and the Elmore State Park Forest offers the most visible recreation opportunities to residents and visitors. Traditionally, Elmore's private lands have provided opportunities to snowmobile, ski, hike and hunt. ~~See below for a list and brief description of public and private recreation lands in Elmore.~~

Public Lands

Elmore State Park/~~Lake Elmore~~: Started in 1936 Elmore State Park including Lake Elmore is located at the north end of Lake Elmore and covers an area of 940,700 acres. Elmore State Park amenities include picnic and beach areas, hiking trails, a firetower, 45 campsites, 15 lean-tos, full restrooms and pay showers. There is a daily fee to access the State Park.

Putnam State Forest: Putnam State Forest is open for low-impact public recreation. No mechanized transportation is allowed, except for snow machines on designated VAST trails. Low-impact camping is allowed when obtaining prior permission from the Barre District Office of Vermont State Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. Currently, there is no fee for use.

Draft Elmore Town Plan

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Forest Legacy Parcel: The Atlas/Forest Legacy Parcel (Wagner Woodlands Timber property) located in between Elmore State Park and Putnam State Forest, is open for low- impact public recreation. No mechanized means of transportation are allowed, except for snow machines on designated VAST trails. Residents and visitors may access the Forest Legacy parcel for free.

Commented [MM26]: Potential land donation

Commented [MM27R26]: Not sure where to find this information

- Fishing Access: The Vermont State Department of Fish and Wildlife maintains boat and fishing access on Lake Elmore. These amenities are open to the public free of charge.
- Town-Owned Recreation Land: Several town-owned properties also provide recreational opportunities for Elmore residents. These include the schoolyard ~~and Stanley Merriam Park~~, open to the public after school hours, for sports activities, playground use and other low impact recreation purposes.

Private Lands

Privately owned recreation land including the Catamount Trail Association and the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers depend on the use of private property to provide hiking, snowmobile, snowshoe and cross-country ski trails. Additionally, hunters, fishermen and trappers, have traditionally relied on the generosity of private landowners for the recreational use of those lands. Land owner permission required.

~~Additional measures to protect landowners are enforced through the Vermont Recreation Use Statute, Title 12, part 9, section 203. Title 12 states that when a land owner makes their land available for public use without consideration for recreational uses, this statement shall not be misinterpreted to 1) limit property owner rights, 2) limit the ability of a land owner and recreation user to enter into an agreement for recreational uses, 3) support any claim of eminent domain, 4) create any duty of an owner to inspect their land for dangerous conditions, and 5) relieve any users from their obligation to exercise proper safety while participating in recreational activities.~~

Communication Facilities

Overview

Elmore would like to continue to improve expand the communications network to provide the entire town with adequate cellular and high-speed internet coverage. However, the town does have concerns over the adverse impacts of expanding the network. When expanding the communication network, both public and private utility companies should follow the policies and standards within this plan.

Communication Towers

Elmore supports the enhancement of a telecommunication network when such facilities do not have significant adverse environmental, health or aesthetic impacts since one of the town's principal scenic qualities is its ridgelines and mountainsides. ~~Elmore ridges are predominately undeveloped and provide an unbroken skyline when viewed from the valley floor and the use of the town's ridges for telecommunication towers and related facilities needs to be undertaken in a manner that will not detract nor adversely affect these scenic values.~~ To minimize conflict with scenic values, facility design and construction shall employ the following principles listed below. The siting of communication towers is regulated under Section 248 by the Public Utility Commission (PUC). For more information visit the PUC's website at: <https://puc.vermont.gov/>.

- Encourage communication tower applicants to exhaust all reasonable options for sharing space on existing towers and tower sites prior to proposing new sites and related facilities. Taking into consideration space available on existing towers, geographic service area requirements, mechanical or electrical incompatibilities, comparative costs of co-location and new construction.
- Where feasible, site towers/facilities in areas not highly visible to the traveling public, or from residential properties, historic district, public use, and outdoor recreation areas, including hiking trails and beaches.
- ~~Locate towers/facilities in forested areas or sufficiently landscape to screen the lower sections of towers and related ground fixtures from public vantage points, such as trails, roads or water bodies.~~
- Utilize materials, architectural styles, color schemes, lighting fixtures, mass and other design elements to promote aesthetic compatibility with surrounding uses and to avoid adverse visual impacts.
- Where prominent views of a site exist, locate towers downgrade of the ridge so they don't exceed the elevation of the immediate ridge.
- When constructions of access roads are involved, minimize their visibility by situating roads along the natural contour of the land, and avoid open fields or meadows.
- Avoid peaks and ridges that function as regional focal points.
- The height of towers should not exceed that of the tree canopy in forested areas.
- No access roads (this does not include logging roads) suitable for vehicle traffic should be constructed on the Worcester Range above 1,250 feet in elevation.
- Avoid using external lights if possible and comply with local light ordinances.
- Towers, antennas, and related fixtures that fall into disuse, or are discontinued are to be removed by the facility owner immediately. The owner may be required to post bond for removal.

Facility/Service Priorities and Funding Opportunities

Water Supply and Waste Water Treatment

~~Currently, Elmore has only limited public drinking water supply and no central wastewater treatment facility.~~

~~This puts tremendous pressure on private residents and businesses to maintain individual septic systems and seek outside sources for drinking water supply. Rising numbers of individual septic systems increases the risk of both surface and groundwater pollution in the central village area and along Lake Elmore. Additionally, economic growth is limited by the lack of municipal water and sewer infrastructure. To minimize water pollution, the town of Elmore should consider water and sewer updates for lake front developments as well as existing homes. Implementing municipal water systems and waste treatment facilities can be a costly procedure. However, there are funding opportunities available to construct and update these systems.~~

Funding opportunities for water and waste disposal systems are available through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Development Program and the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). The Rural Development program offers a wide range of utility grants and loans to assist rural communities in financing utility and infrastructure improvements. The DEC offers Public Water System Construction Loans to both municipalities and nonprofit water cooperatives. For more information on these funding opportunities visit www.rurdev.usda.gov and www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/.

