

TOWN OF WESTFORD
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Minutes for October 15, 2018 Meeting
Approved on February 4, 2019

Commission/Board Members Present: Koi Boynton, Wendy Doane, Gordon Gebauer (until 8:30pm), Seth Jensen and Mark Letorney.

Commission/Board Members Absent:

Also present: Melissa Manka (Planning Coordinator), Kevin Camara, Amy Macrellis and David Miskell.

The meeting began at: 6:34 p.m.

Amendments to Agenda

The Planning Commission decided to discuss the interim bylaws immediately following the community wastewater discussions since David Miskell was present to hear and participate in both agenda items.

Phased Community Wastewater System Final Report– Overview by Kevin Camara of Green Mountain Engineering

Kevin Camara and Amy Macrellis were present.

Kevin began by reviewing the design of the phased system as well as the cost estimate for the three phases.

Kevin stated that there are typically three means of funding community systems: 1) bonding – however, sometimes there are concerns with the town’s ability to cover the cost of a full system, 2) grants and loans – FYI, the NBG does not require PE and existing businesses wanting to expand is the gold standards for funding and 3) public-private partnerships – however, most similar towns start with an existing system which is expanded upon.

Gordon noted that the town should not pursue bonding the project at this time since the town is currently paying off the bond for the property’s acquisition.

Seth commented that it’s a chicken and egg situation as the wastewater would support residential and commercial development in the village, which would in turn help with bonding by growing the tax base.

The group then discussed permitting and whether ANR would allow phased permitting and/or systems. Kevin added that an Indirect Discharge Permit would require a year of preparation and, if phasing is allowed by ANR, could be acquired in phase 1 or 2.

The Planning Commission agreed to send their comments and questions to Kevin within the next 8 to 10 days at which time Kevin would prepare the final report.

Melissa said she would schedule a follow up meeting once the final report was received.

Determination of Aquatic Permitting Criteria Compliance -Scope of Work & Cost Estimate

Kevin Camara and Amy Macrellis were present. Amy gave a brief overview of the work necessary to prove preliminary aquatic permitting criteria compliance for ANR. She added that gathering

samples has been slightly difficult due to the rainy weather, but she plans to gather the minimum necessary samples in order to prove compliance prior to the end of the year. Melissa mentioned that the Westford School had been sampling the Browns River for many years.

Amy said that data would be useful.

Melissa offered to contact Mr. Sherman to request any water quality data he has for the Browns River.

Seth MOVED to approve Stone Environmental Inc's scope of work and budget.

Wendy SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 5 – 0.

Melissa said she would prepare a contract for review by the Selectboard and Stone Environmental Inc.

Interim Bylaws for T4 Front Yard Setback

Wendy MOVED to approve the interim bylaws.

Seth SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 5 – 0.

VCRD Community Visit Update

Melissa explained that VCRD offered an abbreviated community visit to Westford which would focus on three or four pre-selected priority projects, such as the United Church of Westford, Brick meeting House and Town Common.

Wendy MOVED to recommend acceptance of VCRD's offer.

Koi SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 5 – 0.

Making It Happen Conference - Overview by Wendy Doane

Wendy stated that her big take aways from the conference were towns need to change power structures, increase community participation in all demographics and develop creative public engagement models which provide meals and childcare. She also noted businesses are a key component and need to be invited to participate in the process.

FY20 Budget Proposal & Town Report

The Planning Commission discussed the possibility of recommending the creation of a grant writing committee with a budget to hire a part-time grant writer. They agreed a number of other towns do this with great success.

Wendy said Fairfield has had a grant writer for 12 years which is shared between the community center who provide \$2,500, school who provide \$2,500, library who provide \$2,500 and town who provide \$4,000 towards the grant writer's salary. She said the grant writer works 20 hours per week for \$18 per hour. She noted that the grant funds received far exceeded the funds spent on the grant writer.

The Planning Commission agreed to investigate this further prior to the FY 20-21 budget season as well as meet with potential partners to discuss the idea.

2018 Work Plan & Project Updates (See *Work Plan* for details)

The Planning Commission reviewed their work plan.

Citizens to be Heard, Announcements & Other Business

No citizens to be heard.

Minutes of August 20, 2018 Meeting

Seth MOVED to approve the minutes.

Mark SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 3 – 0.

Wendy abstained.

Minutes of September 11, 2018 Meeting

Wendy MOVED to approve the minutes.

Koi SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 4 – 0.

Minutes of September 17, 2018 Meeting

Koi MOVED to approve the minutes.

Wendy SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 3 – 0.

Seth abstained.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:44 p.m.

Submitted by,

Melissa Manka, Westford Planning Coordinator