

TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 21, 2024

Members Present: Beth Cook, Bob Cook, AnnMarie Harmon, Alice Peal, Jonathan Ursprung
Members Absent: Emma Hanson
Staff Present: JB Weir, Planning and Zoning Administrator
Others Present: Jeff Campbell, Rebecca Campbell, Keith Cubbon (CVRPC), Fred Messer (Emergency Management Coordinator), Brian Voigt (CVRPC)

II. Regular Business.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm by Jonathan Ursprung. 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 adjustments were made to the agenda.

3. Public Forum.

Nobody requested time to address the PC.

4. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of May 7, 2024 were approved.

5. Public Hearing: Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP)

Alice Peal provided some background information on the LHMP, noting that she, Fred Messer, Claire Ireland, Iras Shadis and Luke Foley worked on this update with Keith Cubbon. Keith then reviewed the Plan and its relation to the State Plan, ERAF rates and disaster relief funding. He presented a matrix of specific mitigation actions, for which he requested that the PC provide ranking and cost estimate information. Keith explained that he will compile the ranking feedback provided, and place the highest ranked items into a Mitigation Action Table included in the LHMP. He outlined the adoption process which will be followed, from Selectboard approval to Vermont Emergency Management adoption, and finally to FEMA. Jonathan indicated that he would work with JB Weir to compile feedback provided by PC members and provide Keith with the input requested; AnnMarie Harmon indicated that she is available to assist with this process as well. The impact on the Town's Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund reimbursement rate was explained, as the LHMP's adoption will increase the level of reimbursement for which Waitsfield is eligible. FEMA provides 75% of the reimbursement. Without the LHMP, the State provides 7.5% and the Town 17.5%. After completion and acceptance of the LHMP, the State would provide 17.5% and the Town 7.5%.

6. River Corridor Presentation

Brian Voigt provided an outline of River Corridor planning, explaining that Corridors have been defined by DEC, that some related plans exist from which towns may determine priority projects, and that adoption of River Corridor Regulations is an additional strategy for providing rivers the room they need to move. He explained that adoption of such regulations will also positively affect the Town's ERAF rate.

Brian provided some details of the differences in maps of Waitsfield's current Fluvial Erosion Hazard Overlay (FEHO) and the River Corridors as mapped by DEC, noting they are very similar, but that there are some additional areas to be included in the adoption of River Corridor Regulations. Alice indicated that she has been working with Brian to draft these bylaws, using Waitsfield's current FEHO bylaws as well as DEC's model regulations. The draft document is available for review, and any comments may be provided to Alice.

Brian confirmed that he would share the slides and resource links included in his presentation with the PC.

The progress of the current Flood Area mapping updates being completed by FEMA was outlined by Brian; he indicated that he would keep the PC apprised on any upcoming work sessions related to proposed changes. Brian also outlined the few items in the Flood Hazard regulations that will need to be addressed.

7. Village Master Planning

Formal Recommendation to Selectboard Update – AnnMarie confirmed that the Selectboard was informed that there will be some changes to the deliverables outlined in the contract with SE Group; the Selectboard approved contracting with SE Group for this work.

Meeting with Shannon Morrison June 3 – PC members are invited to join this meeting (Zoom).

Project Kick-off PC Meeting June 4

Steering Committee/PC Process – The SC will be meeting on May 28 to outline the new scope of work

8. Wastewater Planning Project Update

Bob Cook provided some updates, noting good progress on all fronts. He outlined the locations of pump stations for the group, confirming that they will all be underground units, with only some power access infrastructure located at the surface.

Jonathan noted that the public meeting went well, and that the Outreach team is working to ensure that people understand the purpose of the bond vote as supporting external funding.

9. Other Business

PC Vacancy – Becca Newhall is still potentially interested in joining, but outreach is also continuing.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary