

**TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT**  
**Planning Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, December 17, 2024**

**Members Present:** Beth Cook, Bob Cook, Emma Hanson, AnnMarie Harmon, Becca Newhall, Alice Peal, Jonathan Ursprung

**Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** JB Weir, Planning and Zoning Administrator

**Others Present:** Brian Voigt (CVRPC)

## **II. Regular Business**

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 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**

The order of the agenda items was adjusted.

### **3. Public Forum**

No members of the public were present.

### **4. CVRPC/FMR Workshop on Aging MRV Septics**

Brian Voigt spoke of a wastewater workshop being planned by CVRPC, in conjunction with his work with DEC and the Tactical Basin Plan for the Winooski River watershed. The need for this type of workshop was identified through that program. The presentation will focus on onsite wastewater topics such as permitting, new technologies, etc.

There was a discussion regarding the need to avoid confusion with the Wastewater Project; Brian will discuss this with the DEC presenters to determine if the title of the workshop and other promotional materials can be adjusted accordingly.

Brain then provided an update on the Clean Water Service Provider project for which the Town applied for funding to study and potentially create floodplain connections at five or six locations along the Mad River. Funding has been awarded for the engineering phase of the work, and an RFP will be issued so that the feasibility of the potential reconnections may be assessed. If any projects are to be implemented, further funding for the construction phase will be sought. Brain will provide the PC with a report on the engineering studies in April 2024.

### **5. Alice Update**

Regional Plan committee work – Alice reported that Brian Voigt and Lincoln Frasca of CVRPC presented their draft of the Natural Resources chapter, which appears to be ready for inclusion in the final Plan. Other chapters which are ready to move forward include those on Economy, Transportation, and one other; Alice would like the PC to review chapters as they are drafted and reviewed by the Regional Plan group, rather than waiting until the entire document has been compiled. She indicated that the group will be meeting more frequently in coming months to expedite the draft/review process for the Regional Plan.

Alice recommended a webinar with FEMA and the American Planners Association, and noted that FEMA is considering implementing requirements for disaster mitigation planning.

Climate Action Plan – Alice noted that the Public Health portion of the Plan has been drafted, and recommendations have been presented to the full Climate Council; this material has focused in large part on ensuring health equity among Vermonters.

Meadow Road bridge – a meeting is scheduled for the end of the week regarding applying for a Vtrans grant for the first stage in determining whether to repair or replace the bridge; DuBois & King will be completing a study to provide to VTrans. Efforts continue to have FEMA allow for their covering some of the cost of this project. Alice also noted that the new weight limit has been posted, but is not necessarily being observed. JB explained that a full damage inventory is being put together for FEMA, for damage due to the July 2024 flooding.

Act 250/Section 248 process differences were clarified; the training mentioned by Alice at the previous meeting was regarding Section 248 of Title 30 – Public Utility Commission hearings and approvals.

## **6. Approval of Minutes**

Approval of the minutes of December 3, 2024 was postponed.

## **7. Groundwater Protection Overlay**

JB reported that he had sought legal input regarding the questions that were raised at the previous meeting, and had been advised to not include any language specific to forestry operations, as the AMPs which must be followed are geared to protect water resources. Regarding off highway vehicles, JB had consulted maps and determined that the VAST trail closest to the Overlay area is outside of all three zones, although he acknowledged that there may be other unofficial trails that run closer to the water source. His recommendation was to approve the draft Overlay language in its current iteration. No PC members raised any further concerns.

**MOTION:** *AnnMarie made a motion to approve the Groundwater Protection Overlay language as drafted, including definitions and maps, and to begin the adoption process. The motion was seconded by Beth, and passed with Bob abstaining.*

JB outlined the process steps, and it was agreed to postpone the Public Hearing until February 18, 2024 in order to allow time for JB to get all the necessary noticing and distribution of the draft in place.

## **8. Village Master Planning**

Jonathan updated the group, noting that no Steering Committee meeting had been held in December, but that the core team had met to review some preliminary drawings of ideas that may be incorporated into the Plan as it is developed. He pointed out that all this work is in preliminary stages. Some of what has been looked into is incorporating ideas raised during the public meeting, looking at Slow Road possibilities, and identifying landowners/tenants to be included in early conversations. He also noted that the website has been updated, and contains a link for submitting additional public comments.

He and AnnMarie spoke of planned FPF postings, and coordinated a schedule for submitting those.

Annmarie spoke of the committee's having discussions regarding potential locations for housing development, but noted that the plans currently consist of rough diagrams, and that SE Group will be looking at this aspect of the planning in more detail, including determining an initial range of the number of housing units which may be possible.

One option being explored is the potential for closing the Slow Road for hosting of the Farmers' Market, which could be configured to also help alleviate related parking constraints.

So far, the Fiddler's Green area has not been looked at during the work with SE Group.

JB is compiling a list of priority land owners whose property has infill development potential, including the potential new owner of the Mad River Green shopping center. He noted that Skatium principals are also engaged, and that Don Swain plans to attend the next Steering Committee meeting.

Becca began a discussion regarding the slowing of traffic on Route 100. Jonathan explained that VTrans dictates what is allowed to change along state highways, but that SE Group is exploring traffic calming measures that may be implemented with the road in its current configuration, including safe crossings. He also explained that where there is more dense population and pedestrian use, VTrans is typically more willing to entertain ideas for reconfigurations. PC members spoke of towns where this type of road development has taken place, such as Brandon and Danville.

Bob asked that materials drafted during the next meeting with SE Group be distributed prior to the PC meeting if possible.

## **9. Wastewater Planning Project Update**

JB provided some updates on meetings and applications related to ongoing and upcoming funding requests, and he and Bob both noted that the work involved with these programs is cumbersome and a slow process.

## **10. Other Business**

AnnMarie shared that she had attended a webinar covering Vermont's navigating climate risks and building resilience; she noted that Vermont has a reputation of being climate change resilient, but yet is ranked #3 in the US in the number of disasters per capita. She explained that there are new organizations forming throughout the state to address impacts such as increased disasters, the shrinking of ski season, and other climate change impacts.

AnnMarie had also attended a meeting where flood insurance was the topic of discussion, and was struck by the fact that DEC staff working on these matters must cover multiple aspects of the process, from rulemaking to permitting to addressing needs after a flood. She indicated that fortunately there have been numerous volunteer organizations working to assist people experiencing disaster-related issues. She offered to put together a summary of both webinars for JB to disseminate.

Bob noted that Joshua Schwartz had indicated that he will be working on a Warren project; JB confirmed that Joshua will be continuing with his assistance with Waitsfield's Wastewater project.

**11. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:59 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary