

**TOWN OF WESTFORD**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**Minutes for September 19, 2016 Meeting**  
Approved on October 17, 2016

**Commission/Board Members Present:** Jeremy Berger, Gordon Gebauer (Chair), Mark Letorney, Seth Jensen (arrived 8:15pm)

**Also present:** Joel Fay (Conservation Commission member), Steve Knight (Energy Committee), Marilyn Thomas (Conservation Committee), Sue Adams (Interim Planning Coordinator)

The meeting began at 6:38p.m.

**Region Energy Plan – Identifying Local Constraints for Energy Production Mapping**

Gordon gave an overview of the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission's (CCRPC) Energy Plan Project. The CCRPC is asking each municipality for feedback by October 7<sup>th</sup> on areas not suitable for future wind and/or solar energy production beyond what GIS maps can show. Mark pointed out that the VT Department of Public Service (DPS) is driving the project and he is not happy with the DPS regarding their rolling back of net-metering. He feels the DPS is too industry-biased and not supportive enough of small scale, point of use renewable energy generation. By phasing out net-metering, DPS will in effect drive out VT's small scale solar plants. This, he contends, is anti-renewable and warrants a defensive tone with the energy mapping feedback.

Gordon offered to contact CCRPC to inquire whether they are doing anything in response to the DPS net-metering phase-out, and if so, whether a formal position statement from the PC would help their efforts.

A brainstorming session with all those present identified local constraints beyond what the GIS maps already show in Westford, e.g., FHO, WRO, wetlands, agricultural and hydric soils, rare natural areas, deer wintering areas, etcetera. These are:

1. Common, Village and Rural 3 zoning districts
2. All ridgelines
3. All view-sheds identified in the 2015 Town Plan
4. A 2 km buffer around homes for industrial scale wind generation
5. Significant natural communities and uncommon species (refer to the Biodiversity Map behind Melissa's desk)
6. Any town and school owned land
7. All conserved land, including the potential Jackson Farm and Forest.

Gordon and Sue will work jointly on the feedback letter. Gordon will craft a position statement and Sue will add the list of local constraints.

**Westford Land Use & Development Regulation Amendments:**

The public hearing on the first round of amendments is all set for October 17, 2016 at 7pm.

Gordon and Sue collaborated on fulfilling the noticing requirements. Round two of amendments will begin soon after this round is complete.

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

The RED vote is set for October 11. It is a floor vote, therefore, people must be present to vote.

The Jackson Farm and Forest Project group will meet Monday, September 26. Sue offered to cover the DRB meeting scheduled that same night in order for Melissa to attend the JFFP meeting. Public relations will be the focus.

The Spiller Property is ready to be put on the market, however, Bernie Fleury (abutter to Spiller) has asked the Selectboard to hold off until he has decided whether he wants to make an offer. The Selectboard agreed.

Seth had two comments regarding the sale of the Spiller property: To request a floating easement, as opposed to a fixed easement, and, to be cognizant of the full potential value while entertaining offers. With the recent change in zoning district and regulations, the uses for the Spiller property are greater now than under the former zoning district and regulations.

### **PC Work Plan**

Gordon requested that discussion of commercial renewable energy generation be put on the agenda for the next meeting (October 17). Specifically, should it be prohibited? What would that language look like if it was added to the next round of regulation amendments? If and when 3-phase power comes to Westford, it will come with the possibility of large scale, commercial energy generation.

The Commission decided not to submit anything for the October newsletter. Seth will write the November newsletter submission.

### **Minutes of the August 18, 2016 Meeting**

Jeremy MOVED to approve the minutes.

Seth SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 4 – 0.

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

Submitted by,

Sue Adams, Interim Westford Planning Coordinator