

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

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

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: JB Weir, Planning and Zoning Administrator

Others Present: Misha Golfman (Mad River Path Association)

II. Regular Business.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order 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 changes were made to the agenda.

3. Public Forum.

Nobody requested an opportunity to address the PC.

4. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of September 19, 2023 were approved.

5. Mad River Path – VT100 Path Vision

Misha Golfman provided an overview of the Mad River Path Association and the current path segments, noting that many of the disconnects between segments are not resolvable due to a lack of landowner permissions. He explained that the ROW along Route 100/100B does allow for room to construct a fully accessible, multi-use path from Warren Village to Lover's Lane near the northern end of 100B in Moretown. Misha indicated that both VTrans and CVRPC are in favor of developing such a multi-use path, and outlined the implementation steps, beginning in 2026, that will need to be completed in order to make this vision a reality. Currently Misha is seeking support from the towns involved as he works with CVRPC on a grant application to cover a scoping study for the project.

Misha confirmed that coordination between installation of wastewater infrastructure and path development is likely, Alice spoke of the process whereby CVRPC's Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) approves VTrans Priority List projects, and Kevin noted the usefulness of establishing an 'official map' to ensure that future development does not interfere with such a path.

6. Draft Zoning Bylaws

A discussion took place regarding extending the Village Residential (VR) District to include the school property, Ed Read's property, and one other residential property at the northern end of the district. These three parcels are included in the Designated Village Center, Water Service Area, and the proposed Wastewater Service area, and it was agreed that they should be part of the VR District, although there was some difference of opinion as to whether that should be pursued during this Bylaw update or at a future time.

Alice pointed out that there are many parties involved and that the current process is likely too far along to be held up in order to work through the steps necessary to include this change in zoning district designation. Some other members wanted more definitive information regarding what entities would need to be part of the process, and how much time it might take to incorporate this change into the current revisions. It was decided to hold off on making a decision until the next PC meeting, and that JB will gather the pertinent data so that an informed decision is possible.

Clare Rock of CVRPC had offered suggestions for making edits to the Town Plan in order to accommodate this zoning change. She had also provided Alice with some statutory references related to this and other topics, which Alice will share with the rest of the PC.

Kevin reported on the feedback received during his presentation of the Bylaw changes to the Select Board and the DRB. He indicated that Brian Shupe expressed some concern regarding removing Conditional Use review for some development, particularly in the Historic Overlay District; otherwise, the Board was generally supportive of the proposed changes.

Kevin then explained that members of the DRB had commented on some of the more technical aspects of the revisions, including:

- Specification of a minimum width for access to flag lots
- Whether necessary to cap ADU size
- Bonus allowances (affordability, etc.) as singular or additive
- Clarity in the PUD standards as they relate to cottage courts
- Definition of an 'area' for median income determination

JB also noted that Alex (SE Group) had also pointed out that the use of either 'coverage' or 'footprint' should be used throughout the Bylaws, currently both terms are used to indicate the same coverage. (This had also been noted by a member of the DRB in a follow-up email.) It was also agreed to change language related to smaller cottage courts to 'four or fewer.'

Kevin will work with Alex to incorporate appropriate changes and provide an updated document for PC review on October 17. This will potentially allow for a hearing to be scheduled in early December, followed by a Selectboard hearing in January.

Alice noted that there is further information available from ACCD regarding ADUS and the HOME Act, and provided other members with a link to that information. She also explained that all RPCs have been asked to report on regional land use maps, as there is often confusion regarding various local area designations when people are applying for grants related to those designations.

7. Municipal Plan Application

AnnMarie explained that the application is due on November 1, and asked for assistance from others in reviewing the materials as she completes this work. JB will help with completing the application, and Beth, Emma, and Jonathan offered to assist in reviewing the documents before finalization.

Alice confirmed that the Bylaw Modernization project may be considered a 'Phase One' of this project, which allows for the preselection of SE Group as the consultant for the Municipal Plan work.

AnnMarie raised the topic of wetlands and the work which may be possible through Master Plan development to enhance and reconstruct wetlands in order to enable development in a larger

portion of Irasville. JB explained that a previous effort completed about 20 years ago had relied upon stormwater retention and treatment, but that this plan was never realized and is no longer viable due to changes in State level wetland and stormwater rules. Alice noted that prior wetland study work has been completed as well; this work has provided mapping and soils information.

The two goals that will underly the Master Plan work are development goals for Irasville as well as retention capacity for stormwater, to be enhanced through the wetland enhancement work referred to by AnnMarie. She explained that there have been preliminary discussions with Shannon Morrison of DEC's Wetlands Program, who has expressed enthusiasm for what may develop into a pioneering project for this type of work to help foster compatibility with development and wetland impacts. It was mentioned that SE Group would likely subcontract for any related wetlands work necessary during development of the Plan. The possibility of developing a Waitsfield-specific in lieu program for financing some of the restoration/reconstruction of wetlands was also raised.

Alice outlined the process to be followed in completing the grant application, including obtaining Selectboard approval, determining if Fayston will participate in the application in order to qualify for the higher-level consortium funding amount, and the available funds in the PC budget for meeting the match requirement.

8. Other Business

Alice commented briefly on several topics: the recent influx of wealth to Vermont, the lack of rental properties available, potential for a short-term-rental registry, and the Regional Plan Land Use Map.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary