

**TOWN OF WESTFORD**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION & ENERGY COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Minutes for May 15, 2017 Meeting**  
Approved on June 19, 2017

**Commission/Board Members Present:** Gordon Gebauer, Seth Jensen, Mark Letorney, Sara DeVico, Steve Casey and John Doty.

**Commission/Board Members Absent:** Jeremy Berger, Wendy Doane, Michelle DaVia, Steve Knight and Zack Tyler.

**Also present:** Melissa Manka (Planning Coordinator), David Gauthier, Lynn Gauthier, Richard Hamlin, Pat Haller, Kevin Camara and Amy Macrellis.

The meeting began at 6:33 p.m.

**Ph 2 Community Wastewater Study Wrap Up with Amy Macrellis & Kevin Camara- Jackson Property**

Amy Macrellis of Stone Environmental Inc. and Kevin Camara of Green Mountain Engineering were present.

Amy stated that upon further investigation and calculation they have drafted initial designs for the proposed system and determined it to have a flow rate of 12,600 gpd. They believe this to be the maximum flow permissible without further study. Amy added that the indirect discharge rules are more limiting than the hydrology of the area. She believes more capacity may be possible in specific areas within the overall leach field. She said this should be further studied and confirmed when the preliminary designs are crafted.

Seth asked if portions of the system could be developed over time.

Amy and Kevin responded that portions of the field certainly could but they would recommend at the very least installing the proper control system components, tanks and piping associated with the whole project. They noted that it is more cost effective to construct the entire system at once.

Mark asked what the shelf life of the leach field is if under used.

Amy said there is equal loading in the field, unlike a gravity system, no matter what the flow rate. Kevin said there is no negative impact. It will only prolong the life of the system. Kevin noted that the valve vault and DPS tanks will be located off site and that will be depicted once the location is confirmed. He added that the DPS tank will include a light, alarm and operator signal in case something malfunctions.

Pat added that a phone can be installed on the control panel with the operator's phone number.

Kevin said the system can include a phone or use a cellphone or dial up service to alert the operator of issues, but that will be determined during preliminary engineering.

David asked why the leach fields didn't go into the wood line.

Amy said that could be explored further during preliminary engineering but bedrock was a limiting factor. She said they could not go further towards the road due to the presence of silt.

David asked the depth of the trenches.

Amy said the trenches were 18 inches below the surface with 6 inches of topsoil. She added that dosing is kept high in the soil profile to allow for more absorption.

David asked if a curtain drain could be install in the woods.

Amy said that due to the hydrology a curtain drain would make little difference on the gpd. She said a geoprobe could be used to confirm the location of bedrock and ground water.

Rick asked if they would be eligible for a credit if more stone was used.

Kevin said that's true under the EPRs but not under the indirect rules. Next, Kevin went over the financials. He explained that ENR stands for engineering new record which is an estimate for specific costs over time. He noted that STEP tanks could be purchased and owned by users with operation and maintenance being their responsibility or the town could purchase, operate and maintain the tanks with serviced property owners paying the electricity bills to run them. He said in the latter case grants could be used to purchase the tanks. Kevin noted that annual user fees over \$1000 are unaffordable. He said long established systems typically see annual user fee of \$500-600 and new systems run about \$700-900 annually. Westford would be shooting for the latter range. Kevin noted that towns typically require mandatory connection to ensure the minimum number of connections are met to cover maintenance and operation costs.

Melissa thought the town would like property owners with functioning systems to continue to use those systems to preserve wastewater capacity for future uses and development.

Kevin sad that would be something the town would need to decide.

Seth asked whether having more users per square foot would be most cost effective and add piping as necessary to serve additional areas when development is proposed. He added that towns are less likely to receive federal grants for projects such as these and towns need to look to ways to self-fund infrastructure. Seth would like to request additional cost estimates for likely future development scenarios, such as a small residential development, a store, the white church, town offices and library. He would like to discuss this at the next Planning Commission meeting.

## **Meeting with Energy Committee**

### *Energy Planning Training Discussion*

Gordon was unable to attend the training but will provide the training handouts to the group.

### *Town Plan Amendments & Substantial Deference Checklist*

Sarah began by stating the Energy Committee has met three times.

Sarah said the Committee has reviewed the Town Plan for conformance with the substantial deference checklist and the plan meets many of the criteria already. She said each member of the Committee will dive further into the different sections of the Town Plan to ensure the document meets all criteria. She noted that energy generation will be at the forefront of the revisions but they will also be making recommendations concerning transportation and long-term projects. The Energy Committee will then submit recommended revisions to the Planning Commission for review.

### *Review Energy Survey Results & Public Outreach/Resources*

The group discussed the energy survey. Sarah explained it will be of limited use with regard to the energy plan. However, it will prove useful in giving direction on public outreach and resources concerning alternative transportation options, home heating programs, etc.

### *Review CCRPC Energy Data*

The group briefly discussed the CCRPC energy data.

John Doty believes the calculations to be unrealistic and plans to draft a letter to the CCRPC and State stating his concerns. He reiterated that the wind generation numbers are not feasible in

Westford and thus will not be the focus of their work. He stated that the State would need to contract for high level screening to provide accurate numbers and this has not happened. The Committee will address why the State's wind generation numbers are not feasible in the Town Plan.

Seth asked whether the Committee would recommend a couple large renewable projects or many small projects to reach our solar generation goals.

John said that a 45 acre solar farm would produce enough electricity to power Westford's electrical needs.

Mark said that may be true, but there is a significant difference between net metered power versus power contracted to out- of-state purchasers.

The group agreed that they would like to have a say in where the electricity generated by large scale projects goes and who will benefit.

The Committee will review the CCRPC's Westford regional energy plan write up and provide feedback by June 16<sup>th</sup>. The Planning Commission asked the Committee to submit the comments to the Planning Commission for review before submission to the CCRPC.

The group agreed the Energy Committee will continue with their work and contact the Planning Commission when they have crafted Town Plan revisions for their review.

## **Citizens to be Heard, Announcements & Other Business**

### *Land Transaction & Easement Updates*

Melissa gave a brief update on the status of the land transactions and easements, which include laying out Common Road, the southern Town Common boundary, removal of a public use easement on private lands south of Common Road, the offer of Hallers wastewater easement, and the JFFP.

The Planning Commission discussed the Selectboard's May 11<sup>th</sup> meeting discussing the school use agreement and easements.

Gordon will contact Casey to determine whether the Boards will release the draft legal documents to the Commission and VLCT to determine whether withholding the documents during discussion at a public meeting is a violation of open meeting law.

The Commission agreed to submit a letter to the Selectboard reiterating they believe it's their duty to review legal documents and their concerns with the proposed school policies. Based on the outcome of the May 25<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Planning Commission will determine whether further public involvement is necessary.

### *VLT & Haller Conservation Easement Support Letter*

The Planning Commission approved the draft letter with Seth's amendments to include the T2 purpose and description. Gordon will sign the letter once revised.

### *GME Invoice*

Melissa explained that the invoice was well over the quoted amount with the plat work yet be factored in. The Planning Commission asked Melissa to draft a letter to GME stating the invoice was unacceptable and requesting a reduced amount.

## **Planning Commission Work Plan**

The Planning Commission will review work plan at their June meeting.

**Minutes of the April 17, 2017 Meeting**

Seth MOVED to approve the minutes.

Mark SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 3 – 0.

**Minutes of the May 9, 2017 Meeting**

Seth MOVED to approve the minutes.

Mark SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 3 – 0.

Melissa will send these minutes to the Selectboard so they are aware of the Planning Commission and Conservation Commission's JFFP work plan.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:51 p.m.

Submitted by,

Melissa Manka, Westford Planning Coordinator