



WAITSFIELD PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA

April 16, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Planning Commission

Beth Cook
Robert Cook
Emma Hanson
AnnMarie Harmon, Vice-Chair
Alice Peal
Jonathan Ursprung, Chair
Vacant

Planning & Zoning Administrator

J. B. Weir

Town Administrator

Annie Decker-Dell'Isola

Town Clerk

Jennifer Peterson

Town Treasurer

Randy Brittingham

Waitsfield Town Office

4144 Main Street
Waitsfield, VT 05673
(802) 496-2218
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THE PLANNING COMMISSION WILL BE HOLDING A HYBRID MEETING. THE PUBLIC MAY ATTEND IN PERSON AT WAITSFIELD TOWN HALL OR REMOTE VIA ZOOM WITH TELEPHONE AND/OR VIDEO ACCESS. THOSE PARTICIPATING MAY SPEAK DURING THE DESIGNATED PERIODS.

To join the meeting remotely, use this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9190265312>

Meeting ID: 919 026 5312

Or call: 1 929 205 6099

1. **CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL**
2. **REVISIONS TO AGENDA, IF ANY (5 +/- min)**
3. **PUBLIC FORUM (10 +/- min)**
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – APRIL 2, 2024 (10 +/- min)**
5. **VILLAGE MASTER PLANNING (50 +/- min) AnnMarie/JB**
 - a. Interview Update
 - b. Steering Committee decision
 - c. Steering Committee/PC Process
6. **WASTEWATER PLANNING PROJECT UPDATE (10 +/- min) JB/Bob**
7. **2024 WORK PLAN DISCUSSION (15 +/- min)**
8. **OTHER BUSINESS (20+/-min)**
 - a. CVRPC update (Alice)
 - b. Climate Action Rural Resiliency (Alice)
 - c. PC Vacancy
9. **ADJOURNMENT**

Waitsfield Planning and Zoning Administrators Report
Planning Commission April 16, 2024 meeting

5. Village Master Planning (MPG)

The Village Master Planning Steering Committee (VMPSC) will conduct interviews of the three consultants on April 14 and April 15 and then recommend a candidate to the full PC. Ms. Harmon will draft a formal recommendation on the 15th to be presented by the PZA at the meeting that same evening. The kickoff for the project is slated for May 8.

As discussed last meeting, the Village Master Planning project will be the main focus of the board this year. Given the makeup of the steering committee, the PZA feels it best that the full commission remain very involved in the process. The meeting on the 16th should entail a discussion on what process the board would like to undertake. Perhaps steering committee members attend meetings on a frequent basis, either together or individually. There will certainly be meetings in which the consultants will be in attendance with the full PC. Members will get a better idea of what they want as the project kicks off; however, it is a good idea to begin thinking of how the project will unfold.

6. Wastewater Planning Project Update

Funding applications have been flying out the door. Between the PZA, Robin Morris and Annie Decker Dell'Isola (in her new position as project manager), the USDA application has been completed, along with CDS applications through both Senator Sanders and Senator Welch's offices. CDS applications for Rep. Balint will be made available in the coming weeks. The team also completed a pre-application for the Northern Borders Regional Commission Catalyst program two weeks back. Unfortunately, in notice provided on April 10, the Town was not invited to fully apply.

As we gear up for the bond vote, Mrs. Decker Dell'Isola has been working with Town counsel to draft bond language. Mr. Morris is preparing draft easements for landowners to sign, which is a prerequisite for disbursement of any USDA subsidy.

Given the understanding that CWSRF Pollution Control monies can take up to 15 years to be received, the Town is shifting away from that subsidy which, per the CWSRF IUP for 2024, the Town was eligible for up to \$3 million. Instead, the Town is formally requesting up to \$6 million of Village ARPA money (instead of the initial request for \$3 million). The PZA, Mr. Morris and Mrs. Decker Dell'Isola met with Emily Hackett of CWSRF on April 10. Emily

encouraged the Town to up the ARPA request given the delay in Pollution Control awards. A formal letter to DEC formally requesting the additional monies has been drafted for submittal.

At the behest of Kari Dolan, the Town is submitting a formal letter to Governor Scott requesting that the Town receive remaining ARPA monies prior to their reallocation. The intent is that the Selectboard Chair will sign both letters at its meeting on April 15. Several towns are dropping off the award list given their current project status, and this money will trickle down to other Towns on the IUP who are more ready to proceed (i.e. have had a positive bond vote, have retained the land for the disposal site, etc.)

An update funding stack and project timeline is included in the packet, along with Mrs. Decker Dell'Isola's project update for the 4/15 Selectboard meeting. Both the PZA and Mr. Morris will be in attendance for that meeting.

There are only 60 days to the bond vote as of this writing!

The Town website page for the project has been updated and can be found [here](#).

The story map page is online! Visit that page [here](#).

7. 2024 Work Plan Discussion

The PC began a work plan discussion at last meeting. Time has been allotted at this meeting for continuing that discussion. Aside from the Village Master Planning project, members discussed possible review of the Limited Business District. The PC will also be going into the Bylaws again this summer to add the Groundwater Protection Overlay District. The PZA urges members to take a deep look into the existing bylaws over the coming months for any inconsistencies or other standards which may need updating. A draft 2024 work plan is included in the packet. It is not complete, but is ready for additions as the Board sees fit.

8. Other Business

The PC vacancy ad was published in the 4/11 Valley Reporter. The PZA will get the ad in on Front Porch Forum this week.

Upcoming trainings/webinars:

An Introduction to Vermont's Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Plants

Did you know that the Vermont Natural Heritage Inventory maps and monitors about 600 rare and uncommon plant species across the state? Join State Botanist Grace Glynn for a fun glimpse into some of our rare plants, where they're found on the landscape, and the ongoing work to conserve them. Learn more about what towns can do to better protect these important pieces of our state's natural heritage.

Presenters:

Grace Glynn, Botanist, VT Fish and Wildlife Department

Jens Hilke, Conservation Planner, VT Fish and Wildlife Department

Repeat sessions of this webinar will be offered on the following two dates:

Session 2: Tuesday, April 16th, 2024, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. Register [here](#).

Using BioFinder 4.0: A step by step introduction to using this updated webmap

The BioFinder website is an online map and database that allows users to explore the patterns of habitat distribution that most impact Vermont's biodiversity. It hosts the Vermont Conservation Design data – all components of a complete vision for maintaining ecological function to secure our natural heritage for future generations. The Biofinder website was just updated to BioFinder 4.0 and while the functionality is nearly identical to the previous version, now is the perfect time to learn how to better use this multi-faceted tool. Join us and improve your skills in using BioFinder. This webinar will focus on the functionality of the webmap itself. To learn more about the data behind the maps displayed on BioFinder, be sure to join an upcoming "Understanding Vermont Conservation Design" webinar.

Presenters:

David Moroney, Conservation Planning Specialist, VT Fish and Wildlife Department

Jens Hilke, Conservation Planner, VT Fish and Wildlife Department

Repeat sessions of this webinar will be offered on the following three dates:

Session 3: Tuesday, May 14th, 2024, 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. [Register](#)

Understanding Vermont Conservation Design: The data behind BioFinder

Vermont Conservation Design is the data and the vision that powers the BioFinder website. It is a prioritization tool that identifies the lands and waters most important for maintaining Vermont's ecologically functional landscape – one that conserves current biological diversity and allows

species to move and shift in response to climate and land-use changes. Vermont Conservation Design allows users to see patterns in Vermont's forests and waterways, and identify the places that connect both into a functional network. The Design was just updated with new landscape scale components and Wildlife Road Crossings. It now features more accurate edges of the habitat blocks, that allow for a better understanding of the pattern and network of connected forests. Join us to learn more about this important conservation science.

Presenters:

Jens Hilke, Conservation Planner, VT Fish and Wildlife Department

David Moroney, Conservation Planning Specialist, VT Fish and Wildlife Department

Repeat sessions of this webinar will be offered on the following three dates:

Session 3: Tuesday, April 30th, 2024, 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. [Register](#)

Open Meeting Law for Boards and Committees

Every municipal board, council, commission, and committee (see examples listed below) is a “public body” and is therefore required to comply with Vermont’s Open Meeting Law. Learn – or review – the basic requirements of the law, including:

public notice and creating an agenda

managing public participation

taking and posting meeting minutes

The requirements of the temporary provisions enacted in 2024 allowing remote and hybrid meetings will also be discussed.

This training is critical for elected and appointed members of all statutory municipal boards, commissions, and committees listed below – and also all committees appointed by selectboards and other legislative bodies. Due to the great variety of locally appointed public bodies, the following lists are not exhaustive, but they do include most of the groups included in Vermont Statutes.

Presenters: Kail Romanoff, Staff Attorney I, VLCT Municipal Assistance Center

Date: Wednesday, April 17, 2024

Time: 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Registration Deadline: Wednesday, April 17, 2024

Register [here](#).

Respectfully submitted,

J.B. Weir

TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 2, 2024
Draft

Members Present: Beth Cook, Bob Cook, Alice Peal, Jonathan Ursprung
Members Absent: Emma Hanson, AnnMarie Harmon
Staff Present: JB Weir, Planning and Zoning Administrator
Others Present: None

II. Regular Business.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 pm by Jonathan. The meeting was held in person at the Town Offices and remotely via Zoom.

2. Review agenda for addition, removal, or adjustment of any items.

No adjustments were made to the agenda.

3. Public Forum.

Nobody present requested time to address the Commission.

4. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of March 19, 2024 were amended and approved.

5. Village Master Planning

Submittal Discussion/Interview Questions – JB confirmed that interviews are scheduled for April 15 and 16; the Steering Committee will bring a recommendation to the PC at the April 16 meeting. There was general agreement that all three candidates had provided excellent packages, and some discussion on the need to further evaluate during the interview process the wetland expertise that will be provided by each consultant.

6. NDA Designation Update

JB reported on the smooth review process with the Downtown Board, and that the NDA has been approved and associated mapping provided to ACCD. DEC has been notified of the approval, as the designation will provide for greater levels of funding availability.

It was clarified that the Village Center and NDA designations provide for different, yet overlapping, benefits for the Town, and discussed that related information will need to be included in the next iteration of the Town Plan.

7. Wastewater Planning Project Update

JB highlighted some items from his staff report; work continues on establishing easements, completing funding applications, and creation of an outreach video and other publicity.

8. 2024 Work Plan Discussion

The work plan from 2022 was available, and it was noted that everything on that list had been addressed. Upcoming items that will need to be addressed include incorporating a Groundwater Protection Overlay into the Land Use Regulations, incorporating River Corridor regulation changes

related to the work that Alice is completing with Brian Voigt at the RPC level, and updating the Energy Chapter in the Town Plan when other sections of the Plan are addressed as necessary. The PC also plans on holding further discussions related to the impacts of short-term rentals (STR), including the potential for establishing a registry as well as ensuring that residents will continue to be able to provide themselves with supplemental income through this type of rental.

Other items raised included involving the Fire Department in Master Planning discussions, and consideration of rules related to STRs when outlining Irasville development regulations.

JB emphasized that the Master Planning work will require full PC involvement as the work unfolds, as the project's scope is too large to be covered by the Steering Committee alone.

JB also pointed out that he has received several inquiries related to the creation of housing within the Limited Business District, and suggested that the PC review the types of development allowed in that District, as there is potential for housing development in that area which is currently either precluded or involves what may be restrictive/unallowable Conditional Use Review. Alice mentioned the connectivity between discussion of this matter and the Housing and Population chapters of the Regional Plan, including transportation considerations.

9. PC Vacancy

There have been no applicants for the vacant position; JB will republish the ad seeking candidates.

10. Other Business

CVRPC Update – Alice will provide a link to a recent presentation regarding Act 250. She also reported on a housing project review that she recently attended.

MRVPD – No update was available as this group did not meet in March.

JB reported that the Shea brothers have received a grant for rehabbing the church building on Main Street which they own as apartments.

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary

Waitsfield Wastewater Project Timeline

Waitsfield Community Wastewater Project Timeline (4.10.24)			2024				2025				2026			
PHASE		DETAILS	Jan - March	April - June	July - Sep.	Oct - Dec.	Jan - March	April - June	July - Sep.	Oct - Dec.	Jan - March	April - June	July - Sep.	Oct - Dec.
1	Planning: PER & EID	- PER (approved by VT DEC)												
		- EID (submitted, waiting for VT DEC feedback)	■											
2	Design	- Field Work (wetlands, archaeology., etc)			■	■								
		- Indirect Discharge Permitting		■										
		- 30% Design	■	■	■									
		- Community Information Meeting (May 8th at 6pm)			■									
		- Bond Vote Information Meeting (June 3rd at 6:30pm)			■									
		- Bond Vote (June 11th)				■								
		- 60% Design				■	■							
		- Final Design						■	■					
3	Construction	- Bid						■	■					
		- Construction							■	■	■	■	■	■

Waitsfield Community Wastewater Project Proposed Funding Stack (4/10/24)

Funding Source	Amount	Notes
VT DEC CWSRF	\$353,092	The town has received this subsidy amount to date for planning and design
Waitsfield Municipal ARPA Funding	\$28,326	Waitsfield has allocated this amount of municipal ARPA funding toward 30% design
USDA Rural Development Grant	2,923,470	An application will be submitted on 4/12.
USDA Rural Development Loan	\$1,700,630	An application will be submitted on 4/12.
Congressional Discretionary Spending	\$4,000,000	Applications have been submitted to both Senator Sanders and Senator Welch's offices and will be submitted to Representative Ballint's office when the survey window opens.
Village Wastewater ARPA / Pollution Control	\$6,000,000	This is the funding request being made by the Town for Village Wasetwaer ARPA funding as we understand Pollution Control funding is unlikely to remain.
	\$15,005,518	



Waitsfield Community Wastewater Project

Selectboard Meeting Date: April 15, 2024

Below is a summary of updates on the Waitsfield Community Wastewater Project (“the project”) from Annie Decker-Dell’Isola, Municipal Project Manager (MPM), for the Waitsfield Selectboard’s review. Additional information can be provided on any of these topics upon request.

1. Project Management

a. Admin

- Annie has officially taken over as MPM of the project as of Monday, April 1st, and has been working with the ETT and project partners on the topics identified below. Annie can be reached at wastewateradmin@gmavt.net.

2. Funding

a. Bond Vote (Tuesday, June 11th 2024)

- State Statute requires the adoption of a bond resolution in order to proceed with a bond vote. Annie will present the bond vote resolution to the Selectboard at their meeting on April 29th for approval and adoption which is being prepared with support from Stitzel, Page, and Fletcher, the Town’s bond counsel.
- The Selectboard will be required to hold a bond vote information hearing at their meeting on **Monday, June 3rd, 2024** as per statute.
- The election location on June 11th 2024 will be the Village Meeting House in the basement of the Waitsfield United Church of Christ and **not** at Waitsfield Elementary as school will be in session.

b. DEC

■ ARPA Village Wastewater

- The Wastewater Project Team has met with VT DEC staff who have encouraged the Town to submit a funding request letter for the ARPA Village Wastewater funds that may be reallocated by the State. The Town is currently on the waiting list for these funds but holding our bond vote in June puts us in a competitive position for this reallocation. The Selectboard will review this letter on 4/15 and the team will submit it to VT DEC on 4/16.

■ USDA

- The Wastewater Team submitted the application for both grant and loan funding through USDA Rural Development on April 12th. Underwriting of our project and final determination of available funds available will require proof of a positive bond vote and non-binding connection commitments, which are still being finalized, from a majority of potential users.

- **CDS (Congressional Discretionary Spending)**

- Applications were submitted to Senator Welch and Senator Sanders office on April 8th for CDS funding and will be submitted to Representative Balint's office when the application window opens.

- c. **Governor's Office**

- A letter has been drafted to be sent to Governor Scott's office to request that any available ARPA funding at the State level that may be available or up for reallocation be contributed to Waitsfield's project. A letter has been submitted to the Selectboard for their review and signature at the 4/15 meeting.

3. **Engineering & Permitting**

- a. **Advanced Treatment System**

- The Engineering and Technical Team (ETT) and Dubois & King continue to meet with vendors in preparation of the treatment system selection at their next meeting on April 17th.

- b. **Pump and tank stations (Easements)**

- The project as proposed includes four critical easements for pump stations and tanks along the collection system. The wastewater team has secured verbal commitments from four property owners for these easements. Final easement language will be created in summer 2024 for review by all parties.

- c. **Connections**

- The wastewater project team reviewed the first draft of connection drawings at their meeting on April 3rd. Based on feedback from that meeting, the project engineer will work on updated drawings for review at future meetings.
- Outreach to parcel owners located in the proposed service area has been successful to date. Verbal commitments have been secured for 70% of the capacity designated for priority connections (which comprises 73% of the entire system). There is also a good deal of interest from other parcel owners in the service area for the remaining 27% of available capacity. Engagement with property owners will continue.

4. **Public Engagement**

- a. **Community Meeting (May 8th)**

- A Community Meeting is planned for **Wednesday, May 8th** from 6pm to 8pm at the Village Meeting House (the basement of the Waitsfield United Church of Christ). The meeting will include updates on the project, details on the bond vote, and an opportunity to ask questions of the project team, funding partners, and the project engineer.

- b. **Video**

- The project team, with support from MRVPD staff, has been working on setting up and conducting interviews with project partners and supporters for the wastewater project informational video. The hope is to have the video ready to premier at the Community Meeting May 8th.

2024 Waitsfield Planning Commission Work Plan			
	Tasks	Project	Timeline
		VILLAGE MASTER PLANNING	
1	Irasville Master Planning	This project will incorporate the updated wetland maps and include a review of the history of planning in Irasville. Segue from the By-Laws Modernization Grant work and Wastewater project.	Begins May 8
		Zoning and By-Laws	
1	GPOD	Groundwater Protection Overlay District to be adopted to protect certain land radii around the Town aquifer off Reed Road. This is being done at the behest of the Water Commission. The PZA has drafted the ordinance for the overlay and it is currently under review by the Town attorneys.	Summer 2024 - in process
2	Cannabis Land Use	Land use regulation related to Act 164 (Cannabis Tax & Regulation). Cannabis cultivation, testing, warehousing, and distribution which are NOT opt-in and are also not regulated by the state as agriculture. Become familiar with the Cannabis Control Board regulations and how they affect towns.	<i>PZA recommends holding off</i>
3	Limited Business District	Reviewing standards and purpose. Numerous people have approached the PZA with regard to developing housing in this area. As it stands, residential development is deterred in this area. However, given the proximity to the Town's future disposal field, future phasing of the wastewater system could allow for	
4	Additional Zoning Bylaws Amendments	These should be guided by the most recent legislative updates as well as topics that have come up over the past few months that staff has been tracking (temporary ADUs, updates to the sign standards, definition of story, etc.). Short term rentals should be a part of this discussion. Tasks in Chapter 4 of Town Plan - Housing	