

**TOWN OF WESTFORD
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
MINUTES FOR SEPTEMBER 20, 2021 MEETING**

Approved on October 18, 2021

The meeting began: 6:34pm

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

Also, Present: Melissa Manka - Town Planner, Representative Alyssa Black, Allen Huizenga joined at 7:50 to discuss the end user walk through.

Amendments to Agenda: Switch Wastewater with 1705. Brad Washburn will join for Wastewater agenda item

Citizens to be Heard, Announcements, Correspondence & Other Business: None

Minutes of the August 30, 2021 Meeting

VOTE: *Gordon makes a motion to adopt the minutes of August 30, 2021.*

George seconded.

The motion passed.

Draft FY 23 Planning Commission Budget: Melissa reviewed the draft budget with the Commissioners. Previous fiscal year budgeted to actuals were reviewed. Melissa noted overages in both the legal notices and legal and professional fees categories. The legal notices overage was a coding mistake. Some of the legal notices should have come out of the Selectboard budget. Level funding for legal notices should be fine since the PC budget was not exceeded. Legal and professional services was over budget. Considering the overage in the previous fiscal year and the current work underway, this line item should be increased. Legal fees are included in the VCDP planning grant but in order to avoid taking legal fees from special projects the line item should be increased. Based on the \$200/hour rate of the Town's attorney, the PC agrees that legal and professional fees should be \$1,000.

Including funds for a minute clerk was discussed. The DRB hired a minute clerk for \$20/hr at 10 hrs/month. It was pointed out that having a Commissioner take notes makes it difficult to participate. It is decided to include a note take in the budget. It was discussed if this expense should be included in the Planning Commission budget or the town budget. Other communities have increased budgets to allow for more administrative time and it has freed up planning time to do more for the community.

The Special Projects line item was discussed. The committed funds from the Special Projects funds need to be presented in a way that is easy to understand and makes it clear where money is committed. Melissa will work on a budget justification.

As proposed the Planning Commission budget would see a 27% increase. It is pointed out that the Planning Commission budget has been level funded for many years. Considering the projects that are underway, the increase is warranted.

Prior to voting on the draft budget as amended, other potential expenses were considered. After determining that the Grant Writer is in the town budget and Public Outreach expenses would come from the current fiscal year, it is decided to keep the budget as amended.

***VOTE:** George makes a motion to approve the budget as amended, contingent on new budget justification to be reviewed during the next Planning Commission meeting.*

Gordon seconded.

The motion passed.

1705 Route 128 Property Project

- **Vermont Community Development Program Planning Grant:** All conditions have been fulfilled for the grant agreement. Reimbursements can now be submitted. SE Group and KAS held a kick off meeting in early September. Champlain Housing Trust (CHT) and the VT River Conservancy (VRC) attended. Green Mountain Habitat (GMH) was unable to attend. It has been determined that public outreach for Wastewater needs to happen before public outreach for the 1705 property. Initially, the 1705 project team wanted to hold a public outreach meeting in early October but will now push it back to November. This will impact a grant submission to VT Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB). This timeline will push for submission to VHCB to March 2022. Mark has contacted the property owner and they are fine with the new timeline. This timeline will also impact the UPWP – Hoyle and Tanner contract. Melissa will confirm the new timeline with them and partners. Combining the Wastewater and 1705 projects was discussed. It was pointed out that both projects have different goals and partners. Including all contractors in all the work will drive up the price and complicate the process. It is discussed that the PC needs a working timeline that encompasses the 3 projects – Wastewater, 1705 VCDP Planning and UPWP for village stormwater – to ensure that all the moving pieces are meeting up and coming together. Melissa will work on this timeline.
- **Brownfield Program – Phase 2, Petroleum Clean Up:** The supplemental PAH report from EL Environmental will be complete by the end of September. The Corrective Action Plan (CAP) for the petroleum clean up that is under the underground storage tank is out for public comment. Public comment will end in October and clean up can begin. The clean up will be covered by the property owner's insurance company. The PC requested a memo from EL Environmental to explain how the PAH will impact the wetland buffer during remediation and how does the PAH impact future development.
- **FY 22 Unified Planning Work Program:** The contractor is preparing a scope of services based on the kick off meeting. Gordon and Koi reviewed and both felt it was inline with the intent of the work.

