

TOWN OF WESTFORD
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Minutes for January 17, 2017 Meeting
Approved on February 6, 2017

Commission/Board Members Present: Jeremy Berger, Wendy Doane, Gordon Gebauer (Chair), Mark Letorney and Seth Jensen.

Also present: Melissa Manka (Planning Coordinator).

The meeting began at 6:46 p.m.

Westford Town Plan - 2016 & 2017 Implementation Plans

The Planning Commission reviewed the implementation plan. The Commission included all 2017 items listed in their work plan. Furthermore, they decided to proceed with a community transportation survey and alternative transportation investigation in 2017.

Seth asked Melissa to contact GMT regarding changes to bus routes in the area and whether they are able to assist with the community transportation survey.

Gordon asked that the Road Committee be invited to meet with the Commission at the end of the joint meeting sessions.

CCRPC & DPS Energy Standards & Recommendations

Mark gave an overview of the CCRPC energy planning workshop he attended earlier this month and the Commission discussed energy planning at great length. Mark said the Town must permit commercial wind and solar in appropriate areas. However, the Town should focus on carbon sequestration, biomass fuel/crops, biomass digesters and rooftop solar. He stated that our forests and farm fields are a huge asset with respect to biomass development. He added that the lack of three phase power might be seen as a deterrent now, but it is feasible that a company will install 3 phase in the future.

The Commission agreed to prioritize energy planning by conducting a community energy usage survey and amending the Town Plan and WLUD Regulations to conform to the requirements for substantial deference consideration. The Commission agreed to request that the Selectboard reinstate the Energy Committee to assist in this endeavor and allow the Planning Commission to recruit members. The Commission agreed that it will be important to attract energy professionals/experts to join the team.

Melissa will invite Melanie Needle from the CCRPC to the February 20th meeting to discuss and explain the regional energy planning process.

Jeremy offered to draft a community energy survey for review by the Commission.

Mark stated that the ACS website also provides energy use data.

Melissa will look into whether VPA has a survey monkey account the Town is able to use or whether the Town should renew our subscription.

Mark offered to review the Town Plan in order to make an initial determination as the revisions necessary/involved in order to meet the substantial deference criterion.

Gordon offered to draft the energy committee recruitment letter.

Melissa will request permission from the Selectboard to send said letter on their behalf.

Meeting Citizens to be Heard, Announcements & Other Business

FY17 MPG Update

Melissa said Amy from Stone Environmental and Kevin from Green Mountain Engineering are hoping to meet with the Commission on February 6th to review the results of the test pits conducted in the fall. The Commission will confirm their availability with Melissa.

Land Sale & Town Common Boundary Update

Melissa noted that the Westford-Milton Road property is under contract and closing was expected in the near future. However, a number of issues have come up with regard to the Spiller lot / Town Common boundaries which will take a few months to sort out. The Commission agreed that all individuals owning property south of Common Road should be offered their front door yards. Seth stated that the Selectboard should maintain Common Road as a 4 rod road to ensure sufficient room for future public infrastructure.

Jackson Farm & Forest Project Update

Melissa said she is waiting for a cost estimate from Green Mountain Engineering in order to carry out the subdivision work necessary.

Planning Commission Work Plan

The Planning Commission reviewed their 2017 work plan and made further revisions.

Minutes of the November 14, 2016 Meeting

Jeremy MOVED to approve the minutes.

Wendy SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 5 – 0.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:16 p.m.

Submitted by,
Melissa Manka, Westford Planning Coordinator