

TOWN OF WESTFORD
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES FOR JANUARY 22, 2024 MEETING
Approved on February 19, 2024

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

Commissioners Absent: *No Commissioners absent.*

Also Present: Harmony Cism (Planning Assistant), Maria Barden (Minute Clerk), Ron Rodjenski (Project Manager), Barb Peck, Bill Hill, Kim Guidry, Ira Allen, Sheila Franz, Sue Roediger, Carol Winfield, Lori Johnson

Meeting Began: 6:31pm

Meeting Rules of Procedure (Review) *G. Lamphere reviews the rules of procedure and tells the public that they will be closing the chat option except during roll call and public comment.*

Amendments to Agenda- *No amendments to the agenda.*

Minutes of the January 8, 2024 Meeting

Mo Reilly MOVED to approve the January 8th Minutes.

Mark Letorney SECONDED to approve the January 8th Minutes.

Motion passed 3-0

Citizens to be Heard - Items not on agenda

No citizens to be heard at this time.

Community Wastewater Project

- **Next Steps**

R. Rodjenski discusses the directive given by the Selectboard about the WW project; He discusses the WW Oversight Committee, mission statement, and what is currently going on with funding for this project since the no vote, Ron continues to keep the state funding up to date on the project. Ron discusses the WW Oversight Committee website that Holly and Harmony have linked to the town's website. They have been adding public documents to it as we go so that residents can stay up to date on what is happening when it comes to the project. He discusses the initial idea being the subcommittee will have to prioritize 3 or 4 alternatives to explore in an expedited way with an engineer and make a recommendation to the Selectboard.

- **Subcommittee to Look into Alternatives**

G. Lamphere discusses the labeling of the subcommittee being the "WW Oversight Committee," he discusses oversight being the word used because it is a non-voting committee, they will not be steering one way or another. G. Lamphere read the mission statement of the WW Oversight Committee, see below. There were no suggested edits by any of the PC members.

"To provide community, staff support to the town engineer as they investigate and summarize alternatives to the Maple Shade Community WW system now at 30% complete. The Maple Shade project

has full construction funding, accepting the 400,000-dollar borrowing authority for contingency funds, which was voted down November 7th 2023."

G. Lamphere discusses the idea being, members/officers of the WW Oversight Committee will be serving until the WW Oversight Committee work is deemed complete by the Selectboard. There will be no chair or vice chair and a moderator will be selected to run the meeting and be the point of contact for the community, public information will be posted on the town's website under the new tab. The committee will consist of one member of the Selectboard, one member of the PC, the town Administrator, Westford Project Manager Ron Rodjenski and 2 residents. He discloses that it is not the PC position to debate residents who are willing to run, and they will leave that up to the Selectboard.

There is some discussion by the PC whether they should make the edit that residents brought in for the committee should be 1 for, 1 opposed and 1 neutral to WW or completely unbiased when it comes to the WW system, discussion of whether they should pass names along when they hear someone is interested.

Ron Rodjenski says anyone who expresses interest should be pointed directly to the Town Administrator, so the PC is not involved with passing along names. **G. Lamphere** proposes they bring this to the Selectboard for review with the one edit that **R. Rodjenski** suggested.

Motion to Advance to Selectboard

George Lamphere MOTIONS to advance the WW Oversight Committee Document to the Selectboard for their approval with the one edit of not including residents' names. *(footnote-any resident interested send an email to Holly to express their interest)*

Mark Letorney SECONDS the Motion

Motion passes 5-0

Communication

R. Rodjenski says he has spoken with a few people about the intent to take from November 7th forward to have town staff produce public documents ready for the public on the website they have linked to the Town website. If anyone feels there are additional documents that should go on the website to bring it to the Town's attention.

H. Cism says she has been in touch with LCATV, and they said if they are sent Zoom recordings, they can post PC meetings on their website for easy access to the public as well.

Public Comment

S. Franz, K. Guidry, C. Winfield, B. Peck, B. Hill, L. Johnson were all recognized; some feel the mission statement is misleading by saying "community WW system" rather than stating it is just for the library and town office going forward. Some feel the mission statement should be written by the committee when formed rather than prior to the committee members being chosen.

There was a question regarding who the Oversight Committee would be reporting to, would it be the Selectboard or the PC? Residents would like to know if the Mission Statement will be posted on the website. There was more discussion and questions from residents regarding the mission statement, WW Oversight Committee, grants/funding and what the current funders may or may not be open to. There was a question regarding the funding being contingent on a set of goals, how clear are the goals and can we decide whether an alternative does or does not meet them?

G. Lamphere re reads the mission statement for some clarity; **R. Rodjenski** discusses that this Mission Statement was meant to be a double vetting with the PC first and then the Selectboard adopting it, so the new members have clarity on what their mission is. This does not prevent the new committee from making changes back to the Selectboard once they have come together, he believes without the initial direction it would take a ways to get together and not be what the Selectboard wanted.

G. Lamphere says the PC is reviewing the document to be sent to the Selectboard and says the Committee will serve as long as the Selectboard needs them and when the Selectboard no longer needs them they will move on, they will not report to the PC but will provide the PC and the community information, George doesn't believe there is a hierarchy but rather they are serving the town and Selectboard until further notice. **R. Rodjenski** adds that looking back on history he is trying to be conscious that this is a town project and would like to engage everyone, but the Selectboard will make the call in the end. **The PC** says that the mission statement will be on the website once it is approved by the Selectboard.

R. Rodjenski and the PC respond to the question of funding goals and whether alternatives may meet those goals. There is an individual change of scope request to each agency, they get their response and modify the Town's position. It all depends on who's funding, what they are funding and why. All agencies said if there is an alternative, even if it is not Maple Shade, they must look at a change of scope request and that is what the Oversight Committee will be doing.

R. Rodjenski discusses going back to the funding sources and how all of them have been engaged with Maple Shade and has said in the near term there is no funding coming from the state for WW alternatives. They have told him that we are in a unique situation with funding right now and have a limited time where we can get it.

Town Center Area Stormwater • FY'25 UPWP Application (Update)

G. Lamphere Application form was submitted to keep our stormwater concepts and project ideas on the table from a funding access perspective. Says there are no plans to immediately move forward on Stormwater or apply for funding on this.

R. Rodjenski discusses the town rather than it being one specific person trying to get on the list of the UPWP to preserve the option of getting assistance from regional planning, this is on the list and the Selectboard will need to act later about funding later in March.

January 11th Selectboard Meeting (Summary)

G. Lamphere discusses making an effort to include the minutes from the Selectboard meetings in the PC packets so they can look them over if they have not had a chance previously.

January 25th Selectboard Meeting (Prep)

G. Lamphere plans to attend and participate in the WW alternatives work and the WW Oversight Committee discussion with the Selectboard; They'll also talk about the WW Oversight Committee website as well.

M. Reilly is hoping for a bit more moderation during the meeting to help with participation.

Correspondence (Review & Response Plan)

No Correspondence.

Quarterly Financial Report (Review)

No questions regarding the quarterly report.

2024 Work Plan (Review & Revise)

- **H. Cism** would like guidance regarding the work plan and what should be added to the calendar other than meetings and deadlines. Discussion of adding "future projects list" that Melissa had left. Harmony

has been working on digitizing tax maps and fee schedules being updated and she would like to discuss this at some point.

- **PC and R. Rodjenski** discuss meeting schedules and if there is a need to continue with two meetings for the time being. They agree to go down to one meeting every third Monday of the month with the addition of adding special meetings when needed. They will start with one meeting in February on the 19th unless President's Day is observed then it will be moved to the 20th.
- Add Town Common Stormwater Route 128 to the next meeting.
- May/June revisit for Neighborhood Development area designation for T4.
- Harmony will do some research before the next meeting regarding sign ordinance, so the discussion can be picked back up at the next meeting.
- Review ordinance for Mobile Food Vendors at the coming meeting.

Adjourn-Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm