

PERMIT APPLICATION FOR JULY 4th PARADE

The Town is holding a 4th of July celebration including the traditional parade around the Common. A permit is required from the state. The permit is free. Nanette had the State Police signed off on the permit because the Town does not have its own police department. Dave Baczewski made a motion to approve the permit application for the 4th of July Parade as written, seconded by Lee McClenny. Motion passed 3-0.

CORRESPONDENCE

The UVM Health Network Home Health & Hospice sent a letter expressing their thanks for the funding provided by the Town of Westford in its town budget.

Lee mentioned that two residents have approached him regarding the funds coming from the state/federal government for infrastructure. The residents would like to see some of those funds used to purchase additional playground equipment on the common.

COMMUNICATION

There was no communication.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE & PAYROLL WARRANTS

Greg presented the accounts payable and payroll warrants. The Board members will come into the office to sign them.

PUBLIC HEARING – PROPOSED WESTFORD LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

The public hearing was called to order at 7:00 p.m. and was held as part of the process of amending Westford's Land Use & Development Regulations. Gordon Gebauer from the Planning Commission was present as background, Gordon explained that in 2015 the Planning Commission did a significant rewrite of the Land Use & Development regulations that included the Form Base Code for the Town Center. Since then, they have had two amendments, one in 2017 and one in 2018. The 2017 edit was small, 2018 was similar. The proposed amendments for this year are more substantial and came about as the result of public input. Many have been suggested by residents and some by the Development Review Board to address situations that had not come up in previous iterations of the regulations. The Planning Commission is trying to get the amendments approved in time for the building season. These changes if adopted could significantly help some people.

The changes are as follows:

Language was added to allow campgrounds in the R5 and R10 districts. This came about because of a request from a landowner in the R10 district to allow primitive campgrounds. After discussion it made sense to have it as an allowable use in R5 and R10.

Changes to the R5 planning and design standards. R5 is the district that runs mainly along paved roads. In this district an applicant can gain points for design features, in this instance a landowner had suggested increasing the number of points allowed or available. The Planning Commission included some of the recommendations and reworded some planning and design standards.

The Planning Commission was asked to consider allowing taverns and restaurants as an adaptive reuse in the R10 district for historic structures such as barns. The Commission was not sure this is going to apply to many buildings, but found it is a reasonable request.

A landowner contacted the Commission regarding the wetland buffer in the town center area. The town wetland buffer was 100 feet, and the state is 50 feet. They agreed it made sense to reduce it to the state standard of 50 feet.

Under the current zoning regulations if a property owner had a non-conforming use there was not an avenue for them to expand their building or developing their property because of the non-conforming use. The Planning Commission amended language to allow minor expansion, so those property owners have more flexibility to develop their property.

The Historical Society requested a waiver of the form-based code if the building in question is a replica of a historical structure. This came about because the Historical Society is hoping to build a replica blacksmith shop to serve as a museum. The Planning Commission saw a lot of historical and educational value in these sorts of exceptions to the form-based code.

The Planning Commission asks that the Selectboard agrees with these changes and votes to adopt the amended regulations. Bill opened the floor up to comments and questions. Dave had reviewed the changes and thanked Gordon for his excellent recap. He thinks all the changes are very appropriate and in tune with what the public wants.

There were no other comments from the public. Lee McClenny made a motion to close the public hearing at 7:11pm, seconded by Dave Baczewski. Motion passed 3-0.

ADOPTION OF PROPOSED WESTFORD LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

Lee McClenny made a motion to adopt the proposed changes to the Westford Land Use & Development Regulations as submitted, seconded by Dave Baczewski. Motion passed 3-0.

REVIEW, DISCUSSION & APPROVAL OF CLEAN WATER STATE REVOLVING FUND STEP 2 APPLICATION & ENGINEERING SERVICES

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) Step 2 Application & Engineering Services was provided to the Selectboard for their review. This is part of the Wastewater project. The project's future is uncertain, but promising.

