



## Rural Municipality of West River Planning Board Committee Minutes

<b>Meeting No</b>	2025-22	<b>Time</b>	6:00 PM
<b>Session</b>	Regular - Public	<b>Date</b>	Thursday, September 11, 2025
<b>Chair</b>	Helen Smith-MacPhail - Mayor	<b>Location</b>	Afton Community Centre
<b>Adoption status</b>	Approved	<b>Contact Person</b>	Susan Morse - CAO
<b>Attendance</b>	Mayor Helen Smith-MacPhail, Deputy Mayor Shaun MacArthur, Councillor Daniel Sud, Councillor John Yeo, Councillor Lillian MacCannell, Councillor Steve Pollard, Susan Morse - CAO, Ehi Itua - Administrative Assistant		
<b>Regret</b>	Councillor Aaron MacEachern		
<b>Guest</b>	Nil		

- **Call to Order**

Mayor Helen Smith-MacPhail called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. She also reminded attendees of public participation etiquette.

- **Adoption & Approval of Agenda**

The CAO requested to add the following item to the agenda

- Delegation - Karen and Barry MacKinnon

The CAO also noted an omission from the Agenda and requested to add

- In Camera 7.1. PLB.25.22.7 – Pursuant to the Municipal Government Act Section 119(1)g

The agenda was approved as circulated, including any added and moved items. It was moved by Deputy Mayor Shaun MacArthur, seconded by Councillor John Yeo and unanimously carried.

- **Declarations of Conflict of Interest**

Nil

- **Delegation**

- Karen and Barry MacKinnon appeared before the committee to discuss their property at Cribbage Lane, Cumberland. They initially believed their lot was subdivided based on a past survey but later discovered it was not legally subdivided. When they submitted a subdivision application, it was denied due to non-compliance with minimum lot size requirements in the Land Use Bylaw. The CAO explained that despite the survey, the lot must be approved and registered by a planning authority (at the time it was the Province) to be considered legally subdivided. Municipal staff had offered options: accept the denial or apply for a variance, however a variance cannot be granted solely for lot size issues. Mayor Smith-MacPhail expressed empathy but reiterated that the committee must follow the bylaw and cannot approve the subdivision.

Councillor Lillian MacCannell joined the meeting.

- **Recommended Items**

- **PLB.25.22.1 – Rezoning Request PID# 1111137**

**Decision Type:** Action

**Status:** Deferred

**Background:**

[PLB.25.21.6](#)—An application was received to rezone PID # 1111137, located at Black Creek Road, Nine Mile Creek. The application was submitted concurrently with a subdivision application for seven lots on the subject parcel. The applicant applied to rezone his property from Rural Area (RA) to Rural Residential (RR) zone so that he could eventually be allowed to subdivide the parcel into seven lots for residential development. The proposed residential developments have 5 lots accessed by their own Subdivision Road. Two lots have proposed access from Black Creek Road.

**Description:**

The applicant made a presentation to the Committee on the proposed development. Following the presentation the applicant asked what standards the Municipality would require for the proposed subdivision road. Mayor Helen Smith-MacPhail explained that the bylaw requires roads servicing a subdivision to be built to the provincial standard of a public road. The Committee advised the applicant to seek further clarification and confirmation directly from the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure regarding the standards it would require to accept and maintain the proposed road. The applicant requested the Committee defer the rezoning request until he has received more information from Department of Transportation regarding the road standards.

- **PLB.25.22.2 – Rezoning Request PID# 492074**

**Decision Type:** Information

**Status:** Received

**Background:**

An application was received to rezone PID # 492074, located at Long Creek Road, New Dominion. The applicant applied to rezone his property from Rural Area (RA) to Rural Residential (RR) zone so that he could eventually be allowed to subdivide the subject parcel for residential development.

**Description:**

This application is informational at this stage. The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure reviewed the proposal and denied the proposed road access. Without approval of road access, the rezoning could not proceed under the current proposal. The applicant has been notified and is exploring alternative access options. The applicant will be invited to present to the Committee if a new access option is confirmed and approved by DTI.

- **PLB.25.22.3 – Land Use Bylaw Amendments – Update**

**Decision Type:** Action

**Status:** Recommended

**Background:**

[PLB.25.21.4](#)

**Description:**

The CAO provided the Committee with an update on progress toward amendments to the Land Use Bylaw. A Planner has been retained to work with the municipality on the amendment process and the CAO had a preliminary meeting to discuss the desired amendments including:

- Subdivision Survey Requirements
- Section 7 of the Land Use Bylaw – Limiting Number of Units per Lot: Exploring ways to prevent overly dense developments inconsistent with zoning intent.
- Accessory Structure regulations
- Secondary Suites/Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
- Height Limits
- Housekeeping Items

The planner will begin to prepare draft amendments for Planning Board's review.

