

**TOWN OF WESTFORD**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**Minutes for October 17, 2016 Meeting**  
Approved on November 14, 2016

**Commission/Board Members Present:** Jeremy Berger, Wendy Doane, Gordon Gebauer (Chair), Mark Letorney

**Commission/Board Members Absent:**

**Also present:** Melissa Manka (Interim Planning Coordinator)

The meeting began at 6:30p.m.

Jeremy MOVED to rearrange the agenda.

Mark SECONDED.

Motion PASSED: 4-0

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

The **RED** vote was held October 11. All articles passed.

Barb asked why the **Common boundary** has been on our agenda. Gordon explained that the southern boundary line in particular had never been formally established based on deeds found in the vault, therefore, the Commission took it up as a project. The surveyor originally hired by the PC presented a survey the Commission did not find acceptable due to errors in his mapping. Recently, the Town's tax mapper offered his own research showing a southern boundary quite different than what has been generally accepted. The Commission has since asked the Selectboard (SB) to look into the matter. The SB has made it known they would like to sell the Spiller property which abuts the southern common boundary; certainly a change in the common boundary could affect a future sale.

Gordon gave a brief update of the **Jackson Farm and Forest Project (JFFP)**. There was a successful hike on the property last week and another planned for this Saturday, October 22. There will be a meeting open to the public Thursday, October 20, at the library. The public hearing is set for November 3. The vote is November 8.

Barb pointed out that the appraisal numbers Dave Adams (SB chair) posted on Front Porch Forum do not add up. She asked if there was another appraisal since the last JFFP public meeting on December 22, 2015 and if so, what drove the change in value and who did the appraisal.

Gordon responded that he would prefer Dave answer Barb specifically since she reached out to him. In general terms, he confirmed there was indeed a second appraisal by the same company that did the first and that the change in zoning districts partially prompted a re-evaluation of the property's assessment. Sue added that a comparable land sale that was not factored into the first appraisal also affected the results of the second appraisal.

Gordon gave a brief update of the **Spiller property**. The SB is entertaining a new offer that will be officially noticed in a special SB meeting Wednesday, October 19. Based on this news, Gordon believes the offer by Bernie Fleury was not accepted.

Barb questioned why the SB is selling the property. Gordon answered that it's a different SB than the SB that oversaw the purchase years ago and that Barb should direct her questions to the SB. Barb thought the Town needed the property for a potential build of a bigger town office. Gordon answered that while office space is a still a concern, what was and still is of equal concern is what to do in the event the town office wastewater system fails. Hooking into the Spiller property's

existing wastewater system was seen as a viable solution to a system failure at the town office. In recent years the White Church (United Church of Westford) has been designated as a potential alternative site for a wastewater replacement system for the town office, therefore, the Spiller property is no longer essential to the Town in this regard.

#### **Draft FY15-16 Planning Commission Town Report**

Gordon shared his first draft of the report. The Commission gave him feedback. It was acknowledged that since the final report is not due until after Thanksgiving, Gordon will be able to incorporate the results of the JFFP vote.

#### **Draft FY17-18 Planning Commission Budget**

Everything is to be level funded if possible. Gordon feels strongly that no new or special projects should be added at this time in light of the JFFP's \$185K price tag to the voters. The Commission agreed. The one line item that could not be agreed upon is how much to budget for legal notices. The amount to ask for depends on what the cost has been to date for the regulation amendment noticing and how many future rounds of amendments the Commission may need. Sue did not know the cost of noticing for round of the amendments. Melissa Manka will need to confirm. The PC budget is to be presented to the SB October 27<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Draft Region Energy Plan Letter to CCRPC**

The CCRPC changed the letter deadline from October 7 to November 1. Gordon is writing a position statement to include in the letter. Sue and/or Gordon will add the list of local constraints that were identified at the last PC meeting (see minutes of 9/19/16).

#### **VT Dept of Public Service Regional & Municipal Energy Planning Standards**

This topic was postponed until the next regularly scheduled PC meeting.

#### **Westford Land Use & Development Regulation Amendment Public Hearing**

At 7:35pm the Commission began the hearing. No one from the public was present. Sue had a number of questions on behalf of Melissa. The first pertained to 'exempt farm structures' needing to meet setbacks (Section 112). After much consideration and discussion, the Commission decided to keep 112.B (2) with amendments. It became apparent that the process of continuing without Melissa was laborious and inefficient. The Commission decided it best to continue the hearing with Melissa present. At 8:20pm Jeremy MOVED to continue the public hearing at the next warned meeting. Wendy SECONDED. Motion PASSED: 4-0.

#### **PC Work Plan**

Seth is scheduled to write the November newsletter submission.

#### **Minutes of the September 19, 2016 Meeting**

Jeremy MOVED to approve the minutes as amended.  
Mark SECONDED the motion.  
Motion PASSED: 3-0.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00p.m.

Submitted by,  
Sue Adams, Interim Westford Planning Coordinator