

**TOWN OF WESTFORD
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
MINUTES FOR June 20, 2022, MEETING
Approved on July 18, 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 and Sheila Franz, Ira Allen, Lori Johnson, Maureen Wilcox, Tom and Jenny Charland and Carol Winfield.

The meeting began at: 6:34p.m.

Amendments to Agenda:

G. Lamphere requested time to speak about updates to the selectboard.

M. Manka requested time to speak about the applications for the zoning administrator and planning assistant.

G. Lamphere granted said requests and stated the topics would be discussed towards the end of the meeting.

Minutes of the June 6, 2022, Meeting:

Diane will make any needed changes and submit to Melissa.

G. Lamphere asked that Mo's last name be added to the minutes.

S. Jensen MOVED to accept the minutes as edited.

M. Letorney SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED 4-0.

Meeting Rules and Procedure:

G. Lamphere discussed the importance of having rules and procedures for the planning commission meetings. He stated as chair he needs to respect order and decorum. He needs to keep time and follow the agenda. All meetings are public except executive session. Order must be maintained according to meeting rules.

We will continue to seek public comment from citizens as time allows. If a participant has a question, please raise your hand and state your name. We will limit questions and comments to 3 minutes to allow others to speak as well. Questions and comments should be addressed to the full PC and not individual members. Must be acknowledged by the chair to speak. If you have already spoken, you might not get recognized again. The public should not delay or interrupt the meeting and threatening remarks are prohibited.

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

None currently.

Correspondence:

Received one piece of correspondence from Tom Charland and this was included in the PC packets for this meeting. Tom is investigating increased density or reducing density regulations. Melissa will confirm receipt of email.

G. Lamphere asked if amending the PUD is an option? M. Manka replied that there is not enough density to add another lot per current regulations. No subdivisions per regulations.

G. Lamphere inquired who would be involved in the responsible if the Charlands pursued bonus density requirements? If the Charlands decide to pursue we would pursue getting a legal opinion. S. Jensen suggested to look at the bonus density option as the regulations are much more specific than when the Charlands built. G. Lamphere indicated it is not the PC who would review the regulations with the Charlands. That falls to the zoning administrator or the DRB. It may or may not be beneficial for the landowner to pursue. It is a complicated path and expensive. M. Letorney indicated this would be the most likely option.

G. Gebauer understands the Charlands position and request time to consider. There are two issues: One is to amend the zoning regulations and the second is the out-of-pocket expenses the Charlands have incurred. If the Charlands lost money due to a town employee giving information. We can look at the request and talk specifics. Bonus density would be the shorter and better way.

S. Jensen thinks the town has bonus density capacity. However, the Charlands should take it up with the selectboard. If they feel ill advised that should be discussed with the selectboard as well. All commissions agreed.

T. Charland thanked the commissions and what do we do at this point. Is bonus density program only option? We do not know how to proceed at this point.

M. Manka had emailed the Charlands the regulations for their review if they are interested in the density bonus option. Different sections for different structures and you should reference the section that applies to what you want to construct. If you want to pursue then a survey, engineering and legal would all need to happen. Most likely page 87 sections b and d would be the sections you would want to review.

S. Jensen suggested that a possible free sketch could be done before submitting to the DRB.

T. Charland said that he is looking at a maximum of 1000 sq ft. Engineering has already been done and we can go forward with the DRB. J. Charland asked who could explain the regulations. They should contact M. Manka. We are ready to comply with town requests but want to move forward.

G. Lamphere said it was critical to review the regulations and see if what you want to do meets the criteria, then the town can get a legal opinion. Will take time and effort on the part of the landowner and there is no guarantee that this will be successful, but it is the quickest way.

ARPA Committee:

M. Manka completed the Phase 1 ARPA request for wastewater. It was a short application. S. Jensen suggested we hold all questions for Phase 2. G. Lamphere requested that the project sponsor be changed to an individual name. It was suggested that to be M. Manka so that there is a single point of contact.

M. Manka said that we have 2-3 months to draft Phase 2. This phase is much more work. Our next meeting is not until July 18 so should we start preparing the Phase 2 application. G. Lamphere suggested that we should be thinking about the Phase 2 application but not to invest too much time in it until we have a response on draft 1. Maybe several people can work on it, and we can divide the questions. S. Jensen pointed out that just because M. Manka's name was on the application that she should not have to do phase 2 application alone and we should divide the work. M. Reilly thinks this is a good plan. G. Gebauer agrees.

G. Lamphere indicated we need signed ESA to do Phase 2. Revisions to the town office plan (phase 1) were made and the application was submitted on 6/20/22.

Do we want M. Manka to submit wastewater to ARPA?

G. Lamphere MOVED to have M. Manka submit the wastewater application to ARPA with the change of her being the contact.

G. Gebauer SECONDED the motion.

The motion passed 5-0.

