

**TOWN OF WESTFORD
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
MINUTES FOR SEPTEMBER 18th, 2023 MEETING
Approved on October 2, 2023**

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

Commissioners Absent: George Lamphere

Also Present: Melissa Manka (Town Planner), Harmony Cism (Planning Assistant, Minute Clerk), Lori Johnson, Barb Peck

Meeting Began: 6:30

Amendments to Agenda

None

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.

Citizens to be Heard – *Items not on Agenda*

None.

COMMUNITY WASTEWATER PROJECT

- **Action Item List**

The Action Item List was updated on 9/1 after receiving input from collaborators. It will be updated again for the 1st meeting in Oct.

- **Selectboard Schedule**

9/28/23 SB meeting: All WW items have been completed.

10/12/23 SB meeting: SB will review and potentially approve the Policy Resolution. JB hopes to have updated ordinance to submit to the TA for review during the first week of October. This gives the SB time to review the updated ordinance before their 10/12 meeting. The SB will be prepping for the 11/1 hearing. The Policy Resolution addresses key policy issues from the ordinance on which the SB has made decisions.

- **Project Schedule**

No changes since the last meeting. Stone Environmental is working on the specification book table of contents. This must be submitted to the DEC in order to hold the official 30% design meeting. Once the PC holds this meeting and receives feedback, the project will go into the 60% design phase.

Stone Environmental bumped forward permitting. It will start happening in May 2024 to start working with Indirect Discharge to ensure that the project stays within the ARPA deadline.

- **Communication Schedule & Public Outreach**

An Outreach Meeting will be held on 9/27. The Committee will go over where the project is and move forward with the next informational meeting. The Outreach Committee has offered assistance to the SB if needed for their 11/1 meeting.

9/13/23 was the Informational Meeting. This meeting was well attended, and people asked good questions. The PC received feedback that the information was well presented and easy to understand.

9/23/23 there will be two site walks.

10/18/23 will be the second informational meeting. This meeting will follow the same format as the 1st informational meeting.

11/1/23 there will be a SB meeting where the SB will warn the bond vote. This procedure is set by state statute.

- **September 13th Informational & September 14th Selectboard Meetings**

Covered above. The Town Planner is waiting for the signed resolution and warning language so that information can be put on the website. The Town Clerk is working with the printers, and ballots will be mailed mid-October.

- **September 28th Selectboard Meeting**

Covered above. Most items on the SB work plan have been taken care of. The Policy Resolution has been moved to 10/12. Nothing wastewater related from the PC is on the 9/28 SB agenda, but it would still be good to have a member of the PC present.

Public Comment

Lori Johnson feels that the PC should be promoting the 11/1/23 Selectboard meeting.

FY '25 Planning Commission Budget Request

M. Manka provided a draft Planning Commission budget. The PC will revise as needed and approve and submit for the 10/26/23 SB budget meeting. The PC strives to level fund and minimize the financial impact to the Town.

G. Gebauer MOVED to approve the budget request for submission to the SB for a total request of \$14,550.

M. Reilly SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED 4-0.

1st Quarter Financial Report & Organization

The PC will revisit this topic at the next meeting. G. Lamphere is working with the treasurer and bookkeeper to move the Conservation Commission budget out of the PC budget. They are also working to move grants outside of the PC budget so there is an accurate read of budget vs expense.

Correspondence

Wendy Doane sent an email to the SB with a list of questions for the PC and the SB. The SB responded and directed Wendy to the PC. The questions with brief answers are below. The questions were discussed/answered in much more detail at the informational meeting and in the FAQs on the *Westford's Future* website.

Q: Are there options for the town office and library that meet current wastewater rules and setbacks from wetlands, wells, and groundwater?

A: No, not that the PC is aware of. The existing property is not suitable for a complying system according to the state and engineers.

Q: Would grants be available for on-site septic for town buildings?

A: None that the PC is aware of.

Q: Could the Town of Westford be subject to a fine from state agencies for the current non-compliant septic system?

A: The PC is not sure of fines but there would certainly be violations.

Q: Do we have a feasibility statement for on-site septic for the town office or the library from a regulatory agency?

A: The DEC did provide an email saying the property is unsuitable for a system that meets current and future needs.

Q: Could a current map of septic systems and wells and required well-shields, of the Town Common be available at the September 13 meeting?

A: Yes, this was available at the 9/13/23 meeting.

Q: Could the SB explicitly explain the wastewater capacity, after the town buildings, homes on the common that want to participate, and the civic buildings have been accounted for?

A: This was discussed at the informational meeting and in the FAQs. The Town would be reserving 20%. Half would be used by existing uses. This leaves approximately 8000 gallons remaining for expanded use. The capacity is variable based on usage needs.

2023 Work Plan

9/23/23: Site walks. North Road site walk at 10am, Common site walk at noon.

9/25/23: Newsletter due. Eric updated the poster for Oct. and Nov. This will be submitted to the newsletter.

9/28/23: SB meeting.

10/2/23 PC meeting. Go over schedules. Go over 1st quarter financial report. FY'23 Town Report. Route 128/104 intersection.

10/12 SB meeting. Policy Resolution Review. Refer to Dave Rugh.

10/18/23: 2nd informational meeting.

Adjourn:

M. Reilly MOVED to adjourn.

G. Gebauer SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED 4-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:19pm