TOWN OF ORWELL
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD
DRAFT MINUTES - July 15, 2026

Date and time: July 15, 2026, called to order at 7:01 pm (the Chair stated the time on the record).

Location / platform: Orwell Town Clerk's Office, hybrid meeting, in person and by Zoom (Zoom ID 885 9743 9199).

Members present: Dan Redondo, Chair (in person); Joe Andriano, Secretary (in person); Cian Quinn (by Zoom); Robert "Bob" Almeida (by Zoom). The Chair stated that four members constituted a quorum, that the Board's membership is six, and that the quorum requirement is four.

Members absent: Gary Murdock and David Burtch

Staff present: None.

Other participants: Justin Hall, applicant on Permit #3-4-26 (in person).

Public present, not participating: None noted.

1. CALL TO ORDER

- Called to order at 7:01 pm by Chair Redondo. The Chair confirmed on the record that the meeting was being recorded. The Chair stated that the agenda would be adjusted to take the board leadership positions under New Business first, before any applications, and proceeded to roll call

2. NEW BUSINESS TAKEN OUT OF ORDER: BOARD LEADERSHIP POSITIONS - VICE CHAIR AND SECRETARY

- The Chair described the two open positions and their duties.
- Motion to nominate Joe Andriano as Secretary (moved by Quinn, seconded by Almeida). Opened for discussion; no discussion offered. Voice vote; carried.
- Motion to nominate Cian Quinn as Vice Chair (moved by Almeida, seconded by Andriano). Opened for discussion. Quinn stated that other work commitments are the reason he usually attends by Zoom and asked whether in-person attendance would be required; the Chair stated that the Vice Chair is not obligated to attend in person, that the Chair expects to be present at nearly all meetings, and that he would give advance notice of any absence. Quinn agreed to serve. Voice vote; carried
- Recommendation of an additional member to the Selectboard: The Chair stated his intent to expand the Board from six to seven members and that a name must be recommended to the Selectboard. The Chair stated that he has spoken with Lynn Gallagher, a longtime Orwell resident who has expressed interest. Motion to send a nomination of Lynn Gallagher to the Selectboard for its approval (moved by Redondo, seconded by Andriano). Voice vote; carried.

3. APPROVAL OF PRIOR MINUTES

- The Chair stated that the agenda item as warned, approval of the May 20, 2026 DRB minutes, was inaccurate because there was no May meeting for lack of a quorum and the June meeting agenda was not issued in time, and that the item should be the minutes of the April 15, 2026 meeting. Motion to approve the minutes of the April 15, 2026 DRB meeting (moved by Quinn, seconded by Andriano). No corrections or amendments were offered on the recording. Voice vote; carried.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

- The Chair asked whether anyone was present with a matter not on the agenda or not an application before the Board. No public comment was offered.

5. OLD BUSINESS

5.1 APPLICATION: David Martin - Permit #8-44-25 - 2 lot subdivision

- The Chair described the application as a boundary subdivision with the house on it, and stated that the applicant is still waiting on the survey and is not ready to proceed. No hearing was opened and no one appeared on the application. No motion was made. The Chair stated that the Board would table the matter and continue it to the next meeting, and that no new warning would be required because the application is ongoing. The date, time, and place of the continued proceeding were not stated on the record.

5.2 APPLICATION: Justin Hall / Hall & Breen Farm, LLC - Permit #3-4-26 - 2 lot subdivision, final plat review (warned)

- Justin Hall appeared in person. The Chair stated that the property is on Stage Road, that at the last meeting at which the Board had a quorum it determined the application to be a minor subdivision, and that the Board could therefore move to final plat review. The applicant submitted a completed final plat review application form, which the Board reviewed item by item. The Board confirmed that the applicant had provided the names and addresses of adjoining and facing property owners, a location map drawn to scale, a final site plan at scale, and a complete boundary survey by a licensed surveyor showing lot lines, monumentation, true north, and scale. The Chair stated that no adjoining town lies within 500 feet, and that the final statement of compliance with the town plan and the regulations could restate the regulatory language, which the Board accepted as stated. On item 7, the water supply and wastewater permit, the Chair stated that because the land is agricultural the permit need not be in hand, but that state language regarding the future owners' obligation to seek a wastewater permit must be included as a condition of the final plat and carried onto the final deed documents. At Almeida's request the split was described: the house and barns, running from the northern pasture line south, remain one lot of approximately 20 acres, and the fields, open areas, and the barn across the road become a second parcel of approximately 52 acres more or less.
- The Chair referred the Board to section 8.5(c), under which an application is deemed complete at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the DRB after recipt, which was this meeting,, and stated that the Board would deem the application complete at this meeting and hold the final plat hearing at the next meeting.
- Motion to waive items 8 through 17 of the final plat review application form (moved by Andriano, seconded by Quinn). Voice vote; carried.
- Motion to accept the application as a completed final plat (moved by Quinn, seconded by Almeida). Voice vote; carried.

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.1 APPLICATION: Margaret Toth - 422 Mt. Independence Rd., Orwell - Permit #05-19-26 (change of use, camp to residence) and Permit #05-20-26 (variance, relief from side setbacks)

- The applicant did not appear. The Chair stated that by rule the Board cannot proceed with review of an application without the applicant present, and that no one was waiting to be admitted to the Zoom session. The Chair confirmed that the members had received a copy of the application and described the matter as a house on Mount Independence Road with a request for a variance for relief from side setbacks and a request for a change of use from camp to residence, then described the usual procedure, in which the applicant presents the project and the Board asks questions. Almeida asked whether the applicant was aware the meeting was tonight and whether a Zoom connection may have failed; the Chair stated his understanding was that the applicant intended to attend in person, and that the applicant had come to the office the previous week to ask whether the meeting would be held. The Chair stated the time as 7:23 pm and that this was ample time for the applicant to have appeared.

6.2 Discussion on ways to speed up minor subdivision permits

- This warned agenda item was not taken up as a separate item on the recording, and no motion or vote was taken. During the Hall final plat review, the Chair stated that he considers section 8.5(c) to be an obstacle and that the Board should speed the process up if it can, and Almeida observed that the provision delays applications.

OTHER BUSINESS

- None.

7. ADJOURNMENT

- Motion to adjourn the Development Review Board meeting (moved by Quinn, seconded by *[not stated in recording - confirm; the Secretary's worksheet records the second by Bob Almeida]*). Voice vote; carried. The Chair stated the time as 7:23 pm immediately before entertaining the motion, and called the Planning Commission to order at 7:24 pm. An adjournment time was not separately stated on the record *[not stated in recording - confirm; the Secretary's worksheet records 7:24 pm]*.

Respectfully submitted,

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Joseph I. Andriano, Secretary, Orwell Development Review Board

Minutes drafted July 15, 2026. Posted as draft on July 20, 2026. Approved as submitted / as amended on ____________.

TOWN OF ORWELL
PLANNING COMMISSION
DRAFT MINUTES - July 15, 2026

Date and time: July 15, 2026, called to order at 7:24 pm (the Chair stated the time on the record), immediately following the Development Review Board meeting.

Location / platform: Orwell Town Clerk's Office, hybrid meeting, in person and by Zoom (Zoom ID 885 9743 9199).

Members present: Dan Redondo, Chair (in person); Joe Andriano, Secretary (in person); Cian Quinn (by Zoom); Robert "Bob" Almeida (by Zoom).

Members absent: Gary Murdock and David Burtch.

Staff present: None.

Public present: None.

1. CALL TO ORDER

- Called to order at 7:24 pm by Chair Redondo. The Chair stated that the Commission would take roll call, then the board leadership positions, then return to approval of the minutes and follow the rest of the agenda.

2. BOARD LEADERSHIP POSITIONS - VICE CHAIR AND SECRETARY (taken out of order)

- Motion to nominate Joe Andriano as Secretary of the Planning Commission (moved by Quinn, seconded by Almeida). Voice vote; carried.
- Motion to nominate Cian Quinn as Vice Chair (moved by Andriano, seconded by Almeida). Discussion invited; none offered. Voice vote; carried.

3. APPROVAL OF PRIOR MINUTES

- Motion to approve the minutes of the April 15, 2026 Planning Commission meeting (moved by Quinn, seconded by Andriano. No discussion, edits, or revisions were offered. Voice vote; carried. Individual votes not recorded; no roll call was taken. *[Vote tally not stated in recording - confirm.*

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

- The Chair asked whether anyone was present from the public. No public comment was offered.

5. AGENDA ITEMS

5.1 Old Business - Act 181

- Discussion: The Chair stated that this item has been a standing placeholder, that the underlying act has since been modified and is no longer an issue, and that the item can be removed from the agenda for the next meeting.

5.2 Recommendation of an additional member to the Selectboard (taken up during New Business)

- Discussion: The Chair stated that the Commission needed to take a vote to recommend adding Lynn Gallagher as a member in order to reach a seven-member board.
- Public comment: None.

- Motion and disposition: Motion to recommend the addition of Lynn Gallagher as a board member (moved by Quinn, seconded by Andriano). Discussion invited; none offered. Voice vote; carried.

5.3 Portal discussion - demo and next steps

- Discussion: The Chair stated that the goal is to make the application process digital so that applicants can work from an online checklist, which the town does not currently have, and that Andriano has been developing a portal system. The live demonstration was not given because several members were participating by Zoom; Andriano summarized the prototype instead. Andriano described the prototype as covering three application types coded so far, zoning permits, subdivisions, and appeals, built from the town's own regulations, with each deadline and decision path linked to the regulations. He stated that the design keeps a person in the loop rather than automating decisions, giving the example of an expired zoning permit clock that is surfaced for a decision rather than acted on automatically; that the system performs rule lookups, such as routing a minor subdivision past preliminary plat review; that permissions are role-based so that only the chair, the town clerk, or the zoning administrator can take the steps assigned to each by the regulations; and that records cannot be altered after entry, with an exportable audit trail of who did what.
- On concerns he anticipated, Andriano stated that applicants are not required to be online because the town clerk login can enter applications submitted on paper, and that a public terminal in the clerk's office is possible; that no money would change hands through the system, so filing fees would still be paid at the clerk's office by check, cash, or mail; and that a login would be required because applications contain phone numbers, addresses, and other personal information that should not be exposed to automated crawling, while the public records remain available at the clerk's office. He stated that other improvements would be needed before any adoption.
- On cost, Andriano stated that the server cost to the town would be about $10 per month. He disclosed that while he intends to sell the software to other towns if it is successful, he regards Orwell as a test bed. Therefore, he would be willing to supply a software license with administration of the system and updates for free while he was DRB secretary and for a period of two years after that. Under any licensing arrangement the system would run on the town's own server and the town would own its data.
- Andriano stated that his request was not for action at this meeting, but that members log in over the next month, try the prototype, and bring questions and feedback to the next meeting, that the link would be sent around again, that no special login is needed and the prototype can be reset with one click, and that each screen has a feedback button that reports the page the user was on. The Chair stated support for an applicant management view that tracks progress, outstanding applicant items, and open board questions, noted the difficulty of reviewing applications during Zoom meetings, and stated that each member having a login would remove the need for the Chair to scan and email applications. The Chair also stated that he would like a notification to be sent to all members by email immediately upon submission; Andriano stated that this can be coded.
- Public comment: None.
- Motion and disposition: No motion made; no vote taken. The Commission's stated next steps are member review over the coming month, further discussion at the next meeting, and eventual presentation to the Selectboard for its decision on adoption.

5.4 Rewrite of the Land Use Regulations - goals, objectives, and schedule for presenting revisions to the Selectboard

- Discussion: The Chair introduced the topic, stating that the regulations serve both the town and applicants, that language should be more concise, that some waiver standards rest on subjective criteria such as aesthetics and town character, that the process steps could be improved, that the regulations were last written in 2012, and that the Commission should take up the work over the coming year, including identifying provisions needing improvement, developing goals and objectives consistent with the town plan, establishing a schedule for presenting revisions, and considering whether emerging land uses such as data centers need to be addressed.
- Andriano stated that he has spent the past six months reviewing the regulations, that the document is difficult for a lay reader, that it should open with a plain-language decision tree addressing what permit or approval a person needs and what district they are in, and that he has drafted a proposed table of contents consolidating permits and approvals into a single chapter. He further stated that in his review he identified provisions he believes are out of compliance with current law. He described two paths, first bringing the regulations into compliance, which he said should move more quickly, and second making the document usable by a person without a lawyer, and cited the Town of Benson's regulations as an example of a simpler document while stating that he sees issues with them as well. The Chair stated that the work is realistically a winter task and that his growing season leaves no time for it now. The Chair invited questions and comments; none were offered.
- Public comment: None.
- Motion and disposition: No motion made; no vote taken. No goals or objectives were adopted or accepted as a working draft, and no schedule for presenting revisions to the Selectboard was established.

6. ADJOURNMENT

- Motion to adjourn (moved by Quinn, seconded by Almeida). Voice vote; carried. The time of adjournment was 7:46 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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Joseph I. Andriano, Secretary, Orwell Planning Commission

Minutes drafted July 15, 2026. Posted as draft on ____________. Approved as submitted / as amended on ____________.