

**TOWN OF WESTFORD  
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES  
MINUTES FOR OCTOBER 2, 2023 MEETING  
Approved on October 23, 2023**

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

**Commissioners Absent:** Gordon Gebauer

**Also Present:** Melissa Manka (Town Planner), Harmony Cism (Planning Assistant, Minute Clerk), Lori Johnson, Barb Peck, Carol Winfield, Kim Guidrey, Ira Allen

**Meeting Began:** 6:32pm

**Amendments to Agenda**

An executive session for personnel will be added at the end of the meeting.

**Minutes of the September 5, 2023 Meeting**

Will be approved at the next meeting. We do not have a quorum of commissioners who were at the 9/5/23 meeting.

**Minutes of the September 13, 2023 Meeting**

M. Letorney MOVED to approve the minutes as presented.

G. Lamphere SECONDED the motion.

The motion passed 3-0.

**Minutes of the September 18, 2023 Meeting**

S. Jensen MOVED to approve the minutes as amended.

G. Lamphere SECONDED the motion.

The motion passed 4-0.

**Citizens to be Heard – *Items not on Agenda***

None.

**COMMUNITY WASTEWATER PROJECT**

- **Action Item List**

An updated action item list has been shared. The PC is trying to close out some items that are due now or next week. Will start on a new revision soon.

- **Selectboard Schedule**

The SB work plan has been updated based on 9/14 discussions. Everything is on track.

The work plan incorrectly states that the public hearing is on 11/2. M. Manka will correct this date to 11/1 and resend.

- **Project Schedule**

No changes since 8/30. The PC is waiting for comments from the state on the 30% design plans, the table of contents from project engineers, and to hear back from historic preservation so we can get everything lined up for the 30% design plan meeting with the state. The next stage will be working toward the 60% design plan.

- **Communication Schedule & Public Outreach**

Site walks were held 2 weekends ago. These went well. There was light attendance, but the people who came asked good questions. A 2<sup>nd</sup> public outreach meeting will be held on 10/18. Committees are getting ready for that meeting and getting information out ahead of the meeting. The SB has asked the PC to review Zoom chat questions from the 9/13 meeting.

The SB would like a panel to be present at the 11/1 public hearing. Stone and Birchline are available, as is Emily Hackett from the state. Robert from Oakson will be at the 10/18 informational meeting. The PC will confirm who is available for the 11/1 meeting and provide a list for the SB. Will need to find out if the SB is looking for a presentation, an abbreviated presentation, or none.

- **Draft Wastewater Ordinance & Executive Summary**

The Town Attorney has the draft ordinance. He will hopefully have a chance to look at it this week. Once that is back, the executive summary can be drafted and hopefully sent to the SB for their 10/12 meeting for them to review and possibly approve for public dissemination on 10/12. The goal is to have the final draft available to the public by 10/18.

- **September 13<sup>th</sup> Informational Meeting Zoom Chat Questions**

The PC has received the chat log from Lake Champlain Access TV. JB Hinds pulled questions from the chat and noted whether they were answered and by whom. One question from Arlo Pouliot may not have been specifically answered. The PC needs clarification on that question. GL will follow up with Arlo. All other questions from the chat were answered. There is an additional response from Amy Macrellis on the 1<sup>st</sup> page regarding alarms.

- **September 28<sup>th</sup> Selectboard Meeting**

G. Gebauer, M. Reilly, and S. Jensen attended. The SB discussed the 11/1 meeting, the ordinance, and the executive summary. There was general discussion about tone during correspondence and public dialogue. It is important that the Outreach Committee is available to the SB and the community for questions that come up.

- **October 12<sup>th</sup> Selectboard Meeting**

The goal is to have the ordinance reviewed by the Town Attorney and back to the SB in advance of that meeting. The SB will be discussing the 11/1 meeting. M. Manka will provide the SB with a list of people who are available to act as a panel. She will inform them that the PC can do a full or abbreviated presentation or none at all based on what the SB desires. Need to review necessity and bond language.

