

**TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT**  
**Planning Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, December 5, 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:** None

## **II. Regular Business.**

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 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 changes were made to the agenda.

### **3. Zoning Bylaws Public Hearing.**

Alice opened the Public Hearing for the Bylaw updates. No members of the public were present; PC members discussed their role in presenting information at the upcoming Selectboard Public Hearings. Alice closed the Public Hearing at 7:12 pm.

### **4. Public Forum**

Nobody requested an opportunity to address the PC.

### **5. Municipal Planning Grant Update**

JB highlighted some of the items from his report provided in the meeting materials, noting that the award notifications have been postponed until December. Alice reported that a proposed work plan at the MRVPD had included more of that staff's time for this project than she felt would be necessary, and she had explained to that group the plans for forming a comprehensive steering committee to undertake the majority of this work. It was reiterated and agreed that representation from Downstreet/Senior Citizens should be part of that committee.

### **6. Wastewater Planning Project Update**

JB indicated that staff at DEC has granted the appeal related to the Town's income threshold calculation for qualifying for certain grant awards, and that the data supplied by Alice is to be accepted. This will provide for the full amount of funding being granted for the 30% design work. JB is beginning work on the Project Priority List Application for 2025, for design and construction work on the system. He also noted that the final PER was submitted and is available; this new, polished, version contains several pieces of information which were requested by the DEC to be included. Further meetings with USDA will be held; this Department requires that funding to cover the project has been approved before a project will be considered for funding.

Public outreach regarding the project will begin in the coming week.

Alice asked for the reason behind a wastewater project funding request to the Selectboard, and JB explained that there is approximately a \$50K gap between the maximum subsidy that might be awarded and the cost of this phase of the project.

Kevin asked about the Fair Grounds property as a potential wastewater infrastructure site; Bob explained that, while the donators of the parcel asked that some of the property be developed in a way to support housing, there is a large amount of assessment to be undertaken by the Conservation Commission before any decisions are made.

## **7. Approval of Minutes – November 7, 2023**

The minutes of November 7, 2023 were approved.

## **8. Other Business**

### Memo from Chair – CRRPC, LHMP

Alice reported on various CVRPC activities, noting that:

- Waitsfield's Town Plan should be approved at the next RPC meeting, but because of some required elements discovered to be missing during staff review, the approval will only be for four years; once those items are addressed, the approval can be extended to the full eight years. Alice will forward the staff report to the rest of the members; she noted that in general the comments provided verbally by staff and the review committee were very complimentary.
- Climate resilience is being covered at the RPC level currently, and will be expected to be included in upcoming Plans by towns at a future point; some of the current work is to determine the best protocols for inclusion in Town Plans.
- Progress continues on the Regional Plan update; current topics include flood mitigation policies, climate change activities, and housing initiatives. The goal is to set a framework for what the region will need to have in place to address these challenges. The Plan will be presented in a format that covers topical areas, rather than providing individual towns with a full synopsis.
- It will likely take a year or longer before the requirement for regional future land use mapping is mandated.

Alice noted the following regarding progress on completion of an updated LHMP:

- CVRPC's Keith Cubbon is drafting the Plan.
- Friends of the Mad River is supporting the work, will be holding a public forum re flooding, is helping to define flood areas, and has agreed to host the Public Hearing for the LHMP.
- Because of this ongoing work to get an approved Plan in place, the Town's FEMA ERAF rates will go back to the 12% level; there is further work Alice is looking into that may be undertaken to possibly bring that up to 20%.
- Fred Messer is the lead on this project, but Alice will reach out to PC members if any other assistance is needed.

### Zoning Bylaws – Table 2.04 ARO District Standards discussion

JB explained that a question had arisen regarding the possibility of developing affordable housing in

the ARO District, and noted that his interpretation of the Bylaw language precludes the development of new housing structures that are not designated for either student or employee use.

No PC members disagreed with JB's interpretation of the regulations, but questions were raised and potential strategies for allowing such development were brought forth. It was decided that JB will do some historical research regarding permits issued for the Yestermorrow property as well as the reasons behind the ARO District's standards.

#### Irasville Height Standard

AnnMarie asked for clarification regarding the mention in SE Group's memorandum for the Bylaw update of plans to revisit the height limitations in Irasville once a wastewater system is in place. Kevin explained that this potential revisiting of the height/stories allowance is due to the HOME Act's allowance for an extra floor bonus for a building that provides a certain amount of affordable housing units. It may be that this legislation changes to remove the bonus allowance, but if not, the PC had agreed that the matter should be discussed further because of the concern expressed regarding four-story buildings in Irasville.

#### **9. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary