

**TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT**  
**Planning Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, December 6, 2022**

**Members Present:** Kevin Anderson (online), Bob Cook (online), Emma Hanson (online), AnnMarie Harmon (online), Alice Peal (online), Steve Shea (online), Brian Voigt (online)

**Staff Present:** JB Weir, Planning & Zoning Administrator

**Others Present:** Alex Belensz (SE Group), Mark Kane (SE Group), Julia Randall (SE Group)

## **II. Regular Business.**

### **1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm. 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 revisions were made to the agenda.

### **3. Public Forum.**

There was nobody present requesting to address the Commission.

### **4. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of November 15, 2022 were amended and approved.

### **5. Wastewater and Water Feasibility Study Update**

Alice reported that the 90% report had been presented to the Selectboard, and that it was determined that both the water connections outlined in Option 2 and development of wastewater infrastructure at the Munn outlined in Option 4 will be pursued within the upcoming Preliminary Engineering Report (PER). The PER will also include information related to phasing of Option 5B, which includes development of a disposal site at the northern end of the study area, at a site to be determined.

It was noted that DEC staff had indicated at the Selectboard meeting that the new income restrictions may not pertain to the upcoming grant applications.

Alice pointed out that synching the schedule of available funding deadlines with the proposed work schedule might prove somewhat difficult, and that she has requested a possible reservation of ARPA funding to ensure that the project continues to move forward. She and JB are investigating whether full construction funding may be applied for along with the application for PER funding, and are also working to apply for funds through the Agency of Commerce and Community Development's Community Revitalization Program.

Brian indicated that it will not be beneficial to present this as an avenue for growth outside the Irasville/Village areas; Kevin suggested possibly considering two grant applications, one for the water connections and another for the wastewater system development.

### **6. SE Group: Bylaw Modernization Project Kickoff**

Alex, Mark, and Julia of SE Group introduced themselves and explained what role they will play in this project. Another consultant, Gabby Voeller, was not able to attend this meeting.

Alex outlined the phases in which these various aspects of the project will be addressed:

- Foundation phase – gain clarity around goals, issues, opportunities, strategic objectives
- Planning and drafting phase – gather public input, refine language to be more specific
- Finalization and adoption phase – PC-led, with consultant support available through the adoption process

He then explained the entities that will be involved – PC, Steering Committee, Selectboard, members of the public, consultants – and the roles they will play, and outlined strategies to be incorporated in order to allow for efficient use of meeting time. The scope of work document/schedule and associated tasks was reviewed, and it was affirmed that revisions to this outline might be proposed based upon the progress of any wastewater solution implementation. PC members pointed out the need for plan for bicycle traffic, the uniqueness of resort areas, a desire for more pedestrian-friendly navigation within town, and the desire to keep street-level businesses as customer-facing.

Alex asked the PC members to outline their hopes and fears for this project, points brought up included:

#### Hopes

- Pedestrian access important
- Downtown could be more attractive for strolling
- More places/activities for pedestrians to visit
- Shift in economics could make infill development attractive
- Successful even if no wastewater system put in place
- Reduction of the sentiment that ‘zoning prevents development’
- Residential and commercial possibilities
- Raise awareness of what is possible/potential
- Basis for next stage of master planning work

#### Fears

- Potential objections to increased building height allowances
- Need for four-season activities/visitors
- General fear of/resistance to change among residents
- Ensure that there is success even if wastewater does not pan out
- Ensure all sectors of public are included in the process, especially developers
- Not much resulting from bylaws changing

There was further discussion regarding the need to provide public education regarding the connectivity between this project and the wastewater project, and how potential expansion and related wastewater needs must be considered together. Some case study examples were suggested for examination, and plans for public engagement events and goals were reviewed.

### **7. Town Plan Review and Next Steps**

Some feedback and questions were received from the Selectboard’s review of the draft Plan; JB suggested providing those Board members with some more time for review, and to plan for beginning the adoption process/public hearing a little later than mid-January as originally

intended. He also noted that he had conferred with Clare Rock of CVRPC, and her suggestion is to proceed with readoption vs amendment, with the understanding that some areas will be addressed sooner than the eight-year timeframe allowed for.

## **8. Other Business**

a) STR Survey Municipal Grant – Alice reported that the MRVPD is planning to apply for a Municipal Grant in order to gather data regarding short-term rentals (STR) in the three PD towns, to include determining numbers of available STRs and some of their physical characteristics. Alice will suggest that information regarding owner-occupied vs. commercial use also be collected.

b) Cannabis Control Board – Alice noted that the Board is currently rewriting the rules they issued last year, and intends seek to allow outdoor cultivators to use lighting and will propose that they prove to the CCB that they have sufficient water for cultivation.

It was decided to meet next on January 3, 2023.

## **10. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary