

PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC)
Minutes of the Virtual Zoom Meeting Held on Thursday, December 11, 2025, at 5:30 P.M.

Commission Members Present

Doug Albertson	Alternate Commissioner	Belchertown
Alvin Allen	Alternate Commissioner	Southwick
Bruce Coldham	Commissioner	Amherst
Bruce Colton	Commissioner	Longmeadow
Robert Daley	Alternate Commissioner	Chester
William Dwyer	Commissioner	Hadley
Douglas Finn	Commissioner	Hatfield
Peri Hall	Alternate Commissioner	Goshen
Jack Jemsek	Alternate Commissioner	Amherst
George Kingston	Alternate Commissioner	East Longmeadow
Kate Kruckemeyer	Commissioner	Holyoke
Robert Lucier	Commissioner	Palmer
Jack Luttrell	Commissioner	Wilbraham
Rosemary Morin	Commissioner	Springfield
Tracy Plantier	Alternate Commissioner	Wilbraham
Stephen Thor Johnson	Commissioner	Southampton
Robert Szklarz	Commissioner	South Hadley
Jessica Thornton	Commissioner	Southwick
James Whalen	Alternate Commissioner	Holland

PVPC Staff Present

Kimberly H. Robinson, Executive Director
Ken Comia, Director of Land Use and Environment
Patty Gambarini, Chief Environment Planner
Geoffrey Klafeta, Transportation Planner
Indrani Kowlessar, Director of Human Resources and Administrative Services
Catherine Ratté, Deputy Director
Gary Roux, Director of Transportation Planning
Deanna Young, Administrative Services Coordinator

Guests

Corrin Meise-Munns, Land Use Planning Manager, Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Communities Not Represented at the December 11, 2025, Commission Meeting

Agawam	Huntington	Thorndike
Blandford	Ludlow	Wales
Chesterfield	Middlefield	Westfield
Chicopee	Monson	Williamsburg
Cummington	Northampton	Worthington
Easthampton	Pelham	
Granby	Plainfield	

1. Chairman's Call to Order, Welcome, and Approval of the Minutes of the Commission Meetings Held on June 12, 2025, and October 9, 2025

The December 11, 2025, virtual Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by William Dwyer. Indrani Kowlessar took roll call and noted there was a quorum.

MOVED BY PERI HALL, SECONDED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 12, 2025, COMMISSION MEETING WITH THE FOLLOWING AMENDMENT PROPOSED BY BRUCE COLDHAM: CORRECTION OF BRUCE COLDHAM'S POSITION IN THE MINUTES AS "ALTERNATE" TO "COMMISSIONER". THE MOTION CARRIED WITH ONE ABSTENTION FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

MOVED BY JAMES WHALEN, SECONDED BY ROSEMARY MORIN, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 9, 2025, COMMISSION MEETING WITH THE FOLLOWING AMENDMENT PROPOSED BY DOUG ALBERTSON: CORRECT THE MEETING LOCATION FROM "VIRTUAL/ZOOM" TO "IN PERSON" . THE MOTION CARRIED WITH TWO ABSTENTIONS FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

2. Introduction of New Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) Employees

Gary Roux introduced Geoffrey Klafeta as a staff member who has been with the department for six months. A former intern from March 2022 – May 2023, Mr. Klafeta graduated from Westfield State University, went on to work for the Town of West Springfield, and returned to work for the PVPC earlier this year.

3. Presentation on the Massachusetts Integrated Land Use Strategy by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Corrin Meise-Munns presented the Massachusetts Integrated Land Use Strategy (MILUS). MILUS is a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to land use planning that aligns development and conservation goals across agencies. These agencies include but are not limited to the EEA, Housing and Livable Communities (HLC), the Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED), and Department of Energy Resources (DOER). Examples of existing key objectives include building 222,000 new housing units by 2030 (HLC), conserving 30% of land by 2030 (and 40% by 2050)(EEA, DCR, DCS), and deploying 50 gigawatts (GW) of clean energy by 2050. The strategy involves creating a static map and an interactive GIS tool to guide policy, funding, and permitting decisions, with a focus on balancing housing, clean energy, conservation, and economic development. MILUS is not a regulatory body, but provides incentives and guidance to agencies, municipalities, and developers. The project began in spring, 2025, and is expected to be completed by Labor Day, 2026.

James Whalen noted that Connecticut's land-use planning law, particularly regarding housing, has changed. Mr. Whalen advised caution when referencing Connecticut's mapping example, emphasizing the importance of municipal collaboration and local control in the Massachusetts strategy. Ms. Meise-Munns acknowledged that it is essential to monitor how Connecticut's map is used, particularly given changing laws. Ms. Meise-Munns emphasized that MILUS aims to foster collaboration rather than impose top-down decisions, and municipal input is a priority in the process.

Mr. Whalen asked whether the planned GIS tool for MILUS would incorporate existing biodiversity data layers. Ms. Meise-Munns explained that the technical work group is still deciding which data layers are essential. There is a balance between including enough information and keeping the tool user-friendly. Biodiversity overlays may be included, but possibly as aggregated layers rather than raw source data. The final decision is still under discussion.

Mr. Whalen asked whether the MILUS tool was intended to follow new legislation as it is enacted, or if it was primarily a response to existing laws, citing recent changes such as ADU legislation. Ms. Meise-Munns responded that MILUS is

both reactive and adaptive. It responds to current legislation but is not directly tied to future laws. The tool is aspirational, intended to show how targets, such as housing units, can be met, but it does not prescribe specific outcomes for parcels or override local zoning. Future legislative integration depends on administrative buy-in and project success.

Doug Albertson commented on the challenge of integrating multiple, sometimes conflicting, state goals, such as housing, clean energy, and biodiversity, and expressed hope that MILUS will eventually have regulatory authority, as some issues cannot be fully addressed by a town-by-town approach and require regional coordination. Ms. Meise-Munns agreed that future regulatory authority will depend on administrative decisions and the success of the initial phase. Currently, MILUS is used to screen grant applications and ensure consistent decisions, but any future regulatory “teeth” would require further buy-in from the administration.

Douglas Finn expressed concern about the potential clash between preserving open space, agricultural land, and natural areas versus the need for housing and renewable energy development, and that poorer, rural towns might be compelled to host energy facilities (such as batteries, solar farms, or windmills) due to land values and state priorities. He noted the financial strain on towns with large areas of conserved land and emphasized that fiscal viability for towns should be considered at the state level. Ms. Meise-Munns confirmed that regional equity is a key consideration. MILUS involves RPAs with both rural and urban jurisdictions to ensure diverse perspectives. Fiscal impacts on towns with extensive conserved areas are being studied, with consultants developing methodologies to assess financial incentives and potential land use outcomes. Ms. Meise-Munns confirmed that both grid and infrastructure capacities are being integrated into the planning tool’s analysis to ensure realistic planning. Mr. Finn lastly asked if grid capacity would be in consideration, to which Ms. Meise-Munns confirmed infrastructure capacity would be included.

4. Schedules of the Commission and Executive Committee Meeting Dates for 2026

Kimberly H. Robinson provided an overview of the scheduled dates for both the full Commission and the Executive Committee meetings for the upcoming year. The next meeting is scheduled for February 12, 2026. During the February meeting, the fiscal year 2027 budget will be introduced, and local assessments will be certified. Additionally, Wayfinders and the Donahue Institute at UMass Amherst will present an update on their housing report. This report builds on previous work and is expected to be a high-quality presentation.

The October 8, 2026 Commission meeting will be held in person, following the success of the previous in-person meeting. The first three meetings of the year and the December 10, 2026, meeting will be conducted over Zoom. There was a question about the meaning of “Zoom/Large Conference Room” in the meeting schedule. It was clarified that this notation is used to preserve the option of either virtual or in-person meetings. For the coming year, most meetings will be virtual except for the October meeting, which will be in person.

5. Executive Director’s Highlights and Updates

Ms. Robinson noted that the October 2025 meeting, which had 100 participants, was considered very successful. Presentations from that meeting have been converted into a story map, which will be available on the PVPC website.

The Quantum Training Academy graduated 40 first-year students from Discovery High School and several students from Springfield Technical Community College. The program has now been integrated into STCC’s curriculum as the Bridge to Quantum program. UMass Amherst will evaluate the program, and the results will be shared with MasTech Collaborative and the PVPC.

Applications for direct local technical assistance are due on December 18, 2025. Three communities have been awarded \$850,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds for infrastructure, with announcements scheduled for Berkshire County.

Two retirements were announced: Catherine Ratté, who has been with the PVPC for 28 years, will retire but continue part-time on specific projects. Shirley Stephens, who worked as the Senior Housing Coordinator in Community Development for nine years, is also retiring, and a celebration is planned for the week of December 15.

Recruitment is underway for a senior planner, and a posting for a community development director will be made soon. A new deputy director for Land Use and Environment will start in January 2026.

On December 12, 2025, the PVPC will host a legislative briefing focused on combined sewer overflow, with managers from Holyoke, Springfield, and Chicopee presenting to the legislative delegation. This is the first in a series of regular legislative briefings planned by the PVPC.

6. Community Reports/Updates from the PVPC Commission Members

There were no updates from the Commission members.

7. Other Business

There being no further business to conduct, a motion was called for to adjourn the meeting.

MOVED BY JAMES WHALEN, SECONDED BY DOUGLAS FINN, TO ADJOURN THE DECEMBER 11, 2025, COMMISSION MEETING. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED WITHOUT OBJECTION AT 6:40 P.M.

8. Action Items

- Ms. Meise-Munns and Ms. Robinson are to distribute the Massachusetts Integrated Land Use Strategy by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Presentation to the Commissioners and Alternates.

Respectfully Submitted,

Doug Albertson, Secretary/Clerk
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

List of Documents and Other Items Distributed at This Meeting

1. December 11, 2025 Commission Meeting Agenda
2. June 12, 2025 Commission Meeting Minutes
3. October 9, 2025 Commission Meeting Minutes
4. 2026 Commission and Executive Committee Meeting Schedules