Additionally, for towns in the preliminary stages of water and sewer updates, DEC offers a Planning Advance for decentralized wastewater feasibility studies. For more information on this funding opportunity please contact Don Robisky at 802-654-8991.

Another strategy for financing water and sewage treatment systems is developing a Tax Increment Financing district (TIF). TIF districts are typically designated by a municipality to target areas in need of economic growth or public infrastructure improvements. Initial improvements are commonly financed through federal or state bonds, grants and loans. Financial debt acquired during the construction and implementation process is repaid by property tax revenue generated from the targeted infrastructure or facility improvement. Examples of towns in Vermont that have successfully implemented TIF districts to fund water and sewer expansions include Milton, Newport City and Winooski. To learn more about existing TIF districts in Vermont visit the Vermont Legislature's 2011-2012 Legislative Reports listing online at <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/reports/allreports.cfm?Type=Other&Session=2012>.

Recreation and Community Facilities

Given the nature of Elmore's rural character it is important to maintain and protect the town's valuable recreational resources. To assist in developing new or updating existing recreation and community facilities funding assistance is available through the Department of Buildings and General Services (DBGS) and the USDA's Rural Development Program.

DBGS offers a Recreational Facilities Grant Program to financially assist municipalities and non-profit organizations in developing recreation opportunities in Vermont communities. The USDA Community Facilities Grant Program provides a wider range of assistance to rural areas, by awarding grants to municipalities, counties and nonprofit organizations engaged in constructing, expanding or improving essential community facilities. To learn more about recreation and community facility funding opportunities visit www.bgs.vermont.gov/ and www.rurdev.usda.gov/.

Goals, Objectives, Policies and Recommendations

Goals:

- To [provide ensure](#) adequate public facilities and services are available to protect and enhance the lives of residents and visitors of Elmore.

Objectives:

- Maximize the present use [and accessibility](#) of public and semi-public buildings, facilities, and lands.

- ~~— Ensure personal water supplies are safe and of adequate quantity.~~
- Preserve public health and prevent pollution of surface or groundwater.
- ~~Encourage~~ ~~Ensure~~ Elmore businesses and residents can responsibly dispose of solid waste and are incentivized to reduce the amount of waste generated by increasing recycling efforts.
- ~~Decrease police response times to increase security of Elmore residents~~
- ~~Research the potential of developing public access mountain bike trails and/or dirt bike trails that would connect into neighboring trail networks to promote tourism and further interest in maintaining Elmore's forest land.~~
- Control the spread of invasive species ~~in Elmore, in the lake.~~
- To support the enhancement of a telecommunication network when such facilities do not have significant adverse environmental, health or aesthetic impacts.
- Eliminate septic waste from entering Lake Elmore

Policies:

- ~~— Any new water supply must meet state water supply rules including isolation distances.~~
- ~~— Ensure that State regulations for wastewater disposal are followed. Conventional septic fields are not permitted on slopes greater than 20%.~~
- Provide access for adequate removal of solid waste.
- ~~— Backyard burning of trash is prohibited.~~
- ~~— The town supports the public safety activities of the Elmore Fire Department.~~
- ~~Comply with all State and Town regulations.~~
- All development should be accessible to emergency vehicles.
- Large developments, and developments in remote locations, should include fire ponds and dry hydrants to aid in fire fighting, if similar resources are not available nearby.
- Elmore supports local land owners who generously keep their lands open to traditional recreational uses such as hiking, hunting, fishing, horseback riding and for VAST trails use.
- To minimize tower proliferation when feasible,
- In planning for telecommunication facilities, consideration shall be given to the environmental limitations of any given site. Impacts resulting from the use of wildlife habitats, forestry, agricultural lands, and similar resources should be carefully addressed. Projects that materially impact these resources shall be discouraged.
- ~~— Towers, antennas, and related fixtures that fall into disuse, or are discontinued shall be removed by the facility owner to retain the values set forth above. The owner may be required to post bond for removal.~~

Recommendations:

- ~~Continue to Develop~~ a maintenance a plan and capital budget to preserve public property and equipment.
- ~~Develop a multi-year capital budget.~~
- ~~Develop a multi year or 5 year capital budget plan~~
- ~~— Zoning and subdivision regulations should require the identification of existing and proposed water supply locations to ensure water quality is protected.~~
- Evaluate how the introduction of new "alternative" wastewater treatment systems may impact future land use and development patterns in Elmore.

~~Consider having a decentralized wastewater feasibility study conducted for Lake Elmore and Elmore Village properties.~~

- ~~— Consider options to improve water rescues including budgeting for the purchase of a rescue boat, portable defibrillator or other life saving equipment to aid the Elmore Fire Department in rescue operations on Lake Elmore.~~
- Monitor ~~Discuss~~ the need for increased local police protection.
- ~~— Review alternatives to create a legal right of way to provide access to Little Elmore, if one does not exist.~~
- Meet annually with the Lake Elmore Association for sharing information and to address concerns if they arise.
- Support the Lake Elmore Association to control the spread of invasive species including Eurasian Milfoil.
- Continue to seek grants to maintain ~~Explore potential free or~~ discounted access to the Lake Elmore beach for Town residents.
- ~~— Talk with relevant property owners and the Department of Fish and Wildlife to consider requesting that the State renew its former lease to allow fishing access on Little Elmore.~~
- ~~— Research the potential of developing public mountain and dirt bike trails around Elmore that would tie into neighboring trail networks promoting the preservation of the forests and generate income for the town.~~