

**TOWN OF WESTFORD  
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES  
MINUTES FOR OCTOBER 4, 2021 MEETING  
Approved on October 18, 2021**

**The meeting began:** 6:31pm

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

**Also, Present:** Melissa Manka - Town Planner, Katherine Harris - resident

**Amendments to Agenda:** None

**Citizens to be Heard, Announcements, Correspondence & Other Business:** Paul Birnholz is interested in being included in the wastewater service area. He would like to be included in the future end user meetings. Reserved capacity should be included in the ordinance.

Katherine Harris has joined the meeting to hear about wastewater. She is a potential end user. Thanks to Katherine for attending.

**Minutes of the September 20, 2021 Meeting:** Not available

**Draft FY 23 Planning Commission Budget & Town Report:** Melissa revised the budget to reflect discussion in the last meeting. She will submit it and Mark will attend the October 28<sup>th</sup> Selectboard meeting – to present the PC budget.

George shared a draft outline of the PC's town report. He encourages other Commissioners to add to the outline by this weekend, if anything is missing.

**October 14th Selectboard Meeting Assessment & Preparation:** Selectboard Chair, Bill Cleary has requested a standalone 45-minute meeting. The meeting should include wastewater public outreach, 1705 property, wastewater ordinance priorities, bond vote request. This meeting would replace attendance at the October 14<sup>th</sup> SB meeting. This meeting should take place after the PC's October 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, where the contractors will begin to outline the process and content for a wastewater ordinance and bond vote. We should invite the SB to the PC's November 1<sup>st</sup> meeting. George will follow up with Nanette about the SB attending the November 1<sup>st</sup> meeting and taking the PC off the SB's October 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Town Center Community Wastewater Project**

- **Northern Borders and Economic Development Administration Grant (NBRC/EDA):** There is a question as to whether or not the Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Protection Rules will need to be addressed for the grant award. Melissa is waiting on follow up information and what else is needed for the grant agreement.
- **Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) ARPA Funds:** ANR is holding a webinar on October 7<sup>th</sup> to release rules and guidance for the release of ARPA funds. It was discussed

to request Liz Curry, the town grant writer, attend the October 7<sup>th</sup> webinar and review the match requirements of the NBRC/EDA grant and provide a memo to report out on each. Koi will follow up with Liz.

- **Clean Water State Revolving Fund Step 1 Facility Plan Approval & Step 2**

**Application:** Approval of the Environmental Impact Report is holding up the approved funding for the Step 2. The Environmental Impact Report indicates that there is no significant impact from the project and, when possible, the work will take place in places already impacted such as driveways. The Step 2 Loan Agreement will need to be executed by the SB. Brad and Allen (contractors) are reviewing the services agreement and will outline the priority activities for the first \$125,000. Public outreach and the draft wastewater ordinance will be included in the priority list. The details of the Step 1 and Step 2 were discussed. Melissa followed in email with the following information.

- Step 1 Loan Request - \$39,050 w/ 50% forgiven = \$19,525 owed
- Step 2 Request - \$250,352 w/ \$125,00 forgiven = \$125,352 owed, if additional funds are acquired (local ARPA fund request) or a bond vote approves said expense. At this point, we can only spend the \$125,000 to be forgiven.
- Step 1 & 2 are rolled together for a total step 2 LOAN AMOUNT of \$289,401 w/ a \$144,525 forgiven and \$144,876 to be repaid or rolled into step 3, if the project moves forward.

George requested that Melissa include the Step 1 and 2 numbers in a memo to the SB along with the information in the September 30<sup>th</sup> email to the PC – requesting execution of the Step 2 loan agreement.

- **Public Outreach Committee:** The walk through took place. The public outreach committee feels it went well and good questions were asked. The walk included the Common and a walk down Brookside Road to the field.

The senior's meeting will take place on Monday at 12:30.

The larger community meeting will take place on October 19<sup>th</sup> at the school. Eric Ford is working on hybrid technology and is doing a run through at the school on Tuesday.

It has not been decided if a site visit to Waitsfield/Warren will happen. This will be decided after the October 19<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Having ordinance language will help with outreach.

The website blog is being populated with detailed information on the exploration of capacity at different sites.

