

**TOWN OF WESTFORD**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**Minutes for July 16, 2018 Meeting**  
Approved on August 20, 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) and David Miskell.

The meeting began at: 6:32 p.m.

**Amendments to Agenda**

The Planning Commission decided to move the amendment request to the beginning of the meeting.

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

Request for Westford Land Use & Development Regulations Amendment

Melissa explained the Town recently approved a boundary line adjustment which moves the front property boundary for half the homes on Common Road from 10 ft. beyond their front door to 33 ft. from the center of the road. She explained that this change effects the intended development pattern in the T4 form based code overlay. She noted that those homes are now noncompliant and any new development would have a maximum setback of 53 ft. from the center of road, which is quite close.

David Miskell, consultant for Jeff Hutchins, was present and explained this may present a problem when designing the new dry goods store. He said the current, new setback would require cutting trees, building at an angle to the road and developing/filling in a stormwater ditch. He suggested revising the front yard setbacks based on the new property boundaries. The Planning Commission inspected the area in question and agreed a revision of the setbacks is necessary. They returned to the Office to review the zoning maps and contemplate the effects of omitting the front yard setback maximum in the T4 FBC overlay district. Someone noted that omitting the maximum setback may not have negative consequences since most of the T4 lots are small and shallow. The Commission agreed it would be helpful to hear Mr. Hutchins intentions and thoughts prior to moving forward and asked that he provide the Commission with comment by their next meeting.

Seth suggested addressing the setback issue with interim bylaws until such time as the Commission is ready to make further amendments to the regulations and in order to expedite the process.

Economic Development Conference Update

Mark said the conference was extremely useful and listed the following takeaways:

- How to unmake a community: 1) limit access to buildings 2) limit access to spaces 3) throw out businesses

- Critical to a healthy community and economy: 1) access to high-speed internet 2) incubator and coworker spaces 3) don't use the word no but rather yes and... 4) young populations are critical to success.
- How to move forward: 1) offer suggestion space i.e. white boards 2) offer business card bulletin boards 3) have community potlucks with a diverse population for perspective 4) inventory businesses in town

Mark noted that economic development spins social wellbeing as well as interaction.

#### Emergency Response Communications

Wendy said it would be good to have a ham radio operator in Town to assist residents in contacting family members in the event of a major emergency/communications blackout. The Commission agreed it was a good idea and an item for an emergency response committee to address. They said it could be included in the Town Plan as well.

#### **Review & Discuss 2018-19 Municipal Planning Grant**

The Planning Commission reviewed and discussed the MPG criteria and application. Melissa will draft an application for them to review at their next meeting.

#### **2020 Town Plan Community Survey**

The Planning Commission reviewed and discussed the draft survey. Melissa will revise the draft survey for their next meeting.

#### **2018 Planning Commission Work Plan & Project Updates**

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

#### **Minutes of the June 18, 2018 Meeting**

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

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:35 p.m.

Submitted by,  
Melissa Manka, Westford Planning Coordinator