

**TOWN OF WESTFORD
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
MINUTES FOR JUNE 6, 2022 MEETING
Approved on June 20, 2022**

Commission/Board Members Present: George Lamphere, Seth Jensen, Gordon Gebauer, Mark Letorney and Mo Reilly.

Commission/Board Members Absent: None

Also, Present: Melissa Manka (Westford Town Planner), Diane Finnigan (Minute Taker), Barb Peck, Joseph Franz, Sheila Franz, Ira Allen, Lori Johnson, Pat Haller, Tom Orfeo, Tom Charland, and Jennifer Charland.

The meeting began at: 6:30p.m.

Amendments to Agenda:

There are no amendments to the agenda.

Minutes of the May 16, 2022 Meeting:

Diane will make any needed changes and submit final a copy to Melissa.

G. Lamphere requested that the line “what happens if Kate leaves” be removed.

A couple small grammatical errors were corrected.

G. Gebauer MOVED to accept the minutes with the above changes.

G. Lamphere SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED 4-0.

M. Manka asked if we should change procedure and provide D. Finnigan with google doc access. This change has been made.

Meeting Rules and Procedure:

G. Lamphere reviewed the meeting rules of procedures. He reminded everyone present that as chair he would follow the agenda. We will seek public comment periodically throughout the meeting and will allow time throughout the meeting to answer questions. Any questions and comments should be addressed to the full planning commission and not individual members of the PC. You should raise your hand or if you are online to use the chat function. Do not ask multiple questions and in an effort to make sure everyone is heard limit your question and comments to three minutes. Rhetorical questions should be avoided.

Citizens to be Heard – *Items not on the agenda:*

There were no citizens to be heard.

Correspondence:

Carol Winfield sent an email on May 6th thanking the planning commission for expectations. Receipt confirmed. No action needed.

Lori Johnson sent a second email requesting that form-based code setbacks be taken into consideration and requesting amendments. Response to Lori is that this will be taken into consideration in the next round of amendment changes.

Chelsea Ecker from VT Digger wants to interview the village on the wastewater project. G. Lamphere indicated that we were still waiting on information before we should take action. We cannot offer details at this point. M. Manka will decide if she wants to reply to Chelsea to provide broad information and that any specifics need to come from the engineer or if she wants someone to join her. Once M. Manka decides she will schedule.

Tom and Jennifer Charland attended in person and requested an amendment to allow accessory dwellings structures associated with two dwelling structures. Tom indicated that he had been led by town officials that he was ok to proceed with engineering on his property to build an additional ADU. He moved forward on this recommendation and now has been told by the town that this is not possible, and he has invested approximately \$3500 in the project. He said he would not have spent the money if he knew he had been given bad information. He would like this addressed in a timely manner so no one else is misguided like him. The Charlands current property is in zone R10. S. Jensen replied that other towns similar to ours are experimenting with policy benefits in VT state statute tied to ADU, but this is not likely to help them at this time. G. Lamphere indicated that the PC reviewed and revised amendments in 2021 and since this is such a large undertaking that it is only done every 3-4 years. A decision to look at sooner than this does not mean you will get what you want. T. Charland asked if there were any exceptions for an amendment so he could proceed. G. Lamphere said that the PC is limited in what we can do, and exceptions should be directed to M. Manka and town staff. There is no guarantee we can do anything, but town staff should be able to give an assessment as to what we can do. S. Jensen offered that there are 3 ideas to look into: First, can the original PUD be amended? Second, can density bonus language be utilized and third, can the property have a residential and commercial bed and breakfast structure onsite. T. Charland asked what if it was a tiny home. M. Manka replied that it would still be seen as a single-family home. B. Peck spoke on it taking 2 ½ years for her to get an amendment reviewed in zone 5. T. Charland indicated that he felt he was given inaccurate information and he depends on his government to give good advice. G. Lamphere said that they are committed to looking into the issue and the PC will discuss future amendments and related timeline at the next meeting on June 20.

ARPA (Projects and Request):

G. Lamphere explained that there are 2 topics for ARPA. One is Phase I for wastewater permit and the second is Phase I application for doing the conceptual masterplan for the town office site.

Phase I is a single page application where you explain in 100 words or less the project and cost estimate. Phase 2 is more complex and contains 12 detailed questions. The Phase II

application is scored on a rubric to see if it scores high enough to be considered. The town ARPA committee writes the recommendation and then it goes to the selectboard for review and decision.

