

TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, July 18, 2023

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

Members Absent:

Staff Present: JB Weir, Planning & Zoning Administrator

Others Present: Beth Cook

II. Regular Business.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 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 revisions were made to the agenda.

3. Public Forum.

Nobody requested an opportunity to address the PC.

4. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of June 20, 2023 were approved.

5. Bylaws

Update on SE Group working sessions/Vibrant Villages

JB reported that he and Alex should have a draft of the Regulations with the proposed changes in place for review at the August 1 PC meeting; it was agreed that a full review will likely take both August meetings. It was also agreed to move forward with incorporating changes that will be in compliance with S.100 (The HOME Act) requirements for towns with wastewater systems. One item related to this that will require further discussion is the number of stories allowed, as S.100 provides a bonus floor for development that includes an affordability aspect. Another topic raised that will require further study is the potential need for increased availability of emergency services, including new fire equipment for attending to taller structures. Kevin asked that Gabby and Mark (SE Group) also review these changes when a draft document is ready.

Other Bylaw Revisions

Annmarie requested feedback on the items which she proposed removing from the list being maintained regarding bylaw updates to be addressed. It was agreed that the following had either been completed or were being covered through the Bylaw Modernization work with SE Group:

- Add third story
- Beneficial regulations related to housing
- Height definition (fixed in 2020 revision)
- Frontage requirements/interior (flag) lots
- Full Circle Auto property in Irasville (this has been done)

- Multi-use lots language

There was then some discussion of other items which AnnMarie felt might be included in the current bylaw work.

- Open space design standards – JB explained that this will be a matter addressed outside of the work with SE Group, particularly as it applies more to the Ag/Res District than the Villages; and that design standards for the Village areas are better addressed through a Master Plan.
- Group home/Boarding House/Senior housing definitions – Alice noted that some of this is covered by the HOME Act, and it was agreed to consult with SE Group regarding these.
- Density standards as they related to PUD/ADU allowances – It was agreed to work with SE Group on this.
- ADU incentives/standards for flexibility, including ‘housekeeping unit’ definition – JB will clarify whether this has been addressed.
- Housing design standards – It was agreed that this topic needs a thorough review outside of the current SE Group work.
- Conditional Use for ADUs above 900 square feet – JB will include this in the current draft of changes.

Food Trucks questions/concerns

It was noted that currently there are no Waitsfield ordinances related to food trucks, and that the matter is usually addressed through a separate town ordinance rather than through land use regulations. Nobody had any concerns regarding the current situation; JB noted that he will follow up with Annie on this topic.

6. Town Plan

SB Update

Alice noted that the Selectboard has not yet completed changes to Chapter 13, and that she had spoken with Brian Shupe to explain that going forward the RPC will be responsible for tabulating population information and determining housing needs for each community. They agreed that this new strategy indicates that the population numbers in Chapter 3 do not need updating at this time.

Chapter 13 Review

Kevin offered to create a draft update of the Chapter 13 implementation chart as well as a forward/introductory paragraph, for the PC to review and then pass to the Selectboard to aid in their completion of Chapter 13 work. It was agreed that the following should be added: Regulation of STRs, NDA designation, policies to minimize or avoid impacts to natural resources, update fluvial erosion and river corridor regulations.

Regional Plan

The recent CVRPC meeting related to this was cancelled due to flooding.

7. Wastewater Project Update

JB reported that the Step 2 loan application has been submitted, and that a draft of the 30% ESA was written as part of the submission. The 90% PER has not yet reached completion. JB has responded to questions presented by Hugo Martinez Cazon (DEC) and met recently with Lynnette Claudon (DEC). He is awaiting further information from DEC, including formal comments from Hugo and an audit of the PPL score that was received, as that was anticipated to be in the mid-80s and unexpectedly came in in the mid-60s. JB also noted that an affordability requirement has been reinstated for construction loans; the previous work that Alice completed to indicate Waitsfield's appropriate income levels will be presented to DEC along with other information as this work unfolds.

8. Beth Cook – PC Vacancy

Beth confirmed that her role as a real estate attorney should not create any conflicts of interest as a PC member; but that she would recuse herself as necessary if such a situation did arise. PC members thanked Beth for offering to serve on the PC, and noted that the next Selectboard meeting, where her appointment would be made, is on August 14.

9. VNRC Parcelization Presentation

Alice reported that she had attended this webinar, and that she would like to invite Jamey Fidel to an upcoming meeting to review the information available. It was agreed that asking him to a joint PC/CC meeting would be beneficial.

9. Other Business

Alice noted that Misha Golfman, the new ED of the Mad River Path, will present at an upcoming meeting.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:13 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary