

TOWN OF WESTFORD
DEVELOPMENTAL REVIEW BOARD MINUTES
Minutes for Monday, January 25, 2021.
Approved on February 8, 2021

Board Members Present: David Baczewski, William Cleary (Vice-Chair), Andrew Collier, Jesse Labrecque, Matt Wamsganz (Chair), Dennis Angiono, Francois Ross.

Board Members Absent:

Also Present: Melissa Manka (Town Planner), Callie Hamdy (Minute Clerk), Taylor Newton (CCRPC), Regina Mahony (CCRPC).

The meeting began at 7: 15pm

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

No amendments were offered.

MINUTES OF JANUARY 11, 2021 MEETING

Bill motioned to approve the minutes as amended, Dennis 2nd. Motion passed 7-0.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD, ANNOUNCEMENTS & OTHER BUSINESS

No citizens to be heard, announcements or other business.

ESSENTIALS OF LAND USE PLANNING TRAINING

Taylor Newton and Regina Mahony from the CCRPC were present to do a training on the Essentials of Land Use Planning. Some highlights from the discussion with the board:

Municipal Plans expire every 8 years, and the adoption process can take several months. Westford is in the process of updating the plan right now, although Covid made things difficult over the last year.

Subdivision is required to be a bylaw and allow for grandfathering. This is different from an ordinance because upon passing an ordinance everything must become compliant, there is no grandfathering.

In state statute, VT is a Dillon Law state, meaning statute informs towns what they can regulate and, in some cases, the minimum standards of regulation, but towns can exceed standards if they wish. The state can also set regulatory prohibitions, such as prohibiting towns from regulating agriculture and forestry.

Taylor encouraged that the board should always have their Rules & Procedures and Code of Ethics available. Melissa stated that they are on the website and all members have copies. They are reviewed once a year.

Taylor opened the floor for questions. Bill commented that a few times they breezed over sections that they felt were more for the PC, but Bill feels those are also important things to hear from the DRB level. Bill also appreciated Taylor's "Vermont Planning Goals" slide with the diagram, because it brought clarity to the Planning Commission and Town Plan process.

Andrew asked Taylor what the State's biggest areas of concern are right now. Regina mentioned the three biggest areas are Housing (Bill S.237 had a lot of changes for housing that may transition into zoning). A lot of it had to do with how housing has contributed to social and racial inequalities. Taylor mentioned that generally there is a push to remove some zoning barriers for affordable and multi-family housing. Regina mentioned Act 250 legislation and water quality, particularly decreasing phosphorus levels in Lake Champlain was of particular interest.

Taylor then went on to explain the other projects the CCRPC helps with in Westford such as planning on the 1705 property, grant writing, and project management.

Bill asked how the CCRPC, as regional planners, thinks Westford's zoning stack up against the surrounding towns or like towns? Taylor has not been at CCRPC that long, but the form based code in the village is very progressive for a town of our size. Compared to other small municipalities we are doing great.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm

Submitted by,
Melissa Manka, Town Planner

Callie Hamdy, Minute Clerk