Zoning Administrator and Planning Assistant Positions:

G. Lamphere explained that there are two phases: drafting the job description and receiving feedback and conducting interviews. PC commissioners should review the draft and send comments to M. Manka by Monday. Conducting interviews will take time and we need to have a quorum.

Westford Land Use and Development Regulation Amendment:

G. Lamphere stated that there are about 20 items on the request list and changes to the ADU's is on the list. It is doubtful that we can get to this in the next several months or this year. We don't have the town staff to support it. It would be misleading if we try to embark on this endeavor at this point. It will require some deep dives into impacts the regulations and reviewing the impacts on individuals, neighbors, and our rural character of the town.

M. Manka indicated we need a plan for looking at. It looks to be a 6-7-month project. We currently have 2 major projects underway and should not undertake a third.

S. Jensen agrees with G. Lamphere and M. Manka and we don't have the resources now to look at in-depth and thoughtfully. G. Gebauer agrees that we do it when more time and resources are available but wants to keep discussing so we don't lose sight of this project. M. Letorney feels we should keep focused on wastewater and to move out on the work plan to January/February 2023. B. Peck asked of the 20 items on the list how many are from residents. M. Manka responded that it is a mix and a few of them are from residents but most of them are required from the state regarding regulations for us to get the highest amount of relief funds, clarifications from the DRB and a small handful from citizens.

Selectboard updates:

G. Lamphere attends the selectboard meeting once a month. All commissioners should read the minutes. They are mostly for your information, but we should be aware of what is going on. No action is needed. Anything that you would like brought to the selectboard can be sent to G. Lamphere.

Community Wastewater Project

Step 2 Scope of Work and ESA:

M. Manka talked to Amy at Stone Engineering and progress is being made on the ESA, but they need more time to finish it before they are ready to send to the PC for review and action. Will put on the agenda for the 7/18 and if it comes in before M. Manka will reach out to have a possible special meeting to discuss.

Communications:

Currently, we do not have any planned communication. We are in a holding pattern until the ESA is complete.

G. Lamphere expressed that there is a general concern/consensus since we do not have a planning assistant at this time and until the position is filled there is concern with moving forward. He will meet with consultants to see if anyone might be interested in offering some extra help. S. Jensen offered that hiring takes time and we need to be conscious of the environment we live in in terms of hiring.

G. Gebauer left the meeting at 7:35PM.

1705 Rte. 128 Property Project

VCDP Scope of Work :

M. Manka explained that she had talked to the SE Group and Lincoln Brown. Still working on the conceptual plan and trying to make it easily readable. Jake and Adam think they will have ready for the PC later this week. Lincoln Brown feels they can have the design done by July 1. Once we have the conceptual plan and rendering in hand, we can discuss a special meeting or review on 7/18. M. Manka will reach out when it comes in. G. Lamphere will reach out to the project partners.

Community Survey:

M. Letorney sent a draft of the questions and anyone who wants changes should let him know. G. Lamphere asked if the intent was to have it be part of the webpage and the answer is yes. You will arrive at the survey after reviewing the concept plan. Want to have it imbedded on the website.

G. Lamphere asked for the timeline for adding to the website. M. Letorney explained that it depends on when we when we want to publish the explanation and survey.

If PC could provide comments within two weeks of June 20 to M. Letorney. M. Manka to resend draft survey. Will be on 7/18 agenda to review the final survey.

Communications:

None currently

Newsletter:

All agreed to use the post from June for Front Page Forum. G. Lamphere will reach out to G. Gebauer who prepared the post and get it taken care of. Anything in the newsletter goes on Front Page Forum. Ideally, the next FPF will include the site plan going up. C. Winfield suggested that we put a post on FPF even if to say there is no new news because people are wondering.

2022 Work Plan:

Next meeting is July 18. M. Manka inquired if the information comes in that we are waiting for on the above projects if she should reach out for a special meeting. It was agreed that she would do that. G. Lamphere indicated that he was unavailable July 1 – 11.

- Wastewater review of Step 2 ESA
- Update on ARPA grant from the state
- Update on the Economic Development Grant
- Update on supplemental P.E.R.

We have 3 outstanding documents in state review and 2 grants in process.

1705 project:

- review the updated draft survey
- update from VRC
- discussion on next public meeting

-Continuing work on the zoning administrator and planning assistant positions

S. Jensen asked if any work would be done before the next meeting. On the funding for 1705. M. Manka said that the state has indicated that they have secured money to help with projects

in process but didn't have all the funding but that the state has indicated they have funding to remove the tank. No further updates.

Executive Session:

G. Lamphere MOVED to enter executive session to discuss any resumes for the open ZA and PA positions.

Mo Reilly SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED 4-0.

Adjourn:

Meeting adjourned at

Submitted by,

Diane Finnigan, Minute Clerk