

**TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT**  
**Planning Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, January 21, 2025**

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

**Members Absent:** Alice Peal

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

**Others Present:**

## **II. Regular Business**

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 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**

Alice was not present, so would not be providing updates. AnnMarie had a report to present during other business.

### **3. Public Forum**

No members of the public were present.

### **4. Approval of Minutes**

The Minutes of January 7, 2025 were approved.

### **5. Groundwater Protection Overlay**

JB provided an update, noting that there is no requirement for notification of individual adjacent property owners, and that all parties required to be notified have been sent a copy of the draft, with no comments having been received. The public hearing is scheduled for February 18.

JB also reported that Robin Morris is stepping down from his Water System and Wastewater Project roles, and that water connections/allocations will likely be going through the Zoning Office going forward.

### **6. Village Master Planning**

There was some discussion regarding adjusting the schedule of Steering Committee (SC) meetings, in order to provide the PC members with time to watch the recordings in advance of PC meetings. JB will look into this matter. Next discussed was how to ensure that the PC is up to speed prior to the upcoming public meeting on the project, which is being planned for March. A joint SC/PC meeting was proposed, but the timing and already planned upcoming agendas indicated that this is not likely to be possible until later in the Spring. The possibility of providing child care and food during the next public meeting was raised, and it was agreed to move forward with plans for this, including reaching out to Ira at Friends of the Mad River, who has indicated that some grant money may be available for this type of effort.

**MOTION:** *AnnMarie made a motion to appropriate up to \$500 of Planning Commission funds for the*

*purpose of providing child care and food at the upcoming public meeting that is part of the Village Master Planning Project, to be held in March 2025. The motion was seconded by Beth, and passed unanimously.*

AnnMarie then outlined the draft drawings which had been provided by SE Group, noting that the focus is on creating development along the Slow Road, which is proposed to be extended to the north onto property owned by Sean Lawson, with the access to Route 100 also moved northward. At the southern end, it is being suggested that the southern end of Slow Road and its connection to the shopping center also be reconfigured to provide a straighter access lanes between Route 100 and the Post Office as well as potentially extending the road to the south either through the green or along the existing service road.

Proposed along the current Slow Road area is development of housing/mixed use buildings, with parking located behind the buildings, partially to serve as a traffic route as the road itself will be designed to be closed to traffic for events such as the farmers' market. It was noted that there needs to be an evaluation of commercial demand, to determine if all the structures along the road can serve as mixed use, including housing.

PC members discussed that having buildings at the north end of the road would diminish the view of the wetland area, and there were points made regarding the best location along the road for potential inclusion of a green space/playground area. Alternatively, it was noted that keeping buildings along the roadway as depicted would provide more of a 'Main Street' feel.

The potential for locating a community center/pool here was discussed, with points made regarding associated parking needs and a center's likely interruption of a pedestrian-oriented space. It was noted that a pool in the Skatium area would be difficult to develop due to the soils there, and also that there may not be a large enough population to support a pool. The Fiddler's Green site was mentioned as a possible siting spot. JB spoke of the recent changes in St. Albans, including construction of a community center, which has in part been funded through establishment of a TIF District and a targeted LOT.

On the eastern side of Route 100, design plans include an expansion of parking into the green space that now houses a septic system, with a public picnic area planned for the northern end of the eastern line of buildings, where there is a great viewpoint. The demolition of the western strip of buildings, to be replaced with three new buildings having a greater presence on Route 100, is also part of the design for this area. The location of proposed crosswalks across Route 100 was noted.

PC discussion included mention of parking along Route 100 adjacent to the three new buildings that are proposed.

It was outlined that these plans provide for the development of over 100 new housing units, which is intentionally greater than the 70 requested due to the realization that not everything included in the draft plan will be developed immediately. This also provides for more flexibility as final plans are developed.

There was a discussion regarding the removal of the Brothers' building, PC members felt that this building is attractive and should not be taken down; it already provides housing, and there was no consensus regarding the need for straightening the entry road to that area.

Questions arose about what is planned for either side of the Shaw's building, as well as whether enough parking has been incorporated into the draft plan.

JB reported that he had been in discussions with Sean Lawson, who is amenable to the proposed change of the northern end of the Slow Road. They also considered some locations along Carroll Road that might support housing.

It was brought up that both the Baird and Parker properties have some potentially developable land along the roadway, and that this planning might provide an opportunity to reach out to both parties and determine their interest in participating.

Phasing possibilities were discussed, with it being noted that the proposed changes, while not as overwhelming as plans presented during previous Irasville planning work, are quite comprehensive. Additionally, the parcels included in the design are all privately owned and therefore development proposals will not come from the Town but from individual landowners.

The need to provide useful information for the general public to understand the concepts was noted as important; AnnMarie suggested the use of 3D renderings if possible. The messaging and context in which it is presented were discussed, as methods to ensure that the public input which is being sought will be relevant.

Jonathan pointed out that it is possible enough development takes place outside of Irasville that wastewater capacity is fully used, and all that is presented in the plans might not be feasible. JB noted that there is likely more capacity in the long run, but that this is a consideration to keep in mind.

It was confirmed that Fiddler's Green has not been included in the plans to date, and that Downstreet will be looking into increasing the number of housing units there.

Another core team meeting with Alex will aid in refining the plan in preparation for the public meeting/presentation in March.

## **7. Wastewater Planning Project Update**

JB highlighted some of the information he had included in the meeting packet, noting that a pre-application is being submitted for the Community Development Block Grant, the engineering team continues with design work, and that Greensboro needs to return 2.5 million dollars in ARPA funding, which will now be split between Montgomery and Waitsfield. He and Joshua Schwartz continue to explore potential funding sources.

## **8. Other Business**

Emergency Shelters – AnnMarie reported on her conversation with Fred Messer regarding the Elementary School serving as an official emergency shelter. It was agreed to invite Fred to attend the

PC meeting on April 1 in order to discuss ways to ensure that this becomes more common knowledge.

MRVPD – Jonathan reported that this group has reviewed and approved a work plan for the upcoming year, and that Joshua Schwartz had been able to have a conversation with UVM Medical Center staff, which indicated that there does not appear to be much room for discussion at this point regarding the closure of the MRV Health Center. Jonathan also indicated that the PD is planning to hold a celebration of its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, to reinvigorate public awareness/understanding of the District's efforts.

## **9. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:59 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary