

TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 2, 2023

Members Present: Kevin Anderson (online), Emma Hanson (online), AnnMarie Harmon (online), Alice Peal (online), Brian Voigt (online)

Members Absent: Bob Cook

Staff Present: JB Weir, Zoning Administrator

Others Present: Alex Belenz (SE Group)

II. Regular Business.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 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.

The topic of the Selectboard's Town Plan public hearing was added and it was decided to move the Bylaws discussion ahead of the NDA discussion.

3. Public Forum.

There was nobody present requesting to address the Commission.

4. Approval of Minutes

Approval of the minutes of April 18, 2023 was postponed.

5. SE Group Bylaws/Vibrant Villages Discussion

Kevin reported that the full steering committee will be meeting this week; a smaller group met recently and discussed flagging the Irasville discussion points that are outside the scope of the bylaw review. He asked for input regarding the steering committee's work with SE Group. Alex Belenz noted that he was present for the purpose of hearing discussion, and not for any presentation items.

Kevin explained that because there is no critical timeline for completion of the NDA work, that topic is not part of the current discussion at the subcommittee; Alice pointed out that some of the aspects of bylaws being discussed are part of NDA requirements, and so the bylaw work needs to be completed prior to the NDA work.

Alex explained that he and Julia will review possibilities for bylaw changes related to Irasville, in the same manner that the Village districts were reviewed, at the next PC meeting; he asked that any feedback/requests should be passed to SE Group through the subcommittee.

The ongoing list of bylaw change suggestions that has been maintained by the Zoning office was mentioned, and JB explained that everything is outlined in a document which can be brought to the table when the PC is ready to review those items again.

AnnMarie asked Alex to provide suggestions/recommendations for options 1B (lot coverage) and 1C (setbacks), which were discussed during the Village review. Alex explained that they will look at what

currently exists on properties in the districts for these dimensions, and base suggestions on that information.

It was confirmed that the issue of providing for some level of affordable housing will be discussed further with Alex and Julia at the next meeting, with topics such as threshold trigger levels and how to incorporate incentives rather than requirements into the regulations, as this strategy is more likely to work for smaller development projects as well as larger ones.

There was some discussion regarding whether to look at expanding the zoning district for Irasville, with some support expressed for an increase to the south along Route 100, including the fairgrounds parcel.

Other aspects of Irasville that will be looked at include whether development of a cottage court is possible under the current PUD regulations and whether the concept of a cottage crescent depicted in the DEC wastewater materials should be pursued.

Alice asked that PC members bring thoughts about a vision for Irasville to the next meeting, which will be discussed in conjunction with the comments received at the open house. Alex reminded the group that the bylaw work being undertaken is to enable development that is desired, and that details such as design standards belong more in the realm of Master Plan work.

6. Neighborhood Development Area (NDA)

Requirement for WW funding or Priority Checklist points –

Alice noted that there are several benefits to obtaining this Designation, which are outlined in the documentation available from State agencies. She reported that she has been unable to find language specific to the Designation being a requirement for funding, but that there are definitely points provided for placement on the Project Priority List. It was agreed that there is some lack of clarity regarding whether the PC or Selectboard has the ability to authorize moving forward with this endeavor; JB explained that the PC would likely recommend to the Selectboard for approval that this be taken on.

Brian pointed out that the Designation may be worthwhile even without completion of a wastewater project, and Kevin noted that SE Group staff are aware of the potential for this Designation as they develop proposals for bylaw changes.

Review Meeting with ACCD on process/timeline –

Alice reported that she has met with ACCD staff and Joshua Schwartz and held preliminary discussions regarding this, and that these conversations will continue, particularly if it is determined that the NDA is necessary for construction funding awards.

7. Wastewater Update

PC members expressed concerns regarding potentially not being part of the information pipeline from the various groups that are working on the project, and wanted to ensure that all pertinent notifications/postings/minutes are being addressed as necessary. JB assured the PC that all updates are being provided regularly as he receives them.

It was also discussed that there had been some commentary that indicated contemplation of an expansion of the service area for the wastewater system; it was confirmed that there has been no

change from what was decided upon by the PC. Members would like to receive information related to how the capacity numbers were generated for the PER, as they need to understand how much capacity will be for existing development and what may be available for new/future development.

8. Town Plan Public Hearing

The Selectboard has scheduled a Public Hearing for the Town Plan revisions on May 8; the PC has provided a summary of the changes made. Several PC members confirmed that they will be present for the Hearing and available to answer questions if any arise.

9. Other Business

No other business was taken up by the PC.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary