

TOWN OF WESTFORD
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Minutes for May 21, 2018 Meeting
Approved on June 18, 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), Greg Baker and Sara DeVico.

The meeting began at: 6:41 p.m.

Community Wastewater Scenario Analysis & Cost Estimate

Kevin Camara of Green Mountain Engineering did not show for the meeting.

Amendments to Agenda

The Planning Commission decided to move Town Plan discussions, reorganization and minutes to the beginning of the agenda.

2020 Town Plan

The Planning Commission agreed to focus on economic development, housing and energy in the amended 2020 Town Plan.

The Planning Commission discussed whether to conduct a community survey. The last community survey was conducted in 2009. The Commission saw a benefit to surveying the community again since much has changed in the last 10 years. It was suggested they either draft a new survey focusing on facilities, utilities and services or simply re-issue the 2009 survey with minor changes. Seth said the Planning Commission should use Survey Monkey this time and noted the process of compiling resident responses was extremely burdensome in 2009.

The Commissioners' agreed the survey should be published in the fall since the United Church of Westford and Long-Term Management Plan Committee will be surveying residents during the summer months.

The Planning Commission will review the 2015 Town Plan, CCRPC Town Plan comments, and 2009 community survey prior to their next meeting.

The Planning Commission discussed their wish to carry out an asset inventory and develop a community and public property master plan.

Melissa suggested the work be tied to the Facilities, Utilities and Services Chapter of the 2020 Town Plan, if the Commission wished carry out the work prior to applying for a MPG for community and public facility programming. The Commission asked about the grant's timeline. Melissa said awards are announced in December and contracts are typically set by February. She noted that the Commission could require completion within 6-8 months which would allow for the Facilities, Utilities and Services Chapter to be amended to include the consultant's findings prior to the May 2020 Town Plan adoption deadline. The Commission agreed to wait and apply for an MPG. They added they would like to begin working on the MPG application in July.

Citizens to be Heard, Announcements & Other Business

Reorganization

Seth MOVED to appoint Gordon as Chair, Wendy as Vice Chair and Seth as Clerk.

Koi SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 5 – 0.

Performance Review

Gordon will work with the Commission to evaluate the Planning Coordinator's performance and report back to the Selectboard.

Minutes of the April 2, 2018 Meeting

Mark MOVED to approve the minutes.

Seth SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 4 – 0.

Gordon abstained.

Minutes of the April 16, 2018 Meeting

Wendy MOVED to approve the minutes.

Mark SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 4 – 0.

Seth abstained.

Minutes of the April 23, 2018 Meeting

The Planning Commission will review these minutes at their next meeting.

2020 Town Plan - Energy Chapter

Greg and Sara were present.

Sara began by stating that the CCRPC reviewed the Energy Committee's draft energy plan and added some tables and bullet points to the action items section.

Wendy asked if biomass was addressed in the plan and asked which towns in Vermont currently use biomass to produce energy.

Sara said many places use wood boilers, such as Westford School¹², with Middlebury using cow power and Essex and Montpelier using wastewater treatment processes for small scale energy production.

Mark asked if household waste was used to produce energy anywhere.

Greg and Sara said no.

Mark asked if biomass was net metered.

Sara and Greg said no.

Wendy wondered if biomass crops could save farming in Vermont while providing a much needed renewable energy source.

Mark said he didn't think Vermont was there yet, but household waste had potential given the new composting law. He suggested asking how many individuals compost in the community survey.

Sara noted that Michelle DiVia said we would need to partner with neighboring towns because a rural town couldn't produce the quantity of waste necessary to run a large scale biomass facility.

Mark suggested researching the costs and benefits of hauling organic waste vs constructing/operating a digester.

Sara and Greg noted that a digester could cost between \$300,000 -\$400,000.

The group briefly reviewed the energy items listed in the 2015 Implementation Plan and Sara requested a copy.

It was discussed that after the CCRPC receives a substantial deference determination and Westford adopts the 2020 Town Plan, the Town would request a substantial deference determination from the CCRPC.

Sara mentioned that the energy maps the CCRPC provided will need to be added to the Town Plan Energy Chapter or added as an appendix.

2018 Planning Commission Work Plan

The Planning Commission reviewed and revised their work plan. (See 2018 Planning Commission Work Plan for specifics).

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:40 p.m.

Submitted by,
Melissa Manka, Westford Planning Coordinator