Town Office Phase 1 application – asked by the selectboard to contract with a third party to develop a masterplan of rebuilding/expanding the town office. This project would be approximately 10-14 weeks. There are two costs levels: The first is \$10,000 - \$12,000 and gives us sketches and renderings. The second level is \$20,000 - \$25,000 and this gives floor plans and more details. G. Lamphere recommends there be a 3-person board for phase 2 that is a member of the selectboard, the planning commission and the town. S. Jensen suggested that the timeline might be longer because everyone was a volunteer, and we might want to a \$5,000 - \$10,000 buffer to complete assessments required for USDA/RD and the VT Bond Bank funding. Selectboard is not part of the review process for Phase 1. M. Manka said an alternatives analysis is needed prior to development of a conceptual plan as site restrictions and development alternatives will need to be identified prior to picking a preferred alternative. G. Lamphere offered that these points would apply to Phase 2.

S. Jensen MOVED that George will make the changes discussed and submit the application.
M. Letorney SECONDED the motion.
The motion PASSED 5-0.

Community Wastewater Phase 1 application – G. Lamphere asked if anyone wanted to try to complete the application. M. Manka volunteered but will keep it broad and will work with JB regarding the amount requested. She indicated we might need an extension with NBRC. It was decided to get an application started.

Zoning Administrator and Planning Assistant Positions (Process):

M. Manka said that the zoning administrator's resignation had been accepted and the selectboard decided to merge a few positions, namely the part-time DRB coordinator, zoning administrator and planning assistant into one position and it would go from 2 days a week to 3 days a week.

Selectboard will advertise the position. Planning commission does interviews and works with the DRB and SB to make a recommendation. Interviews for this position will be added to the work plan for July. Selectboard can appoint an interim zoning administrator, and this does not need planning commission approval.

Town Center Crosswalk Repainting (Status Update):

M. Letorney updated the planning commission that VTrans will resurface the crosswalk later this month or next and, in the future, we do not need to ask as it will automatically be done as part of the annual road maintenance.

Community Wastewater Project

Step 2 Scope of Work and Engineering Services Agreement (Status update):

M. Manka said that the supplemental PER is with the state, and we are waiting for a response. Regarding the ESA, she met with Amy from Stone and DEC to discuss. Amy has some follow-up questions for Jeff. The draft ESA should be ready for PC review by June 20. The process is that Stone submits to the planning commission who then submits it to the state for comment and then it is sent to the planning commission again who sends it to the selectboard and ultimately it is resubmitted to the state again.

ARPA Timeline (Discussion):

The timeline to be identified in the ARPA grant contract will give the town, consultants and state the most time possible to complete the project.

Communications:

Pat stated that he thought we were waiting for capacity information. M. Manka responded that is correct. We have three documents with the state from the step 1 and 2 scopes of work and we are waiting for action. The new step 2 ESA will be submitted to the state soon and we will have four documents in DEC review.

1705 Rte. 128 Property Project**VCDP Scope of Work:**

M. Manka updated the PC that Adam is the new project lead, and he took over from Tom and Mark. Adam has made a few clarifying changes to the conceptual plan and that information was sent to Lincoln Brown. She will touch base for an update. We had to postpone the April engagement meeting and it was decided in the last meeting that we would hold off on the engagement meeting until we confirm that the trust is still willing to work with VRC. We are kind of in a holding pattern but should have next steps for the next meeting.

Website (Update):

M. Letorney updated the PC that the soft launch was successful, and the site has received many hits. He updated the questions and added in a FAQ section with the last FPF article. M. Manka stated we should start reviewing the draft survey. M. Letorney feels we should wait to promote the site until the conceptual plans are on there.

Communications (Discussion):

There were no communications at this time.

Newsletter/FPF Articles (Discussion):

The newsletter/FPF post is due on June 27th. Does anyone have any ideas, or should we draft something? PC will discuss at the next meeting on the 20th. The PC could just include last month's FPF post. If we get any good news and/or project movement, we will come up with another plan.

Work Plan:

- Newsletter Plan A is to use FPF from late May. We have nothing solid to announce as we are waiting for items to be approved.
- Review a draft of ESA and submit it to DEC.
- Review 1705 revised conceptual plan/renderings.
- Wastewater updates
- Zoning administrator position and interviewing
- Discuss WLUD amendment requests. G. Gebauer asked M. Manka if she could provide what requests currently are in for amendments. S. Jensen asked if we could do a preliminary notation of how much time is estimated on these.
- Review ARPA ask for wastewater
- Attempt to schedule public engagement meeting.

M. Manka stated we need to consider new staff coming on who will need training. G. Lamphere told M. Manka not to hesitate to reach out for feedback.

Annual Employee Performance Appraisal (Executive Session):

G. Gebauer MOVED to enter executive session at 8:37.
G. Lamphere SECONDED the motion.
The motion PASSED 5-0.

G. Gebauer MOVED to exit executive session at 8:44.
S. Jensen SECONDED the motion.
The motion PASSED 5-0.

The PC decided to conduct the Town Planner Annual Performance Appraisal at the next meeting.

Adjourn:

Meeting adjourned at 8:48.

Submitted by,
Diane Finnigan, Minute Clerk