Town Center Community Wastewater Project

- **Sunday End User Walk Through:** Allen joined the PC to discuss Sunday's end user walk through of the system. The contractors will walk through all the components

including the pump stations, hook ups. It was discussed that the \$30,000 is a good estimate for hookup because each situation will be different and not every end user. The figure is the estimate is an allowance for when outside plumbing will need to happen. There will be a handout on Sunday with examples of pump stations. The placing of the pump station will need to be considered as to not have too much impact. Gordon informed the PC that the Common Hall has offered their property along Brookside Road for pump station placement. The other option is the parking lot of the Town Offices. Sharing examples of a pump station should help to ease concerns and demonstrate that it is not a sewage treatment plant. Odor has also been a question from the end users. Allen reassures the PC that there will be a venting pipe that will control odor. The control box on Brookside Road will provide a good example of what a pump station impact will be. Allen encourages the use of a small building for the electrical controls, as they can be unsightly. The electrical is also there for back up if the power goes out. Allen points out that surveyors will be out this fall and that often helps end users to better understand the full system. The surveyors often communicate with property owners and share a lot of information. A mailing might need to go out to the end users to identify where the piping is coming out from their homes.

- **Outstanding Funding Sources:** There is no update on the Northern Borders Regional Commission (NBRC) application and Economic Development Agency's (EDA) decision. \$466,194 was the NBRC request that has been passed on to EDA for potential funding.

The PC discussed the state level TIF funding and supported the decision to only advocate for that funding if all other funding sources fail. Considering the EDA and American Rescue Plan funds, it is not necessary to advocate now.

Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) will be releasing their FY'22 spending plan for the additional \$8 million they have for waste water. Alyssa will continue to track their progress.

- **Clean Water State Revolving Fund Step 1 Facility Plan Approval & Step 2 Application:** Melissa received final approval on the Step 2 application last week. The town was approved for \$244,396. This funding will allow for final design, permitting, pretreatment testing, public outreach, and development of the town ordinance. This will be all the pieces needed to get to final construction. For the Step 1, the preliminary engineering report (PER) was accepted but the environmental impact still needs to be approved. The approval of the environment impact report is holding up the approval of the facility plan. Reimbursement of the secured Step 2, will be impacted by the hold up with the facility plan approval. No reimbursements can be submitted until the full plan is approved, including the PER and the environmental impact report.
- **Funding Discussion:** There are 4 tasks that need to get addressed – 1B archeological and environmental, hydrogeological study for pretreatment, geotechnical/geological for possible ledge boring and topographical study. The goal is that in the next 2 weeks the consultants can move on the top 4 priorities - 1B archeological and environmental, hydrogeological study for pretreatment, geotechnical/geological for possible ledge boring and topographical study. The PC discussed that the ARPA funds vs. the bond share is becoming very crucial. It is emphasized that the goal is to get to between 80 to 100% of costs covered by outside

funds, decreasing the bond share. The direct tie to providing moderate income housing in Chittenden County will be critical to securing funding. It is pointed out that ANR's intended use plan for last year included the 50% forgiveness but it is not in this year's intended use plan. Alyssa is going to give ANR some breathing room and then reach out with the forgiveness question. It was requested to have Bard attend 1 PC meeting per month and provide a monthly progress report.

- **Public Outreach Committee:** Gordon met with the Westford Common Hall and it went very well. John Doane offered the property along Brookside Road for a pump station in exchange for no operation and maintenance cost charged to the Common Hall. This is in line with the PER that identifies the town offices, library, Common Hall, and Brick Meeting House in the costs to the town. The Selectboard will need to determine if including the civic buildings (not owned by the town) as a town expense is the right approach. They will need to include this in the ordinance. The PC believes that the land for the pump station should be considered when making the final decision. The PC's October 18th meeting should focus on preparation for the sewer ordinance and the bond vote. JB Hindes will be supporting that work.

The new webpage westfordsfuture.com is up and is worth checking out.

Upcoming Events - The site walk for end users will be September 26th. The Community Outreach Meeting will be October 19th at 6:30pm at the school. The Seniors meeting is October 11th at the senior luncheon. The next Public Outreach Committee meeting is this coming Wednesday at 10am.

American Recuse Plan Act: The first full meeting of the town's ARPA Committee will be September 29th. They will work on the public engagement process.

Newsletter/FPF Article: Website postcard should work well. Seth will send Eric an email to discuss.

2021 Work Plan: The October 4th meeting should include time to discuss the PC's town report submission. VCDP, UPWP scope of work and timeline update should also be included. A timeline that brings together all the projects is needed. We will also be able to review and discuss the Brownfield Phase 2 Supplemental PAH report.

October 18th meeting – The wastewater consultants should attend. Preparation for the bond vote and ordinance will be the focus.

There is an a Selectboard meeting on October 14th and George is unable to attend.

Adjourn: 9:10pm