

Town of Jay Comprehensive Plan Special Board
March 16, 2026 27th Meeting Minutes

Present: Wally Walters (Chair), Tim Rowland, Olivia Dwyer (Town Councilor), Matt Gillman, Robin Licari

Via Go-To-Meeting: Adam DeSantis, Ann Ruzow-Holland, Scott Allen (AES-Northeast)

Advanced Material: Agenda, Demographics of Essex County and Jay Mar 2026, Exec Summary Attracting New Residents to the Adirondacks NFC Feb 202, Wally's Draft "Tier 1" Recommendations 12 Mar 2026

To Skim: NYT Article Airbnb A Crisis in the Alps 4 Mar 2026, NYT Article Wyoming New Gilded Age 3 Mar 2026, Attracting New Residents to the Adirondacks NFC Feb 2021

Other references: APA Spotlight Presentation Slides v10 13 Mar 2026 (near final version), Jay Community Profile v3.0 Final 03 09 2026-For Formatting, Focal Topics List as of 13 Mar 2025, Town of Jay Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan Outline v4 10_07_2025, WW note to CPSB re major issues for disc 13 Feb 2026, WW note to CPSB re project list for disc 13 Feb 2026

1. Meeting called to order at 6:32 PM

- Minutes from February deferred due to computer problems

2. Updates: (Wally)

- *Community Spotlight Brief* ready to present to Adirondack Park Agency Board

-- 10-11am Thu 19 Mar 2026: <https://tinyurl.com/APAMar2026Thu>

-- goals of land delineation and updating planning regs

-- follow-up meetings with APA planning & technical staffs Thu 26 Mar (Wally & Matt G); Scott Allen also to participate for mapping

-- work will extend beyond the comprehensive plan update

- *Wilmington interest in conducting comprehensive plan update* (Wally)

-- 20 Feb brief of insights to informal group led by Hanna Cromie

-- 12 participants, 2 hour-session; not sure if Wilmington will undertake formal grant application or comprehensive plan this year; open invitation to all CPSB members to engage with Wilmington representatives at their discretion

- *AVCSD Superintendent brief to Town Board* 12 Mar 2026 (Wally/Olivia)

-- elementary school to remain open next year but 6th graders will go to AVCS middle school

-- enrollment declining for the district over last four years to under 1036; substantial budget shortfall of about \$1.5 million; looking toward referendum for budget plus-up through super-majority; also closing Clintonville office

-- forthcoming studies to be concluded soon: Special Education Study, Comprehensive Facility Study concluding

-- community concerns about the importance of the elementary school, elimination of jobs, turmoil and education suffering from teacher:student ratios; fiscal stability may not imply educational success

-- discussion: state funding mechanism for the district distorted, coded as a "more affluent community" due to by rising Jay property values (from second-home and STR demand); district also hit hard by rising utility costs; ancillary sports facilities are costly but well used and cutbacks are impacting; other districts have challenges too (Bloomington just announced closure of elementary school) (Matt G); shall we do more to address these issues in the comp plan update as impact for young families? (Wally); impact of 28 children attending out of district schools (e.g., Keene) and others attending parochial schools; challenges of commuting ("2000 miles of bus driving per day"... "45 minutes commute each way") (Olivia/Matt G); quality of school & reputation favors Keene (e.g., locally sourced food program, metrics; geography too) (Adam); Jay is less unified than Keene due to lack of central school in town (Olivia); lot of poor communities included in Ausable Valley School District (Matt G); Are we doing enough to address poverty in the comp plan? (Robin); Challenge of addressing exterior/regional effects within comp plan update as town level document (Matt G)

- *Jay Community Profile v 3.0* at AES for formatting (Ann)

-- amazing amount of information, content focused (Wally)

-- NYS town law focused on constraining comp plans to land use and never been historical place for human/social services in the documents; can address income disparities but not required to do so, and done more so far than other plans (Ann)

-- incorporating emerging and regional issues such as schools can be helpful in identifying how they will land use and as context; there will be somethings outside the control of the town but mentioning these subjects can help move the regional issues (Ann)

-- now have all the working group inputs on 'what we've learned' and focus shifts to recommendations; looking for working group inputs on findings & recommendations to include 'how' to implement; (e.g., some towns have wealth but without philanthropy; may have value to create investment group or roundtable); need innovative ways to identify how to raise capital beyond grants from the state through business and wealth interests (Ann)

3. Alternative Jay Futures: Money and People (Wally):

- Demographics in Essex County and Jay; Community is being changed by influx of new money and by aging of population in town, county and the region

-- county declined by about 8% over past ten years after long period of growth

-- towns which will prosper best will be those who can attract youth and young families

-- NYT examples of town distorted by STRs and wealth resulting in loss of worker population, community culture and public services; need for balance in managed growth to find ways to have room for affordable housing; affected by many issues such as Main Street, recreation, jobs; Keene example of getting overwhelmed by wealth and lawyers

-- Northern Forest Center 2021 study looked at this problem (Northern Forest Center Study, "Attracting New Residents: A Strategy for the Adirondack Park and its Communities" Feb 2021)

- example of Bethlehem NH doing a good job deliberately attracting youth; possible concern that town would not find alarmism over this credible (Ann)
- importance of creating opportunity for remote work, exemplified by recent meeting of 30 remote workers in Jay (Robin, Tim)
- are Jay's gender ratios (only 45% women) an issue? (Tim); not sure, but age cohorts also an issue; census data also lacks insight on those not claiming residency (Ann)
- also need to insure we address affordable senior housing and senior living arrangements, possibly opening up affordable housing for others (Robin)
- need for all sorts of housing but developers require economies of scale; have to identify parcels of land of sufficient size with water and wastewater infrastructure to be attractive for development; also have to attentive to issues of 'low-income' housing as a hard sell to community (Ann); reduced rate housing, not low-income (Robin); to get market rate housing rather than section 8 housing, have to be economically attractive to developers (Ann); has to find ways to recoup costs, possibly reclassify STRs (Tim)
- if property prices continue to rise, people with young kids will not move into town and could face 'death spiral' in schools (Matt G/Tim)

4. Comprehensive Plan Update Findings & Recommendations:

- Before next meeting, looking for recommendations from each working group lead
- not restricted to making recommendations specific to working group subjects
- are wealthy people using Main Street buildings as tax deductions, as a barrier to renovation? (Robin); depends on the building (Adam)
 - a lot of structural and other deficiencies of Main Street buildings (e.g., Aubuchon building); maybe tear downs (Matt G)
 - town addressing with lots of preparatory work to apply for NY Forward grant, potentially \$5 million; Adam D work on grant for Moriah; certainly a major issue (Wally)
- there is potential for "compelling narrative" for NY Forward application (Adam)
- should put seed in plan re possibility of STRs being reclassified (Ann); Matt Stanley preparing to start an STR committee; Assessor can't readily create distinctions due to state rules (Wally)
- "Tier 1" memo an example effort to encourage working group recommendations; need work to develop "Tier 2" and "Tier 3" recommendations too; ideally by 10 April; goal to reassess progress at April meeting, especially to put together implementation; will help us estimate how fast we can get to completion of draft for public; no specific format or length for working group memos; then we can address roll-out (Wally)
- importance of putting 'pet projects' in; please also try to think about the 'how'; in some cases the 'how' will make the difference (Ann); 'out of the box' ideas OK (Wally)
- please also provide inputs for community project lists (Wally)

5. Updates from Working Group Chairs: Deferred due to time

6. Comments and Open Discussion:

- Importance of grants and employment; remote work is good opportunity (Scott)
- upcoming Economic Development meeting (Adam)
- Lands cleanup on Sat 25 April; two-day workshop for Recreational Economy for Rural Areas Sep 25-26; looking for some individuals with recreational experience (Olivia)

- food pantry use has expanded; have lot of ideas but need help with 'how' such as for senior housing (Robin)
- upcoming meeting with APA staff on 26 Mar; will shape/define what we can do in land use; will need to look for grants ASAP to support (Matt G); probably will be applying for CFA grant this summer but can proceed with work (Wally)
- Fri 5 Jun town celebration of mural and visitor center (Wally)

7. Next meetings

- Mon 20 Apr 2026, 6:30-8 pm
- Mon 18 May 2026, 6:30-8 pm

8. The meeting adjourned at 8:01 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Wally Walters, Board Chair

A video recording of the session with transcript assisted in preparation of these notes

[\[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8NOIoEtWHE\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8NOIoEtWHE)