

**TOWN OF WESTFORD
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
MINUTES FOR DECEMBER 5, 2022 MEETING
Approved on December 19, 2022**

Commissioners Present: Gordon Gebauer, Seth Jensen, Mark Letorney, and Mo Reilly.

Commissioners Absent: George Lamphere.

Also Present: Melissa Manka (Town Planner), Harmony Cism (Planning Assistant), Ben Bornstein (CCRPC), Barb Peck, Sheila Franz, Maureen Wilcox, Laurie Johnson, Ira Allen, and Kimberly Guidry.

Meeting Began: 6:30pm

Amendments to Agenda

Email received from the SB will be added to Correspondence.

Minutes of the November 21, 2022 Meeting

G. Gebauer MOTIONED to approve the minutes as presented.

M. Letorney SECONDED the motion.

The motion passed 4-0.

Meeting Rules of Procedure

G. Gebauer outlined the meeting rules of procedure for the public.

Citizens to be Heard - *Items not on agenda*

Maureen Wilcox asked if there is a reason that the Wastewater Committee is not posting the warnings for their meetings on FPF. M. Manka said that the subcommittees follow open meeting law and warning these meetings via FPF is not required. PC and DRB have gone above and beyond open meeting law and provide the agendas on FPF. This issue can be brought to Outreach Committee to discuss. However, staff resources need to be considered when adding to duties and responsibilities. Maureen would appreciate it if the WW meetings were warned just like PC meetings.

Correspondence

The PC received an email on December 2nd from the SB regarding their intention to test the quality of the water source at the Town Office.

Community Wastewater Project

FONSI & Facility Plan Approval (Status Update)

No update. M. Manka reached out to Emily last week to check in. Emily is working to finish the Facility Plan Approval Letter and pass it on to her superiors for review and approval. The PC is hoping to receive the letter this week.

CWSRF Step 1 & 2 Reimbursement & Close Out (Status Update)

M. Manka has prepared the reimbursement request for the GME Step 1 & Step 2, which can be submitted as soon as the Facility Plan Approval has been received. The reimbursement request goes to State/Bond Bank. The Step 2 invoices are from GME and Stitzel, Page and Fletcher. Once we receive the reimbursements, GME Step 1 & Step 2 will be officially closed out and the PC can move forward with the Stone Step 2. After submission, turnaround time is typically a couple of weeks. This could take longer as it's a bigger project and we are closing out Step 1.

With all of the delays due to overwhelmed state offices, it would be beneficial for the SB to be engaged in this process. To help move the reimbursement process along, the PC advises that the SB appoint a point person for meetings with ANR.

Revised Local ARPA Request & Selectboard Communications

December 8th Meeting

The revised Local ARPA Request will be discussed at the SB meeting on Thursday. G. Gebauer and G. Lamphere will be unable to attend. S. Jensen, M. Letorney, M. Manka, and potentially M. Reilly will be participating in this meeting.

Working Group Memo #3

The PC has reviewed the draft memo. Will graphs be included? The dollar amounts will get refined as we move through Step 2. The graphs may be too detailed this early, as numbers can change. The PC will keep the funding stack graph in the memo rather than the itemized list of funding. M. Manka will provide the memo to the SB by tomorrow morning.

The PC has a monthly PC update scheduled for 12/8. Amy will be present at this meeting. This memo will be submitted to the SB, along with the Facility Plan Approval and, Step 1 & Step 2 reimbursement requests if Melissa has received this information by Thursday. Also to be discussed are the Step 2 ESA with Stone and future decisions the SB will need to make. Something to note is that the engineering phase is 100% grant funded. It is important for the SB to be aware of this. This is a remarkable opportunity for this community. Thanks to Melissa for all of her work on this.

G. Gebauer MOTIONED to submit Memo #3 to the SB as amended.

M. Reilly SECONDED the motion.

The motion passed 4-0

The PC has sent two memos to the SB for the December 8th. One on the revised local ARPA request and one on the ESA, accounting and future SB actions. Another potential memo per JB's suggestion would discuss an outline for an ordinance. The focus for January should be the ESA and getting everyone under contract. After that, the PC should work on the ordinance memo with JB.

