

TOWN OF WESTFORD
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Minutes for July 15, 2019 Meeting
Approved on August 19, 2019

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

Commission/Board Members Absent:

Also, Present Melissa Manka (Planning Coordinator), Bill Cleary, Kristen Underwood and Donna Rizzo.

The meeting began at: 6:30p.m.

Amendments to Agenda

No amendments were offered.

Citizens to be Heard,

No citizens to be heard.

National Science Foundation – Smart & Connected Communities Grant (Kristen Underwood)

Dr. Kristen Underwood and Dr. Donna Rizzo of UVM were present to discuss their National Science Foundation – Smart and Connected Communities Grant proposal. Dr. Underwood began by stating lack of wastewater and water infrastructure hinders growth and economic development in many communities. She said villages house our historical and cultural resources and these assets stir economic development, but without wastewater options and opportunities are limited. Those present then had a lengthy conversation about the town's community wastewater work to date and the proposal at hand. Dr. Underwood said the funds, if awarded, would be used for the development of smart technologies that increase maximum system capacity, reduce maintenance and operation costs and/or optimize system operations. She said they hope to work with Rutland City, Bristol and Westford for the board spectrum of population sizes and infrastructure. The Commission asked who was currently working on smart wastewater technology. Dr. Underwood answered they have been speaking with a company out of Canada. She said she only knows of this technology being used in Europe and Cincinnati. There was some discussion about vendor contracts and ongoing maintenance and repair. Dr. Rizzo said any vendor in the field could be chosen and on-going warranties, contracts and/or maintenance agreements would be decided by the town. S. Jensen suggested development of a portion of the system in Westford to serve as a pilot project. Ms. Underwood said Westford could serve as an example for other rural communities currently lacking public water and wastewater infrastructure. She said letters of intent are due by Tuesday, August 6th with a refined budget and proposal to be developed and reviewed by all parties at the beginning of August. M. Manka said she would send Ms. Underwood's proposal summary and a letter of intent to the Selectboard and request placement on their July 25th agenda. B. Cleary said he would summarize this meeting for the Selectboard.

M. Manka said the Commission's next steps are issuing an RFQ for Clean Water State Revolving Fund eligibility. She said the Commission plans to complete the remaining 20% of the preliminary engineering report as well as conduct an income survey for the village. If the survey shows the median household income in the village is below the state's grant threshold, the town may be eligible for a construction grant. B. Cleary asked that any future construction proposals be extremely well thought-out prior to being presented to the Selectboard.

M. Manka handed out Warren's wastewater ordinance and briefly discussed Warren's system and ordinance. M. Manka said they used Aldrich and Forcier to develop the ordinance and set up the funding and fees structures. The Commission asked Melissa to contact Warren's Town Administrator to ask how much they paid Aldrich and Forcier for their work. S. Jensen asked M. Manka to ask Lynette whether the CWSRF can be used of ordinance and fee structure development.

Town Center Area - Facilities & Infrastructure

Brownfields Program

M. Manka said she nominated the Pigeon property for Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment and on July 8th the CCRPC Brownfield Committee approved the project. She added consultant selection has begun.

Town Office Space

M. Manka said the Selectboard's municipal office optimization report ultimately stated the town offices will require expansion of some sort. She then noted that the Selectboard requested a change of scope, which has yet to be completed. Commissioners mentioned the Pigeon property, located beside east of the town office, is for sale. They agreed the property is of significant value to the town and could be a step towards finding a parking, storage, vault and meeting space solution. B. Cleary said he would summarize this conversation at the July 25th Selectboard meeting and ask the Selectboard to set up a joint meeting to discuss the status of community facilities. G. Lamphere and K. Boynton discussed public involvement. G. Lamphere suggested developing public participation, education and outreach plan as it pertains to community facilities and infrastructure needs. G. Lamphere also suggested drafting a letter prior to the joint meeting listing topics of conversation (e.g. stormwater, wastewater, parking, master planning, etc.) with 3 bullet points on each topic and lots of time allotted to questions and discussion.

Stormwater & Drainage Issues

M. Manka explained the increased use of the Common has increased concerns over the Common's wetness. She said these issues should be addressed if the town wants to promote use of the Common. She recently spoke with D. Albrecht about the matter, who responded in a July 1st email. He suggested applying for an Ecosystem Restoration Grant to develop a Stormwater Master Plan outlining priority projects and then use UPWP funds to nail down project details. The Planning Commission felt this work may be premature since several properties (i.e. Town Office, Pigeon and Hutchins) will likely be redeveloped in the coming years. S. Jensen also noted that one ERP is granted to a town and with the school triggering the 3 acres stormwater rule any ERP application should include the school, which will complicate the application. G. Lamphere suggested this item be placed on the Planning Commission work plan for re-evaluation on an annual basis. In the meanwhile, the Commission suggested the Town Common Committee hire

an engineer to evaluate the existing drainage system on the Common and determine whether its functioning properly and/or requires maintenance. The Commission agreed upgrading and expanding the western parking area on the Commission is a good first step to alleviating parking pressures. M. Manka said she would discuss these items with the Committee.

News, Announcements & Other Business

Development Updates

The Planning Commission will discuss this item at their next meeting.

Act 250 Jurisdictional Opinion

The Planning Commission will discuss this item at their next meeting.

Draft River Corridor Regulation

The Planning Commission will discuss this item at their next meeting.

Work Plan & Project Updates

The Planning Commission reviewed and revised their work plan.

2019 Community Survey Results (relating to Ch. 10 & Maps of Town Plan) & 2020 Town Plan – Chapters 10 & Maps

The Planning Commission will discuss this item at their next meeting.

Minutes of the June 17, 2019 Meeting

S. Jensen MOVED to approve the minutes as amended.

M. Letorney SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 5 – 0.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:38 p.m.

Submitted by,
Melissa Manka, Westford Planning Coordinator