Mayor Helen Smith-MacPhail suggested introducing zoning subcategories, such as, Rural Residential 1 = single-family; RR2 = duplex; RR3 = triplex; RR4 = multi-unit. This would make density limits transparent and allow developers to easily identify what is permitted on a given property. The Committee supported the concept, noting it would reduce misunderstandings and allow higher-density projects in appropriate areas. The Committee emphasized the need to balance development opportunities with the municipality's rural character and infrastructure capacity.

▪ **PLB.2025.22.4 – Bylaw Development – Update**

**Decision Type:** Action

**Status:** Recommended

**Background:**

[CW.25.21.5](#)

**Description:**

The CAO updated the Committee on progress towards developing new bylaws to address Noise, Nuisance, Dangerous Properties and Animal Control. The CAO has reviewed bylaws of other municipalities to identify best practices

The Committee identified unsightly/dangerous properties as the most expensive and complex to enforce but also among the most necessary for community well-being.

- **Information Items**

- **PLB.25.22.5– Permit Report**

**Decision Type:** Information

**Status:** Received

**Description:**

The Committee received a report on permits issued in [June](#), [July](#) and [August](#) of 2025.

- **PLB.25.22.6– Enforcement Report**

**Decision Type:** Information

**Status:** Received

**Description:**

The Committee received a report of Enforcement Activities in June, July and August 2025.

- **Questions from the Audience and Public Input**

- Mayor Helen Smith-MacPhail invited audience members to ask questions.
  - Councillor John Yeo requested an update on a previous request to reduce the posted speed limit to 70 km/h on West River Road. He also mentioned that during the roadside trimming and maintenance, the No parking signs at Mutter Park and Legacy Park has been removed and not replaced.

The Committee directed the CAO to contact the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure and request a replacement of the No parking sign at Mutter Park and Legacy Park and request a reduction of the speed limit along West River Road to 70 km/h. It was moved by Councillor John Yeo, seconded by Councillor Steve Pollard and unanimously carried.

- A member of the public asked a jurisdictional question about applications submitted to the Province before the Municipality adopted its Official Plan and Land Use Bylaw in 2023. She asked whether jurisdiction had been clarified, Province vs. Municipality and whether the subject matter was resolved through IRAC. Mayor Helen Smith-MacPhail replied that Council was not aware of an IRAC appeal and understood most provincial applications had been closed when jurisdiction transferred to the Municipality in 2023. The CAO explained that some subdivision applications caught in the transition period created confusion, but communication from the Province had indicated that new jurisdiction rests with West River. The Committee acknowledged uncertainty and agreed to investigate further.
- Another member of the public asked a question on the status of an ongoing rezoning application and expressed concern about the increasing number of rezoning requests coming before Council so soon after the adoption of the 2023 Official Plan. She highlighted issues of: rezonings lead to higher-density development in rural areas, priorities such as farmland preservation and protection of forested land are not reflected in rezonings and cautioned that some proposals may be motivated more by developer profit than community need.

Mayor Helen Smith-MacPhail replied that the application in question will be discussed at the next Council meeting. She further explained that rezoning decisions are based on consistency with the Official Plan and Land Use Bylaw, not on the applicant motives. The Official Plan is the umbrella guiding document, and density or land-use protections must be applied through its framework. Mayor Helen Smith-MacPhail acknowledged the concerns and noted that Official Plan and Land Use Bylaw amendments could consider density and zoning clarifications to strengthen long-term decision-making.

- **Meeting Closed**

At 7:20 PM Councillor John Yeo motioned for the meeting to be closed. It was seconded by Councillor Steve Pollard and unanimously carried.

- **In Camera Item**

- **PLB.25.22.7** – Pursuant to the Municipal Government Act Section 119 (1)g

- **Meeting Opened**

At 7:49 PM Deputy Mayor Shaun MacArthur, motioned for the meeting to be opened. It was seconded by Councillor Steve Pollard and unanimously carried.

- **Adjournment**

- Deputy Mayor Shaun MacArthur to adjourn the meeting at 7:49 PM.

Helen Smith-MacPhail

Susan Morse

Mayor \_\_\_\_\_

Chief Administrative Officer \_\_\_\_\_