

**TOWN OF WESTFORD
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES FOR JANUARY 8, 2023 MEETING
Approved on January 22, 2023**

Commissioners Present: Mark Letorney, Mo Reilly, Seth Jensen

Commissioners Absent: George Lamphere, Gordon Gebauer

Also Present: Harmony Cism (Planning Assistant), Maria Barden (Minute Clerk), Ron Rodjenski (Project Manager), Rebecca DaVanon, Carol Winfield, Barb Peck, Maureen Wilcox, Kim Guidry, Ira Allen, Dick Lavalle, Lori Johnson, Paul Birnholz, Sheila Franz

Meeting Began: 6:50pm

Amendments to Agenda: *No mentioned that other than roll call and public comment we will be disabling the chat function on zoom during this meeting.*

No Amendments to the agenda.

Minutes of the November 20, 2023 Meeting

S. Jensen MOVED to approve the minutes as amended.

M. Letorney SECONDED the motion.

M. Reilly abstained due to absence at the 11/20/23 meeting.

The motion passed 2-0.

Minutes of the December 12, 2023 Meeting

M. Letorney MOVED to approve the minutes.

M. Reilly SECONDED the motion.

The motion passed 3-0.

Citizens to be Heard - *Items not on agenda* – *No citizens to be heard.*

Community Wastewater Project

Next Steps – R. Rodjenski was directed to review the history of the project and summarize it to get to the Selectboard by Thursday. Waiting to see what the Selectboard discusses in Thursday's meeting before discussing more.

Public Comment-

L. Johnson, R. DaVanon, C. Winfield, P. Bernholz, B. Peck were all recognized during public comment and a discussion regarding other possibilities, whether the PC is looking for alternatives currently and what will be discussed at the January 11th Selectboard meeting was talked about. **R. DaVanon** also discussed their failing septic system.

The PC discusses Ron being directed by the Selectboard to take on the role of Project Manager and that being the reason he has taken on so much responsibility.

Town Center Area Stormwater

FY'25 UPWP Recommendation *The PC reviewed the memo that Mark has written to submit to the SB.*

R. Rodjenski discusses the deadline they have for the regional planning work plan; he talks about some of the projects they have been helping with. Talks about the Brownfield project, Stormwater, Pigeon property, Common traffic flow. Discusses UPWP and his correspondence with that, what needs to be done to move forward, reminder that the application is due the 19th of January.

M. Letorney discusses the PC's priority was stormwater management for the common but that hinged on 1705 because of its involvement with the culvert and land owned by the Pigeon Family Trust.

R. Rodjenski and PC discuss taking a break and taking time to revisit the town plan.

VCDP Grant Closeout

R. Rodjenski says all the documents have been submitted; there was question of one unresolved issue regarding the 1500 dollars that was promised by Green Mountain Habitat and Vermont River Conservancy that was supposed to offset the planning funds spent by SE group. The State asked about this, and we don't have an answer for them, we don't know if the money was sent or if there was an invoice. The State would like to know if this happened, MJ will be working on this tomorrow. Deadline of Friday January 12th to finish answering their questions.

Public Comment-

L. Johnson was recognized and a discussion regarding stormwater/where the dump out was, Lori said someone on the selectboard mentioned hearing talk about that dump out and running it along 128 and down into Brown's River instead. She also discusses the alternative of a culvert on the South side, possibility of running it so far back and running it out to a catch basin there.

S. Jensen discussed this a little bit more and says there would need to be a follow-up with the engineer who completed that report, he is not sure if this was documented in writing.

R. DaVanon was recognized and discusses similarly to what Lori was talking about looking at the other projects that were discussed in the Stormwater report from 2019 and the same culvert Lori discussed.

M. Letorney and S. Jensen discuss the feasibility of 1705 project and the issues with VTrans. Did not feel it was feasible to ask residents to have the type of access to their property that VTrans needed.

S. Jensen suggested the PC changes the direction that they've given Ron about not asking for UPWP funds and take a second look at the two alternative discharge locations, document cost and benefits of both and ask for some funding. He suggests having Ron write that letter now so we can start work on that. **M. Letorney** discusses the soils on the common not being suitable and them trying to find the best solutions that are the most cost effective. **The PC and Ron** discuss getting the UPWP for alternative discharge points for Stormwater. They discuss hope that going forward the PC can collaborate with other boards rather than stay separate on these projects.

Selectboard Meetings

December 28th SB Meeting - R. Rodjenski doesn't have a lot to report on the 28th meeting other than to encourage commissioners to review minutes, he discusses communication via minutes being very important and suggests reviewing the minutes and motions of other boards.

January 11th Selectboard Meeting – R. Rodjenski says it is a critical meeting and a point in the town's history that people will remember. He says one reason being the funding this town has received for the project will never happen again regardless of the outcome. The PC and Ron discuss whether the community knows this meeting is very important to the town's history. George plans on attending, Mo will also try and be there.

Public Comment -

C. Winfield and R. DaVanon were recognized, there is discussion about having alternative ideas should be available to suggest at the meeting on January 11th, would like to know why we are meeting on the

11th if there is nothing new to discuss. **R. DaVanon** reiterates the importance of board's reading other board's minutes. She believes this meeting will be a fork in the road and will determine which way this project moves forward.

The PC asks for patience in the matter because they are volunteer based and they don't have day to day to work on this matter, they've been discussing how to keep the \$4M grant money from walking out of Westford and that has been the focus of work for them. They have been trying to find a way through this and work on this with the Selectboard; they reiterate the money they have now may not be available to alternatives that are brought forward.

Correspondence -

Wendy Doane sent a letter to the Selectboard - the PC did not discuss at this time but thank Wendy for including them.

2024 Work Plan -

- *Meeting schedule - Harmony provided current regular meetings that take place at the Town Office. (Will bring to the full group to discuss dates of PC meetings later, Harmony will send out an email poll)*
- *Follow up on Stormwater and second look at alternatives*
- *Follow up with WW after January 11th meeting*
- *Selectboard to allow re engagement with Stone Environmental*
- *Potential proposition of subcommittee to investigate alternatives*
- *Quarterly financial report ready for next meeting*

Adjourn -Meeting Adjourned at 8:33pm