

TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 19, 2024

Members Present: Beth Cook, Bob Cook, Emma Hanson, AnnMarie Harmon, Alice Peal, Jonathan Ursprung

Staff Present: JB Weir, Planning and Zoning Administrator

Others Present: Christian Meyer (CVRPC), Will Pitkin (CVRPC), Carrie Zeno

II. Regular Business.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Alice. 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. Annual Reorganization

MOTION: Jonathan accepted a nomination to serve as Chair, and was elected unanimously.

MOTION: AnnMarie accepted a nomination to serve as Vice-Chair, and was elected unanimously.

MOITON: It was agreed to suggest that the Selectboard appoint Jonathan to the MRVPD as Waitsfield's PC representative.

MOTION: A motion to reaffirm the first and third Tuesdays at 7 pm at the Waitsfield Town Office as the regular PC meeting times and place was approved unanimously.

MOTION: A motion to designate the Valley Reporter as the newspaper of record and designate the Town Office, Town Website, Waitsfield Post Office, and Village Grocery, as locations for posting PC information passed unanimously.

There was some discussion regarding initiating the use of Front Porch Forum for posting PC agendas and other information going forward, but no decision was finalized regarding this.

5. CVRPC Presentation

Christian Meyer explained some of the background behind CVRPC's review of the recently adopted Town Plan, and what steps can be taken to ensure compliance with the areas of the Plan that do not yet meet the state standards for required elements. Two specific areas he mentioned were the provision of child care, which he explained is important to residents for various reasons, and the inclusion of a transportation map. It was discussed that the map should include public parking, bike paths, transit routes (even those that are seasonal), trails, scenic routes (including the Mad River Byway), airports, and EV charging stations. It was discussed that services such as Free Wheelin' might also be included.

Christian noted that CVRPC is available to assist with items such as the map or other aspects that need to be worked on, in order to have the update completed by the four-year mark. He then reviewed some of the goals outlined in the Plan, asking what assistance the RPC might provide in implementing the Plan through the goals.

There was some discussion whether the next update will be an amendment and only approved for four more years, or if more of the plan will be revised and be a full revision for eight years. JB pointed out that there are several sections of the Plan that were not revised in the most recent iteration, and that would likely benefit from a review as these other changes are incorporated.

The following were mentioned as topics for which the RPC is either currently providing or might potentially provide assistance:

- Public engagement – PC members noted that several big projects are underway which necessitate much interfacing with members of the public; Christian will look into what resources he might be able to provide.
- Upcoming trainings and webinars are typically included by JB in the PC meeting packets, two of note are a VLCT Open Meeting Law training and the Act 250 presentation from CVRPC.
- CVRPC is assisting with the update to the Emergency Management Plan, and is available for consultation when work begins on fluvial erosion.
- Hazard Mitigation and matters related to the new FEMA maps that will be published are also within the RPC's purview; flood hazard bylaws and references to appropriate maps in the Town Plan will need to be updated.
- Conformance with the regional enhanced energy plan may require some work.
- As the Regional Plan update is solidified, there will be aspects that impact work on municipal plans as well.
- Work on approval of Act 250 tiers is ongoing, with involvement of both the Natural Resources Board and the RPCs anticipated; implementation, if the proposed legislation passes, will be several years away.
- Seasonality of the local economy, energy resilience, the current RPC survey regarding greenhouse gas emissions reduction, Downstreet as a worthwhile housing contact, Barre's current work on infill analysis, homelessness and an aging population, home/health equity, Winsooki Basin non-regulatory water quality projects, and potential for simplification of the ACCD's neighborhood designation programs were all mentioned as well.

6. Village Master Planning

Submittal Update – AnnMarie noted that three excellent proposals had been received, from DuBois & King, Regrowth Planning, and SE Group. A draft of the proposed questions to be used in the interview process had been included in the meeting packet, and these were reviewed and suggestions for additional questions/refinements were offered by members of the PC. It was agreed that Bob had raised an important point regarding including some emphasis on commercial and mixed use properties rather than focusing primarily on housing, and that related questions should be part of the interview. It was noted that all three consulting firms have staff with wetlands expertise; Alice proposed that a question regarding familiarity with the State's wetlands mapping efforts and the Winooski Tactical Basin Plan be included. In response to a question from AnnMarie, some visions for the Irasville area were mentioned, including attractiveness and cleanliness, walkability and

connectivity, and traffic calming. JB noted that the Skatium has some ambitious plans underway, and that representatives from that organization should be part of the conversation. AnnMarie will have an updated draft of interview questions available for review at the April 2 PC meeting.

Steering Committee – Alice suggested that the committee include representation of elderly or other housing needs, mentioning that the Mad River Community Fund might be an appropriate party as they receive requests for housing assistance. AnnMarie explained that the Committee has been established, but that Community Fund representative(s) would be invited to present at a meeting. The committee members are Kaziah Haviland, Sean Lawson, Mac Rood, Beth Cook (PC), Brian Shupe (Selectboard), and either Ira Shadis or Luke Foley to represent Friends of the Mad River.

7. NDA Designation Update

JB reported that Jacob Hemmerick felt that Waitsfield's application was in great shape, and that they are on the agenda for Downtown Board review/approval on March 25. AnnMarie and Jonathan both indicated that they would be available to attend the Board's review, as at least one PC member needs to be present.

8. Wastewater Planning Project Update

Bob explained that the main focus of the committee is currently on public outreach, with public support being expressed by many of the impacted property owners. A flyer and story map are currently available to provide information about the project, and a mailing will also be taking place. An engineering meeting is scheduled for March 20.

9. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of February 20, 2024 were amended and approved.

10. PC Vacancy

JB explained that he had edited a previous posting used to advertise a PC vacancy, including an update to the current PC activities. Nobody had any further edits to suggest. Carrie expressed her potential interest in applying for the vacant position.

11. Other Business

Act 250 Update – JB outlined some of the potential implications for Waitsfield should the bill currently under review by the Legislature is enacted. Alice noted that there are folks at the RPC that are concerned that the onus for resource protection will be placed on the towns if Act 250 is watered down to any great degree through the proposed Tier approach.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary