

TOWN OF WESTFORD
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Minutes for April 17, 2017 Meeting
Approved on ****, 2017

Commission/Board Members Present: Jeremy Berger, Wendy Doane (joined at 6:44 pm), Gordon Gebauer, and Seth Jensen (joined at 8:00 pm) and Mark Letorney.

Commission/Board Members Absent:

Also present: Melissa Manka (Planning Coordinator), Joel Fay, Sarah Pinto, Dale Rodgers, Chuck McGill and Marilyn Thomas.

The meeting began at 6:33 p.m.

Meeting with Conservation Commission

The Planning Commission and Conservation Commission reviewed both Commissions' 2017 implementation plans. The Conservation Commission will focus on trail maintenance and weigh in when necessary and appropriate on siting of renewables. The Planning Commission stated that they will seek Conservation Commission comment on the draft Energy Plan and river corridor regulations, which they hope will be crafted by the beginning of next year. The Commissions then discussed the JFFP and the issues that will need to be addressed prior to opening day and thereafter. The Commissions agreed to meet with Bob Heiser of VLT in May to discuss the following: day 1 signage, guided tours, placement of culvert in ROW for pedestrian access, stone wall opening for pedestrian access, trail mowing, trail use, the Interim Management Plan, Forest Recreation Planning Grants and the Permanent Management Plan. Melissa will set up the meeting.

Eco Dev & CEDS Training Discussion – Mark

Mark will discuss the workshop at the Planning Commission's June meeting.

Energy Planning

Melissa said Melanie Needle, CCRPC Senior Planner, believes the CCRPC energy data for Westford will be available at the end of the month. The Planning Commission briefly reviewed and discussed the energy survey results. They agreed the town needs to conduct outreach and education regarding efficiency opportunities and programs as well as alternative transportation options. The Commission will meet with the Energy Committee on May 15th to fully discuss the Town's work plan as it relates to Act 174.

Citizens to be heard

Joel Fay stated he would like to construct a garage that protrudes beyond the front of his house but the FBC area is preventing him from doing so. He added that due to contours, boundary lines and the layout of the interior of his home there is no reasonable, nor desired, way to conform to the FBC, which requires accessory structures to be 20 feet behind the front of principal structure if the doors face a public road or flush with the principal structure if the doors face the side yard. He said that his property is 200 feet back from Route 128 so it would not affect the public-private interface. The Planning Commission agreed that it was not the intent for properties such as his,

set back so far from the road, to be restricted in this manner and stated that they would discuss this matter in depth during their next round of amendments to the regulations. They also suggested Joel look into whether a variance application is appropriate, if he has hopes of beginning development this year. Melissa stated that it was very difficult to meet the variance criteria.

Announcements & Other Business

FY17 MPG Update

Melissa explained that the MPG project must be completed by the end of May with close out documentation provided to the State by the end of June. The Commission will have a meeting with Amy Macrellis and Kevin Camara on May 15th to review the final report of the Phase 2 JFFP community wastewater project.

Land Transaction & Easement Updates

Melissa gave a brief update on current land matters. She stated that the Milton Westford Rd property has been sold; Common Road will be formally laid out over the summer; discussions over whether to deed the Common property located south of Common road will occur this summer; the Selectboard and Schoolboard are planning to draft easement agreements, draft deeds and user agreements for execution the week of June 20th ; the JFFP is plugging along but it is unlikely that the subdivision will be completed prior to mid-June due to application delays.

Open Meeting Law

Melissa provided the Commission with VLCT's open meeting law FAQs.

Housing & Infrastructure

The Planning Commission agreed to advocate for statewide community wastewater and potable water infrastructure funding beginning in December of 2017 with the intent of bringing awareness to Legislators regarding the affect these services have on development, affordability and economic vibrancy.

Planning Commission Work Plan

The Planning Commission made minor revisions to their work plan. Mark offered to write a newsletter article on the WRO and FHO.

Minutes of the March 20, 2017 Meeting

Wendy MOVED to approve the minutes.

Jeremy SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 4 – 0.

Seth abstained.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:46 p.m.

Submitted by,
Melissa Manka, Westford Planning Coordinator