

**TOWN OF WESTFORD  
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES  
MINUTES FOR JANUARY 28, 2020 MEETING  
Approved on February 10, 2020**

**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), Mike Smith, John Doane, Heather Armata, Kate Lalley, Pat Haller, Francois Ross, Vicky Ross, Marc Fryberg, George Pigeon.

The meeting began at: 6:35 p.m.

**Amendments to Agenda**

No amendments proposed.

**Citizens to be Heard,**

No citizens to be heard.

**1705 Rte128 Property w/ Sub-Committee**

Ph 2 ESA

M. Manka confirmed receipt of the CCRCP's phase 2 environmental site assessment funding approval letter and projected consultant timeline. The consultants expect the phase 2 study to be completed by May of 2020.

Appraisal

The 1705 Route 128 parcel appraised for \$230,000 and did not factor in commercial potential and/or brownfield results. H. Armata said she reviewed the appraisal and finds it to be accurate as there aren't commercial projections and/or water or wastewater connections currently available. She noted that the house is likely a tear down with the possibility of renovation. Seth Jensen noted the Village Center Designation tax credits for historic structure renovation may be a deciding factor, but ultimately that would be a community or owner/developer decision. The appraisal will be reevaluated after the phase 2 environmental site assessment is completed.

**Town Center Community Water System**

Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan

M. Manka explained that the Town is in the process of applying for a Step 1 CWSRF loan to acquire preliminary engineering, environmental assessments, financial scenarios, a draft sewer ordinance and user/connection fees. She noted that the loan has 50% loan forgiveness with the Commission repaying the remainder using their annual special project budget. M. Manka stated completion is expected in the fall of 2020. She noted that the information will make the town eligible for grant funding and allow the town to

better inform residents.

#### Clean Water State Revolving Fund Grant & Timeline

M. Manka explained that the previous week the State has offered 1.1 million in loan forgiveness for construction of the wastewater system. However, the Town would be required to complete preliminary engineering, final design, permitting and hold a construction bond vote by June of 2021. The group discussed this timeline at length. M. Manka noted that gaining Selectboard/Town Step 2 loan approval for final design and permitting will be a hurdle since the cost is estimated at \$140,000 and it will be unknown whether construction funding is approved/secured. She stated again that the State timeline is going to be difficult to conform to and she had a follow up call into the State to gain further details. V. Ross suggested explaining to the State that the Step 2 requirement is an obstacle and ask them to help us solve that problem.

#### Tax Increment Financing Meeting w/ Ted Brady, ACCD Deputy Secretary & Finance Scenario Meeting w/ Julie Beth Hinds, Consultant

M. Manka informed the group of the project based TIF ACCD is drafting for the 2020 legislative session. M. Smith offered to put individuals in touch with developers who have worked within TIF districts. M. Letorney was interested in this meeting with individuals who have worked with TIFs. K. Boynton offered to put M. Letorney in contact with Tim and Chip from St. Albans to learn more about TIFs from the municipal side. G. Lamphere offered to contact Ted Brady to discuss an advocacy strategy such as talking points and key legislators. He also requested a Planning Commission meeting with Rep. Robert Bancroft. M. Manka explained if project based TIF language were approved by the legislature it would likely become effective in July of 2020 and the Town would then need to apply for enrollment.

#### Environmental, Financial & Structural Feasibility Studies

To be discussed at another time.

#### Ownership Options & Roll of Town

The group discussed some ownership scenarios. G. Pigeon offered to hold the note for the property but stated he would need approval from family members. H. Armata stated it could be written to have a balloon payments and option to buy with a cancellation clause, if the Town needed additional time to prepare funding sources and/or hold a bond vote.

It was discussed that alternative development partnerships and/or funding sources should be investigated such as Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, Vermont River Conservancy, Community Development Block Grant, Cathedral Square, Blackrock, etc.

#### Decision Tree

There was some discussion as to what kind of staffing and resources will be needed to move forward, if Selectboard sanctioned. There was also agreement that a flow or critical path chart would need to be developed.

#### Selectboard Meeting

The group reviewed and discussed the draft PowerPoint. V. Ross offered to revise the presentation to better identify the two projects at play and explain their interrelatedness.

V. Ross, M. Letorney, S. Jensen and M. Manka volunteered to meet on Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 9am at the Town Offices to discuss/revise the presentation. The group tentatively agreed V. Ross would be lead presenter, M. Letorney would focus on the Pigeon property and commercial potential, S. Jensen would focus on wastewater and others would chime in as needed.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:54 p.m.

Submitted by,  
Melissa Manka, Westford Planning Coordinator