The Step 2 effort involves a hydraulic study to determine whether pretreatment is possible/advisable, geotechnical work to determine the extent of ledge removal, final design, permitting, user commitments, sewer ordinance development, final cost estimates and extensive public outreach. Once Step 2 is complete, the project will be shovel ready. The total cost for Step 2 is projected to be \$250,351, however with the submission of the Step 2 application the Town will be eligible for a 100% loan forgiveness of up to \$125,000, an amount that would not need to be paid back if the bond vote fails and/or the project does not move to construction.

Melissa Manka, Town Planner, was present. She provided a brief history of the Town's search for wastewater capacity from testing properties around the Common which was unsuccessful to the purchase of the Jackson Property (now Maple Shade Town Forest) which had the capacity needed.

Dave and Bill asked that because this is a loan forgiveness and not a grant can the Town spend \$125,000 without having to pay it back? This was confirmed. However, once these funds are spent, the Town will need to be careful that any grants and matching fund works together. Dave is concerned that there is an appearance that the Town is spending town money because of these matches. He is on board with the creativity but is concerned with the message that is going out to the public because this is difficult to understand. His biggest concern is 1.) something is missed, and we have put ourselves into a corner where we must spend money, and 2.) he does not want to presume the ARPA the CWSRF money will be there to bail us out. He wants to be transparent and wants the public to know that public funds have not been committed when it comes to these grants. The public outreach has not really been there. He feels we are ahead of the public outreach, and this could trip us up going into a public bond.

Mark thinks those concerns mirror that of the Planning Commission. Yes, there are funding sources out there which are not guaranteed. Seth recognizes the different funding pieces are complicated. The Planning Commission was intentional in how they structured that application so that Westford did not spend public funds until the project is approved by a bond vote. He thinks a strategy to protect the Town is there, but that it could be mapped out better for the Selectboard and public. It gets into some conjecture when you get into the construction piece but if we all understand that uncertainty, we are not going to push the construction button until the uncertainty is worked out. Meanwhile this engineering work in Step II has certainty.

Lee shares Dave's concerns. He thanked the Planning Commission and their partners for their explanation, work, and help. It is complicated and requires a lot of skill, effort, and energy. It is still open whether the voters will approve a bond, so it is important to explain and educate on how this project is important to the residents and community. Lee is concerned about the perception people may have that we are creating momentum towards something the voters have not agreed to. Moving towards being shovel ready is admirable. so, he is grateful there is an option to restrictions on how much money can be spent.

Gordon thinks Lee and Dave's concerns are valid. With the \$125,000 available they think they can get very close to shovel ready, including engineering work and public outreach. Unfortunately, the way these projects are funded is very different than say a transportation project. With infrastructure you must do all this work up front and find the money for it. This is the closest Westford has been to creating the community wastewater system and believes the \$125,000 would bring us even closer. Amy Macrellis added that there is a risk in not allowing the full \$125,000 to go forward and she suggests taking full advantage of the 100% loan forgiveness. If the State does not have Westford's application on file they cannot act in favor. If they have the full application for Step II, Westford is more likely to get the 100% loan forgiveness.

Bill brought up the cost of the engineering report. He does not know if the cost is driven by state requirements. In his opinion, a quarter of a million dollars is a lot of money and requested an explanation about the costs.

Amy explained that if you think of it as a percentage of the construction costs, \$250,000 is around 10% of the whole project cost. In terms of percentage, it is in line with how much it would take to do a larger centralized wastewater system. She agrees it is a huge investment.

Bill wondered how adding pre-treatment later would change the construction costs. Mark suggested to think of it as a second bond vote and all the preparation that goes into that. Additionally, construction costs would be higher. Seth explained it is important to submit the funding application for the most you are likely to spend and then closely monitor the expenses. It is very hard to go back to a funding agency for more money, it is easier to say you did not spend as much as you said you needed. It is also important to do the engineering full out even if you do not utilize the full build out to see the cost benefit. Conversation needs to be had regarding the pre-treatment and how much capacity is gotten from it.

