

TOWN OF WESTFORD
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Minutes for March 6, 2018 Meeting
Approved on April 2, 2018

Commission/Board Members Present: Koi Boynton, Wendy Doane, Gordon Gebauer, Seth Jensen and Mark Letorney.

Commission/Board Members Absent:

Also present: Melissa Manka (Planning Coordinator), Marjorie Hamrell, Carol Winfield, Lori Johnson, Ray Geddens, Marilyn Thomas, Grant Thomas and Maura O'Brien.

The meeting began at: 7:00 p.m.

Amendments to Agenda

No amendments were proposed.

Planning Commission & United Church of Westford Joint Meeting

The Planning Commission and United Church of Westford met to discuss the future of the White Church and Red Brick Meeting House. The following questions, comments and observations were made:

Red Brick Meeting House – John Doane said we were ending the first 20 years of a 20 year, 5 term lease agreement. John noted that he is working with an engineer to redesign the replacement wastewater system on site. Seth noted that the Town has been working on a community-wide wastewater solution in the Town Center and that dosing systems should be used on properties that have intermittent, high volume use.

White Church – The United Church said they would like the building to become a public space, if possible. Also, they said they have developed a public survey, which will be dispersed board-wide and potentially town-wide.

Property Development – John asked about the development potential of the White Church property. Melissa said she would pull together some planning maps, the property wastewater report and system cost estimate.

Upper Common – There was discussion of the desire to leave the upper common undeveloped.

Town Plan – John asked if the Town Plan would support development in addition to public uses. Melissa said the Town Plan promotes development and public uses in the Town Center Area, but noted that the Town Plan was written when the United Church was functioning as such and the Town believed the upper common was owned by the Town. Therefore, the Town Plan does not address these specific issues.

Uses – John asked the Commission if they thought the Town would be willing to use the building. Melissa mentioned that a sound system would need to be installed since the acoustics make

hearing during public meetings difficult. She also had concerns that it could create church and state issues. Melissa will contact VLCT to research the latter. Seth noted that it may be best if there is a non-profit structure, as opposed to a municipal structure, especially if the building is used for religious purposes.

Management – Seth suggested the United Church contact the Preservation Trust of VT to discuss upkeep and management structures, a property management service or look into community development organizations which mix municipal and non-profit interests.

Citizens to be Heard, Announcements & Other Business

Neighborhood Development Area & Rural Development Caucus Update

Seth requested that Melissa contact Faith at the ACCD to set up a meeting in late March to discuss NDA criteria and community wastewater systems.

Community Wastewater Scenario Analysis Update

Melissa said she is waiting for GME to submit a cost estimate and scope of work.

Brownfields Program Update

None.

Land Transaction & Easement Updates

None.

Other Business

Mark said the VT PUC is taking comment on the new net-metering regulations and feels the Commission should submit comments. Gordon asked Mark whether he would draft something for the Commission to review. Mark said yes and said comments must be submitted by March 15th.

2018 Planning Commission Work Plan

The Planning Commission reviewed their work plan. Gordon requested a list of significant amendments prior to the WLUD public hearing. (See 2018 Planning Commission Work Plan for specifics).

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:58 p.m.

Submitted by,
Melissa Manka, Westford Planning Coordinator