- **October 18<sup>th</sup> Informational Meeting**

This will consist of the same presentation and order of show as the 9/13 meeting. The Outreach Committee will meet to talk about logistics and confirm. The PC needs to confirm the availability of the project team. Their ability to answer questions is important. The PC received feedback that there was not enough time for questions during the last informational meeting. People should ask a question and wait until others have had a chance to ask questions before asking a follow-up question. It will be helpful to

have handouts and plenty of copies. The PC should plan to expand Q&A, and possibly condense the presentation, as there is a need to adequately answer all questions. It may be helpful to have a place for people to write down their name and contact info with questions that didn't get asked or answered.

### **Public Comment**

Carol Winfield expressed appreciation for the extra time for Q&A at the informational meeting.

### **FY '23 Planning Commission Town Report**

G. Lamphere provided a draft of bullet points. The PC's report should touch on the Town Plan, including a summary of what it is and the PC's role, as well as an executive summary of revision history and when this may be revisited. A wastewater summary should be included. The PC should also acknowledge Nanette, who has been a great asset to the town. A blurb about Westford's rural character and what it means to the Town Plan and the PC can also be included. Westford is not rural by accident; it is due to Planning regulations and Zoning bylaws. G. Lamphere will work on a draft report.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Financial Report & Organization**

Once grants and Conservation Commission are omitted, the budget stands at \$10,550. 1st quarter expenses for minute clerk and UPWP grant bring the new total to \$6,097. The revenue and liabilities report indicates other invoices that came out of the special project reserve: these are mainly related to the wetland delineation for the Town Office/Library Feasibility Study.

### **Omission of Conservation Commission & Grants from PC Budget**

Conservation Commission line items have been removed from the PC budget. Grants will be moved, but it is not yet definitive where they might go. G. Lamphere will follow up with treasurer.

### **Correspondence**

The ACCD Town Board approved the Neighborhood Development Area (NDA) and the Village Center Designation (VCD). These are good for 8 years.

The PC received correspondence from Dave Lavallee. This was an email sent to the SB and the PC. Mr. Lavallee is wondering why all properties within the connection area are not being mandated to connect. G. Lamphere will follow up with Dave. The PC thought it was not reasonable to mandate connection. They presented options to the SB and suggested to NOT mandate, and the SB made that decision. If someone is able to locate a complying system on their property, they should have that option. Connections pay a proportional share of bond and O&M. The connected properties will be paying more than people who aren't connecting. Most properties in the center can't build a system without infringing on a neighbor's property. The PC sees a benefit in incentivizing connection rather than mandating. Mandating would not be logical or neighborly. Dave also wondered if a connection fee escrow would be allowed. This is a question for JB Hinds. It is the PC's understanding that this is not allowable under VT statute. Ultimately it is not the PC's decision.

### **2023 Work Plan**

10/12/23: SB meeting. Planning Commissioners attending include M. Reilly, and possibly M. Letorney and S. Jensen.

10/16/23: PC meeting. G. Lamphere will not be present, so M. Reilly will chair. The PC will go through schedules and updates. They will also review a draft Town Report and approve the 9/5 minutes. This should be a light agenda.

10/18/23: Informational meeting at the school.

10/26/23: SB meeting. The SB will prepare for the public hearing. There may be an ordinance discussion if it has not been completed by the 12<sup>th</sup>.

11/1/23: Public hearing.

11/6/23: PC meeting.

11/7/23: Bond vote.

**Executive Session**

G. Lamphere MOVED to enter executive session at 7:50 to discuss a personnel matter.

M. Letorney SECONDED the motion.

The motion passed 3-0.

G. Lamphere MOVED to close the executive session.

M. Reilly SECONDED the motion.

The motion passed 4-0.

No actions were taken.

**Adjourn:**

The meeting adjourned at 8:45pm