

**TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT**  
**Planning Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, January 3, 2023**

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

**Members Absent:** AnnMarie Harmon

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

**Others Present:** Alex Belensz (SE Group), Joshua Schwartz (MRVPD)

## **II. Regular Business.**

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 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.**

A budget discussion was added to the agenda.

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

There was nobody present requesting to address the Commission.

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

The minutes of December 6, 2022 were amended and approved.

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

Alice reported that she and Annie have met with DEC representatives in order to gain more clarity regarding what is required to apply/qualify for upcoming funding, including Project Priority List inclusion, upcoming ARPA funding, and a Clean Water State Revolving Fund application. She noted that Lynette Claudon (DEC) has advised that everything should be submitted by the end of February at the latest. Lynette, along with Emily Hackett (DEC) will be assisting with getting the necessary materials together.

Alice further explained that the Engineering Services Agreement (ESA) for the Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) is needed by the end of February. Bob Cook, Chach Curtis, and Robin Morris are currently working to develop the draft document.

Lynette, along with Jacob Hemmerick of the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) have advised that an application to classify Irasville, and potentially an area south of Irasville, as a Neighborhood Development Area be submitted; this designation will be necessary in order for grant monies to be awarded. Alice explained that other potential designations, such as village center or smart growth area, are either not possible due to not being historically significant or would require much more in depth consideration by the PC. Brian cautioned against an NDA designation significantly altering the area south of Irasville and in turn the parameters of where desired development has been outlined by the PC.

Joshua explained that there are other sources of funding available, but that village funding is tied to the new requirements regarding things such as an NDA designation. He also pointed out that there may be other constraints impacting applications from Waitsfield, such as lot size

minimums. He emphasized that funds should be sought from sources that fit well with a project and the planning goals of the Town.

Alice noted that she had distributed the available NDA application guidelines to PC members, and that she will be meeting with Jacob Hemmerick to determine the potential boundaries of an NDA designation for Irasville.

It was agreed that it would be beneficial to ask Jacob to attend an upcoming PC meeting in order to help provide clarity regarding an NDA designation.

It was noted that the EPA needs to accept DEC's Intended Use Plan requirements before the anticipated ARPA funds are released.

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

Alex commented that the connections between the Bylaw Modernization and pursuing an NDA designation may require work outside of the current contract in place with SE Group.

He then reported that the work on the existing conditions analysis – both review of the current bylaws and on-the-ground configuration of Irasville and adjacent areas – is nearing completion and will be presented at the January 17 PC meeting.

Alex indicated that SE Group will also present a public outreach plan at the January 17 meeting; details are being determined in meetings with the steering committee, although Alex said that an open-house type event will be one of the main deliverables. The following points regarding public outreach were discussed by PC members:

- Separate in-person and online forums are preferred, as hybrid meetings can be difficult for attendees to hear/participate well.
- Business owners are part of the public, and likely will participate through channels open to the public rather than needing a separate event or contact outreach. Alex suggested that a separate conversation with local developers might be warranted.
- Posting information to the Town web site is important; Alex confirmed that a story map site is being developed.
- Describing the project as a precursor to development of an Irasville Master Plan, and explaining that it will provide for changes intended to achieve Town Plan goals is more understandable than 'bylaw modernization.' Alex will work with the PC and the steering committee to refine the overall message.

There was some discussion of what changes would be welcome in Irasville, especially along the lines of sidewalk connections to side roads and pedestrian areas. Alex explained that these discussions will fall more into the realm of conceptual design work which will take place as the Master Plan is developed, although it was agreed that there is a need to show the connections between the proposed bylaws and how they will underly the future design goals.

Bob asked about inclusion of the fairgrounds parcel behind Our Lady of the Snows; JB noted that he had pointed this area out to SE Group members during a visit to Waitsfield; Alex indicated that there is some flexibility in the boundary of the area to be covered by this work, but that the focus will be on Irasville.

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

JB summarized the status of the review and the next steps to be taken. He noted that some Selectboard members had provided minor editing suggestions, which he has incorporated into the document. It was agreed that JB should post the necessary warnings and distribute the Plan as appropriate in order to schedule the PC public hearing for February 7. Kevin offered a reminder to review that the energy checklist items have all been covered.

## **8. Other Business**

### Budget Considerations

Alice reported that the Selectboard has agreed to pursue the possibility of establishing an MOU with the MRVPD in order to engage Joshua Schwartz as a project manager for the upcoming engineering work to be completed for the Water and Wastewater Project. Brian noted that Joshua may not have much availability to provide this assistance, but that he would likely be able to assist to some degree.

The need for funds to engage consultants as PC projects move forward was discussed. Alice has requested that \$20K be allotted to the PC for the coming fiscal year in order to cover this need for various special projects (such as applying for NDA status for Irasville); she indicated that it is likely that between \$10K and \$15K will be included in the budget. It was agreed that there will also be a need to apply for further grant money for some of this work.

## **10. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary