

Town of Weld
Public Information Session
Town Hall
6PM, Wednesday, January 7, 2026

Draft Commercial Site-Plan Review Ordinance
New Fire Station Project
Multi-Rec Space Project

Tonight's Agenda:

- Update, Public Comment, and Q/A for
 - ***Draft Commercial Site Plan Review Ordinance***
 - ***New Fire Station Project***
 - ***Multi-Rec Space Project***
- Adjournment

Commercial Site Plan Review Ordinance Update

Background

- Born of citizen requests in 2024 for Town to regulate solar farms and large commercial structures
- Moratorium on solar farms and commercial structures approved by Town (March 9, 2024) and re-approved and extended twice since; effective until March 15, 2026
- Since then, two Selectboards, the Ordinance Committee, and numerous others have contributed towards the current draft
- Public Survey held in 2025, followed by a Public Information Session and Q/A held August 19, 2025

Commercial Site Plan Review Ordinance Update

Summary of Ordinance

- **Purpose and Scope:** To require site plan approval (by Planning Board) for commercial projects (including solar farms) and multi-family residences (such as apartments)
- **Exclusions:** Ordinance does **NOT** apply to:
 - Residences with less than 5 dwelling units
 - Agricultural activities
 - Lumbering
 - Small commercial activities operated out of a residence (e.g., eggs, syrup, produce etc.)
 - Residential solar panels
 - Home occupations

Commercial Site Plan Review Ordinance Update

Summary of Ordinance (continued)

- **Approval Criteria:** see Section 5.0
 - Includes a community impact assessment of excessive lighting, noise, noxious odors and blocking of scenic view
- **Large Commercial Structures:** particularly large commercial structures must be out of sight from town property through the use of natural barriers or terrain that are at least 300 feet from residences
 - **“Large Commercial Structures”** are those with:
 - structures exceeding 6,000 square feet
 - site exceeding 20,000 square feet
 - occupied structures exceeding 50 feet in height
 - un-occupied structures exceeding 75 feet in height
 - **Exclusion:** Large Commercial Structures do not include structures already in Town.

Commercial Site Plan Review Ordinance

What has Changed since Last Public Information Session?

Key changes include:

- Large Commercial Structure definition
 - Structure size increased from 3,000 square feet to 6,000 square feet
 - Site size increased from 10,000 square feet to 20,000 square feet
 - Occupied structures may not exceed 50 feet
 - Buildings already in town as of 1/1/25 are excluded
- Large Commercial Structure barriers must be natural and no closer than 300 feet from residences
- Multi-family Residence definition
 - Increased from 3 to 5 dwelling units to comply with new Maine law

Commercial Site Plan Review Ordinance

Public Comments and Q/A

- Help us make this ordinance as acceptable and useful to the town as possible
- Recognize compromise is required between wide spectrum of different views:
 - Un-restrained commercial activities
 - Prohibition of all commercial activities
- Recognize that, if adopted, later improvements to the ordinance can always be made by the Town