

**TOWN OF WESTFORD
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
MINUTES FOR JULY 6, 2020 MEETING
Approved on July 20, 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) and Taylor Newton.

The meeting began at: 6:33 p.m.

Amendments to Agenda

No amendments offered.

Citizens to be Heard & Announcements

No citizens to be heard or announcements.

1705 Route 128 Property

Phase 2 Environmental Site Assessment Update (Discussion)

M. Manka briefly reviewed her memo to the Commission regarding the preliminary Phase 2 findings.

T. Newton noted that the use and development of the property need to be known in order to develop a corrective action plan (CAP) for the property.

G. Gebauer said the town would need known development partners in order to develop the site design and determine users for CAP development.

S. Jensen suggested cleaning the property to residential standards to keep the door open for future uses.

G. Lamphere noted that Vermont River Conservancy may be a potential partner/purchaser for the property,

Review Wetland Delineation Quotes (Review & Approval)

M. Letorney will seek additional wetland delineation quotes for the 1705 property prior to the Commission's next meeting.

CDBG – PG & IG Meeting Summary (Discussion)

M. Manka asked whether G. Pigeon officially responded to the town regarding the family's willingness to work with the town and wait for the Commission to develop a path forward given the current circumstances.

M. Letorney stated he has spoken with G. Pigeon and they are willing to work with the town.

M. Letorney noted that G. Pigeon is seeking more than fair market value given the commercial potential of the property.

T. Newton stated that CDBG can be used to fund a commercial appraisal of the property. He also noted that the town would need an option to buy or site control agreement in place prior to applying.

M. Manka suggested requesting Selectboard approval to work with H. Armata to draft said agreement.

T. Newton stated that the CDBG could also be used to develop an existing conditions and future development plan, which are necessary for CAP.

S. Jensen noted that using said funds would mean prolonging the process/project. He wanted folks to be aware of that as the use of state and federal dollars typically means more time spent at each step in the process.

M. Manka noted that the Commission has limited special project funds, which also need to be used to repay the CWSRF loan. She thinks the Commission should be cautious with use of their funds, especially given the current economic impact of the pandemic.

T. Newton stated that he should be able to develop a CDBG planning grant scope of work and budget for the 1705 property after the project meeting tomorrow. He said he needs a better understanding of what the bus committee members are willing and able to do as volunteers. He noted that developing the future site design and corrective action plan would take 1 – 2 years as the CDBG funds would not become available until spring of next year with CAP development happening sometime after the site design is complete.

The Commission briefly discussed public water systems. S. Jensen noted that the CDBG implementation grant may be of use with regard to providing clean water to the private wells contaminated by the underground storage tanks formerly located at the Westford Store as the existing dwellings and potential future LMI ownership units may meet grant income requirements. It was made clear that Champlain Housing Trust was a non-profit as opposed to a public housing authority, which may positively impact how the state looks as water supply requirements. M. Letorney stated he would reach out to DEC to determine at what point public water supply requirements would be triggered.

Next Steps (Discussion)

M. Manka said her notes currently state the following:

Request a Selectboard meeting for 7/23 to give a town center projects update, request a letter of credit, discuss a CDBG application, discussion a 1705 property option to buy or site control agreement. T. Newton will provide a scope of work and budget for the CDBG application after the 1705 property meeting scheduled for tomorrow.

The status of project based TIF legislation is unknown at this time.

Request a 8/27 Selectboard meeting in order to hold a CDBG public hearing and review an option to buy or site control agreement.

Town Center Area - Community Wastewater Project

CWSRF Letter of Credit Request (Discussion, Review & Approval)

The Planning Commission reviewed and approved the final draft of the letter of credit request. G. Gebauer will send the approved document to M. Manka so it may be submitted to the Selectboard along with requests for meeting.

Town of Montgomery Community Wastewater Public Outreach (Discussion)

G. Gebauer briefly discussed Montgomery's public outreach initiative and website. He suggested the Commission reach out to their website designer in the future.

There was discussion regarding whether the Commission had enough information to begin a full-on public outreach initiative at this time. It was suggested that perhaps the Commission provide high level visioning and general timeline information to the public with a disclaimer that the town is still in the process of gathering the information necessary to make an informed decision on how, and if, to proceed as well as potential funding sources to cover the cost of the projects envisioned.

M.Manka suggested developing a spreadsheet which identifies projects, project timelines and funding sources in order to keep track of all the moving parts.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:29 p.m.

Submitted by,
Melissa Manka
Westford Planning Coordinator