Community Recovery & Revitalization Grant

The Agency of Commerce and Community Development has announced a program called the Community Recovery and Revitalization Grant, which is ARPA funded. Water and wastewater are

specifically named as eligible uses for this grant. Westford is a strong candidate for this program. The award amount is 20% of the total project cost, up to 1 million dollars. The grant money could be used as match dollars in other areas of the funding stack. Westford is closer to “shovel ready” than many other municipalities. Deciding factors for ACCD will be the impact that WW will have on community (such as economic development and affordable housing) and impact on the Grand List. We are quite far along in the process of applying for permits and working with ANR.

Chittenden County applications will be reviewed after 30 days, as non-MSA (Metropolitan Statistical Area) areas are given priority. Communities that are more rural than Chittenden County are given precedence. VT Economic Progress Council is part of the review process. The PC should work closely with the SB on an application. ACCD will be looking for letters of support from the Regional Planning Commission, the PC, and the Town.

The application opened this week. The work that has already been done for other grants will give us a head start. Retention of existing housing and business makes a strong argument. The application process is done via an online portal. The application should be submitted by Melissa, and the PC and possibly the SB can help draft it. Letters of support are required. The PC should aim to apply by 1/15/23. Since Westford is in Chittenden County, the application won't be reviewed until the 30-day prioritization period has passed. A PC team to draft the application will include S. Jensen and M. Reilly.

These are designated federal dollars that don't require a match. It will be beneficial to run the numbers with JB, since there are federal dollar restrictions.

M. Reilly will start working on a document to present to the grant writer with content/questions. This will be discussed further at the next PC meeting.

M. Manka is working on a spreadsheet denoting Federal vs non-Federal dollar destinations and how funding sources interact with each other. She is also working to get Emily a definition of “match” for NBRC/EDA funding. She should have more information on funding stack interactions by the end of December based on designations.

Public Outreach

No updates at this time.

Public Comment

No public comment.

1705 Project

Project Website

M. Letorney has updated the website with the final webinar.

Public Communications

M. Manka has prepared a post for FPF and the January newsletter. This should be posted to FPF and the newsletter at same time. The grant needs to be closed out by December 2023. Melissa is meeting this

week with SE Group, Button, and KAS to discuss completion of the scope of work. She will provide an update at the next meeting with a timeline on deliverables.

M. Manka is still waiting on a report from LE Environmental regarding the second UST removal.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Minute Clerk Contract for Services

H. Cism has agreed to be the Minute Clerk for the PC meetings. The budget will need to be increased for the next fiscal year to compensate for a higher hourly rate than the previous Minute Clerk. Special projects funds may need to be utilized for this fiscal year. A new contract can be signed when the budget ceiling of \$2000 is reached. The Minute Clerk and the PC will renegotiate additional funds if/when needed.

G. Gebauer MOTIONED to approve the terms of the contract for submission to the SB.

M. Reilly SECONDED the motion.

The motion passed 4-0.

2022 Work Plan

One meeting left in December. Topics to cover will include: FONSI and Facility Plan update, Step 1 & 2 reimbursement update, Decision on local ARPA?, Community Recovery and Revitalization Grant, WW Public Outreach update, 1705 public communications and scope of work, and the possibility of using Google calendar for PC items.

Emily will be at the next meeting. She will give an update on the Step 2 ESA review and Project Cost Summary spreadsheet. The State would like the GME Step 1 and Step 2 closed out before acting on Stone Step 2. Melissa hopes to have reimbursements by mid-January.

2023 Work Plan

The PC needs to schedule 1st January meeting.

Emily will be present at the January 16th meeting.

Public Comment

Ben Bornstein said that at the last CCRPC meeting there was a discussion about fuel switching funds. \$40 million were going to be allocated from State ARPA to help municipalities transition from oil to other renewable sources of fuel for heating and light. The process would start with energy audits for Town Buildings. Ben will continue to track this. The Town may need to re-create an Energy Committee to take this on. Ben will make a synopsis available to Westford after he attends CCRPC meetings. He will create a memo to the SB. Ben will contact Charlie Baker and keep the PC posted.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:04pm