Mark said the Planning Commission is confident that the \$125,000 would be available through other sources and therefore would not have to be included in the bond vote. The Planning Commission has a history of not taking financial risk with this project and he does not think we are taking a risk that is going to have a negative effect on the Town in terms of the voter's perception or leaving the voters on the hook for the money. How those funds play out we are not sure yet. We have been told there is more federal money coming into the pipeline for the project and are receiving positive signals from state leaders. This is a cornerstone part of the current administration's economic development plan. Not enough confidence to put the Town in jeopardy, but enough to say that this is the next logical step for the Town.

Melissa explained that so much has happened at the federal and state level over the past couple months that there is not a lot of clarity right now. The Planning Commission is trying to get answers, but it has been challenging because plans for the stimulus money have not been made public yet. If Westford submits an application for \$250,000 and takes advantage of the \$125,000 loan forgiveness the state will have our application for the next year. Seth echoed that having a formal statement from the Selectboard with parameters from the perspective of advocating for DEC (Department of Environmental Conservation), helps the Planning Commission advocate for the second subsidy with DEC. From the State's perspective there is a lack of understanding of rural wastewater. The State often looks to Westford because it is the closest to having a shovel ready project.

Everybody agreed that if we \$125,000 of Westford's money was spent, a bond vote would be required. Dave wants to make sure everything is as transparent as possible, as transparency will help us come to a positive outcome with the bond vote.

Dave Baczewski motioned to approve the Step II State Clean Water Revolving Fund application in the amount of \$250,351 if no more than \$125,000 is spent by the engineering team prior to other funds being procured or going to bond vote, seconded by Lee McClenny. Motion passed 3-0.

PLANNING COMMISSION UPDATE ON PROJECTS

Gordon was present to give an update on the Planning Commission's current projects. The adoption of the Land Use Regulations and Step II Application are the most critical update.

One other item they wanted to bring to the Selectboard's attention is that they are forming a public outreach committee to work on public outreach and education to the community regarding the proposed community wastewater system. They have decided that the committee will have two members from the Planning Commission, two members of the public, Amy, and Juli-Beth, and they are seeking to have a Selectboard member on the committee as well. They have chosen this format because when the Jackson Farm and Forest project came before them a few years ago, a similar committee was formed to help steer the project through to

completion. The committee would outline the process for public engagement and communication. They have had two members of the public agree to join, Pat Haller and Heather Armata. Gordon and Melissa will also be part of the committee.

Melissa added that obviously the Planning Commission, as they have done for the past couple of years, has been advocating for themselves in Montpelier and in the state offices and they would love the support as things come up from the Selectboard.

Mark advised that the VT Community Planning Grant that was awarded to Westford is unable to be accessed because the 1705 V Route 128 property has not yet been appraised. Bill thanked the Planning Commission for all their hard work.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Dave Baczewski made a motion to enter Executive Session at 8:25 p.m. to discuss personnel, seconded by Lee McClenny. Motion passed 3-0. People in attendance were Bill Cleary, Lee McClenny, Dave Baczewski, and Greg Barrows. The Board exited Executive Session at 8:47 p.m. No action taken.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bill Cleary, Chair
Selectboard

Callie Hamdy
Assistant Town Clerk/Minute Clerk

GUEST LIST

Caroline Brown
Buddy Meilleur, LCATV
Amy Macrellis
Gordon Gebauer
Glenn Rogers
Melissa Manka
Mark Letorney
Seth Jensen

**TOWN OF WESTFORD HIGHWAY DEPT.
ROAD SCHEDULE
May 27, 2021 – June 10, 2021**

Work to be done:

- Grade roads as needed when weather permits.
- Add gravel to roads
- Continue working on Old Stage Road ditching and culvert replacement.
- Service on the Cat excavator

Work completed:

- Graded Allen Irish Road, parts of Woods Hollow Road, Old Stage Road, Cambridge Road.
- Hauled in winter sand.
- Changed cutting edge on John Deere loader.
- Hauled in gravel.
- Some of the ditching stone lining and culvert replacements on Old Stage Road

Approved at the 6/10/21 Selectboard Meeting.