Approximately, 20 surveys were circulated to the service area. 14 responses have been received with 46% interested or maybe interested in taking part (8 interested, 3 maybe, 4 no). This is good news. Using this as part of public outreach was discussed. It was explained that the survey was used to gauge interest and identify what other information people need. It was not intended that survey results would be shared but used to inform feasibility and public outreach needs. The Step 2 will include firm confirmation from end users, as the contractors work with each property on hooking up. The survey results are in addition to the existing confirmed users – town office, library, old store, Ira Allen, Common Hall, Westford Country Store.

We have reached the point of having enough properties that would connect to continue moving forward with the project. The survey is also gathering questions from end users.

## 1705 Route 128 Property Project

- **Vermont Community Development Program Planning Grant:** Grant agreement conditions have been met and notice to proceed has been received. Reimbursements can now be submitted. The first meeting is October 27<sup>th</sup>. The public engagement will begin the 1<sup>st</sup> week of November. Melissa has talked with Steve Libby (Executive Director of VT River Conservancy (VRC). VRC will submit an application for the January VT Housing Conservation Board (VHCB) funding round. For this application the following things will need to be completed – property appraisal, purchase and sales agreement, preliminary site plan, confirmation from all project partners. That funding cycle will be out for public deliberation until March 16<sup>th</sup>. The challenge is that the property can't be cleaned up under the Brownfields program until it is owned by a non-profit organization or the town. VHCB guidelines state that the property can't be purchased until the property is cleaned up.

Mark informs the PC that the property owner is not happy with the current timeline. They are frustrated with how long the Brownfields work has taken and the appraisal is not complete. They would like an actionable agreement in place by the end of March. In order for this to happen the appraisal and purchase and sales agreement need to be complete. Melissa and Taylor are working with the appraiser.

- **Brownfield Program – Phase 2, Petroleum Clean Up:** The supplemental PAH is complete. A summary of this report should be provided to the SB. The current report confirms that contamination is found in the ditch. This can now be used to inform the site plan and that filling the ditch should be considered.

The Corrective Action Plan for the petroleum under the storage tank is in the appeal period until the end of October. After that the work can go out to bid. This clean up will be paid by the property owner's insurance company. The archaeological report constricts where this clean up can happen and it should be anticipated that more clean up will need to happen during redevelopment.

- **FY 22 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP):** The scope of work has been approved and Hoyle & Tanner have received notice to proceed. The first site walk will take place at 1pm on October 19<sup>th</sup>. The focus of the work is to gather existing conditions and provide scenarios once the preliminary site plan is complete.
- **Discussion with Project Partners & Timeline:** In addition to the request for an actionable agreement, the property owner would also like confirmation of Pigeon family recognition. Using the Pigeon name for a new municipal building has been discussed in the past. The PC offered up Pigeon Park as a better option since public access is a confirmed element of the project and a new municipal building is not.

**American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA):** The committee has met. They will meet again in late October to develop a process for gathering information from the community. The PC should consider submitting a project request. The PC anticipates two requests - \$125,000 for the portion of the Step 2 that is not forgiven. There will also be additional funds for the Step 3. It was discussed that the PC might not be able to consider that all is covered by ARPA with other requests being submitted by the community. It is pointed out that the ARPA funds will be very restricted and many community submissions will be ineligible. It is also discussed that the replacement of the Rt. 108 culvert will be eligible if it can be tied to water quality as identified

by ANR. The culvert project will also enable housing and economic development. The committee will need to be careful with large projects that have not been vetted.

**Newsletter/FPF Article:** October 25<sup>th</sup> is the next deadline for the November Newsletter. The Public Outreach Committee should offer input on upcoming communications.

**2021 Work Plan:** The PC will not attend the SB's October 14<sup>th</sup> meeting. The consultants will join the PC's October 18<sup>th</sup> meeting to discuss the bond vote and wastewater ordinance.

November 1st is the proposed PC and SB meeting, if this is possible the PC will not need to attend the November 11<sup>th</sup> SB meeting.

Starting in November have Brad attend one meeting each month to update the PC on wastewater progress. A progress report should be submitted prior to each meeting with Brad in attendance.

Mark will attend the SB's October 28<sup>th</sup> budget meeting to present the PC budget.

The PC discussed that future utilities should be considered as part of the wastewater construction. Stowe included burying utilities in an extra article, recently. This should be considered for the Westford project since vegetation impact has been a concern of the community. Public water was discussed and if the Jackson property could also be a site for a well. It was identified that the Westford County Store is a possible public water access, as Jeff Hutchins was in the process of making the store well public.

**Adjourn:** 9:06pm