

Pomfret Planning Commission Meeting

2/8/2026

Approved 4/21/26

Present: Bill Emmons, John Moore, Doug Tuthill, Tyler Wellington
Nelson Lamson, Cy Benoit

Absent: Jack Pearsons

Guests:

Call To Order/Agenda Changes/Public Comment

Bill Emmons Chair called the meeting to order at 7:08pm.

The commission reviewed floodplain maps, noting significant inaccuracies in the areas marked for flooding, particularly around Doug's residence where no flooding occurred during Irene despite the maps showing affected areas.

Garage Permit and Tier Designations

The Planning Commission discussed the status of a 24x26 standalone garage permit for Eric Morgan, which Tyler confirmed was signed and left on Becky's desk. The Commission received an update that Two Rivers has not yet provided information on Tier 1A, 1B, 2, or 3 areas, though they are still gathering data. Kevin from TROP RC would not be attending Wednesday's meeting, with Kyle Katz taking his place to discuss potential 1B status designation in the South Pomfret area. The Commission previously submitted comments to Peter Gregory regarding the Two Rivers Regional Plan, requesting that South Pomfret remain unchanged and all

Tier 2 lands be designated as Rural General, with conservation status for the Appalachian Trail corridor.

Pomfret Growth Area Designation Concerns

The discussion focused on the potential designation of an area in Pomfret as a Tier 1B growth area. Tyler explained that while the area meets some criteria, it does not fully comply with all requirements due to issues with water and wastewater infrastructure, septic suitability, and congestion. He expressed concerns that the town plan may be being altered without proper consideration of these factors. John and Tyler agreed that the area was designated as a potential growth area in the past to get the town plan approved, but it still cannot support significant growth..

Pomfret 1B Area Designation Discussion

The group discussed the potential designation of a 1B area in Pomfret, which would allow for housing developments of up to 50 units without Act 250 permitting. They expressed concerns about the process, noting that the town's Select Board would need to request the 1B area designation. The discussion touched on the potential for eminent domain if the area remained undeveloped, as well as the practicality of complete streets infrastructure in a rural setting. The group agreed to attend an upcoming presentation on the topic, with John expressing doubt that the Select Board would approve any changes without consulting the relevant stakeholders and the Planning Commission.

Two Rivers Regional Plan Challenges

The discussion focused on concerns about Two Rivers' regional plan, particularly regarding driveway and road length restrictions in forested areas. John expressed frustration that the plan's requirements, such as a 300-foot forest edge buffer and Act 250 triggers for roads over 800 feet, are based on arbitrary and unreliable data. Tyler and John agreed that these regulations, which could impact both conservation and developed land, need to be challenged with state legislators, though John questioned why

Two Rivers' plan includes mandatory "shall" language rather than permissive "should" language found in other regional plans.

Land Use Regulation Challenges

The meeting focused on discussing land use regulations and the challenges of building houses in specific areas due to road and conservation restrictions. It was discussed the limitations imposed by the town's ordinance, particularly regarding the use of existing logging roads for residential purposes. They agreed that the current regulations were unfair and should be challenged. John mentioned writing a letter to Peter Gregory in October from the Planning Commission but received no response. Tyler suggested pushing harder and potentially meeting with Kevin or Peter to address these issues. The conversation also touched on the potential impact of building houses on agricultural land, with concerns raised about preserving farmland for future generations.

Challenges in Land Development Planning

Tyler discussed the challenges of land development in the area, highlighting issues such as steep terrain, limited choice spots, and the need for long roads to access potential house sites. He expressed concerns about the state's plan to build 30,000 houses by 2030, noting that this goal hasn't considered long-term problems like traffic, water quality, and water supply. Tyler also criticized the state's approach to affordable housing, pointing out that the current strategy is not working and is being funded by taxpayers. He emphasized the need for better planning and financial consideration in housing development.

Advocating for Land Use Reform

John and Tyler discussed concerns about a map created by Two Rivers that will be approved by the Land Use Review Board, potentially affecting land use regulations in Pomfret. They expressed frustration with state-level legislation that they believe unfairly regulates agriculture and restricts property rights. Tyler suggested contacting key legislators and committee members, including Joe Major, Allison Clarkson, and Janet Early, to

address these issues in the upcoming legislative session. John agreed to follow up with these contacts to advocate for changes to the current land use policies.

Act 250 Mapping Concerns

The group discussed Act 250 Tier 3 rulemaking and mapping, with John sharing contact information for Alex Weinhagen who leads the project. They expressed concerns about the Two Rivers regional planning commission's approach to mapping in Pomfret, particularly regarding South Pomfret Village area classification. The discussion concluded with John raising questions about the floodplain mapping in the area and its implications for development, while also discussing Woodstock's water and sewer infrastructure improvements.

The Pomfret Planning Commission met to discuss updates to the town plan and address feedback from Two Rivers Regional Planning Commission regarding land use mapping and zoning regulations.

The main focus was on strengthening language regarding the town's 2-acre zoning requirements while acknowledging TRORC proposed 5-acre density zoning in Rural Ag and Forest. It was also discussed that our Draft Town Plan has all "Rural General" and we need to acknowledge that the TRORC regional Plan has a Rural Conservation area that we are not in agreement. The commission discussed concerns about the accuracy and validity of the ANR mapping data being used by Two Rivers and the state, with several members expressing skepticism about the maps' reliability. T

The group also reviewed specific feedback items from Two Rivers, including transportation planning and implementation timelines, deciding that many recommendations were not feasible for Pomfret's rural nature. The commission agreed to hold their next meeting on April 20th to continue working on Draft Town Plan edits and to notify local landowners about upcoming Two Rivers regional planning meetings where they could voice concerns about their property mapping

Meeting adjourned at 8:25pm

Respectfully submitted

John Moore, Clerk.