

**TOWN OF WESTFORD
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
MINUTES FOR JULY 24, 2023 MEETING
Approved on August 7, 2023**

Commissioners Present: George Lamphere, Seth Jensen, Gordon Gebauer, Mark Letorney, Mo Reilly

Commissioners Absent:

Also Present: Melissa Manka (Town Planner), Harmony Cism (Planning Assistant, Minute Clerk), Pat Haller (Outreach Committee), Tom Orfeo, Maureen Wilcox, Laurie Johnson, Kim Guidrey, Ira Allen, Barb Peck, Nannette Rogers (Town Administrator), Vicky Ross, Peter Lazorchak (Stone Environmental), Emily Hackett (State ARPA rep), JB Hinds (Birchline)

Meeting Began: 7:00pm

Amendments to Agenda

An executive session will be added during this meeting to discuss a personnel matter.

Minutes of the July 3, 2023 Meeting

G. Gebauer MOVED to accept the minutes as presented.

M. Letorney SECONDED the motion.

The motion passed 4-0.

Meeting Rules of Procedure

G. Lamphere outlined the meeting rules of procedure for the public. Updated Rules of Procedure will be added to the website.

Citizens to be Heard – *Items not on Agenda*

None.

Rte 128/104 Fairfax Intersection Meeting

M. Letorney reported that he was unable to attend the most recent meeting, which was hosted by Karen Sentoff at VHB. M. Letorney will attend the next meeting. This topic stems from a VTrans list of intersections that need updating. They are looking for citizen input.

Correspondence

The PC acknowledged receipt of correspondence with Vicky Ross dated 7/10/23.

The PC also has correspondence from Angela Farrington (Vermont Economic Progress Council Program Manager). CRRP has had some delays in the review process and hopes to make an announcement by the end of the week.

Community Wastewater Project

Step 3 Funding Stack

There have been no changes since May. The PC is still waiting for the CRRP announcement.

Action Item List

G. Lamphere will reach out to see what changes people would like to see and go over feedback before releasing a new list for the next meeting.

Project Schedule

Peter Lazorchak reported that an updated schedule was sent out. Everything is on track. Stone Environmental is processing survey data, updating base maps, and taking a closer look at the Step system. The ledge probe data is being processed. Aug 15 is the target date for updated cost estimates. Stone is nearly done with the survey and outreach to potential users.

Kim Guidrey asked if the stakes could come out of peoples' lawns. Peter recommended that the flagging should remain throughout the course of the project. It would be best for Stone to pull their own stakes and check on control points.

Communication Schedule & Public Outreach

G. Gebauer reported on the Outreach Committee meeting last week. Several dates have been set:

8/30/23, evening: A barbeque will be held for all residents in the service area. Discussions will cover updated information, updated project costs, and refined numbers (user fees, tax dollars, etc.).

9/13/23: A community-wide informational meeting will be held at the Westford School. A representative from Oakson will attend via Zoom.

10/18/23: A second public informational outreach meeting has been tentatively scheduled.

10/23/23: A visit is scheduled to the King's Hill Community Wastewater System. Their engineer will be present to answer questions about how the system functions. There will also be a walk from the Common along the path of the sewer line to the dispersal field.

The next Outreach meeting will be held during the first week of August.

A printed booklet of FAQs will be made available to the public.

On 7/31/23 there will be a joint PC/SB meeting.

Vicky Ross asked where the King's Hill community is located. M. Manka responded that it is a large development off Westford-Milton Road. This community utilizes a large wastewater system of similar scale.

July 13th Selectboard Meeting

G. Gebauer reported that contracts were sent to SB for approval to provide notice for the reminder of the bond vote. The SB approved the contracts.

There was discussion about a line of credit to pay for contractor invoices before the state provides reimbursement. The PC will ask consultants for an accurate number on what that amount should be.

John Rogers had asked if the Town will hire a contractor, and if there will be a large initial invoice for materials. Where will the materials be stored? Consultants will need to be asked.

Gordon will send these questions to the consultants. Peter Lazorchak was present and commented that staging is typically focused on further along in the design process – when we are past the bond vote and

setting up contract docs and easements). There will likely be an initial large bill to cover material procurement such as pump stations for each user, etc. Peter will look into these numbers.

Vicky Ross asked if there is there anything that tells us which grants need to be used for which funds. Cash flow projection would be helpful. How difficult will it be to allocate to different grants? G. Lamphere answered that we should wait for word on the final grant, and then funds can be allocated for different milestones.

Executive Session:

M. Letorney MOVED to enter Executive Session.

G. Gebauer SECONDED the motion.

The motion passed 5-0.

The PC entered Executive Session at 7:40pm.

The Executive Session ended at 7:59pm.

Sewer Ordinance & 18 Questions

G. Gebauer reported that the SB's 18 questions are being continually updated. Responses have been provided to all but 3 of these questions, which will be discussed at this meeting. JB Hinds will talk through a broad range of bond estimates and user fees.

JB provided a draft ordinance. This ordinance will be adopted pursuant to the authority conferred by 24 V.S.A. Chapter 59, Chapter 97, and Chapter 101. Ordinances from Bristol, Richmond, and Essex were used as reference documents.

JB Hinds and the PC went through the Draft Ordinance and discussed/clarified several sections.

The PC stressed that the language in Ordinance should match the language in the 18 Questions and also the language in the Westford Land Use and Development Regulations.

Financial Projections

JB Hinds presented a set of parameters of what residents would pay assuming a system cost of \$4 million. The minimum bond to make grant match requirements is \$400K. The maximum is about \$900K based on discussions with residents. There are 12,177 gallons of unallocated reserve. 2027 will be the earliest date to begin repayment of the bond. User fees will include a proportional fee of O&M costs and a proportional fee of the bond.

G. Gebauer will prepare documents to send to the SB in preparation for the joint meeting next week.

Public Comment

None.

2023 Work Plan

7/27 SB Meeting: G. Lamphere will attend.

7/31 SB/PC Meeting to discuss the ordinance and financial projections.

8/7 PC Meeting: Correct revised action plan and provide to the SB for 8/24, special projects fund request, typical updates, Outreach funding request, Action Item list, Follow up on CC budget omission, grant funding, update on intersection, prep for upcoming SB meetings.

8/21: all updated WW info should be available, S.100 overview if guidance available, Village Center Designation renewal.

Executive Session (continued):

The PC re-entered Executive Session at 10:00pm.

G. Gebauer MOVED to exit Executive Session.

M. Letorney SECONDED the motion.

The motion passed 5-0.

Executive Session ended at 10:25pm.

G. Gebauer MOVED to approve the Town Planner's Performance Review for submission to the Town Administrator and Selectboard and request an executive session with the Selectboard.

S. Jensen SECONDED the motion.

The motion passed 5-0

Adjourn: 10:26pm