

**TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT**  
**Planning Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, June 6, 2023**

**Members Present:** Kevin Anderson (online), Bob Cook, AnnMarie Harmon, Emma Hanson (online), Alice Peal (online)

**Members Absent:** None

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

**Others Present:** Alex Belenz (SE Group), Julia Randall (SE Group)

**II. Regular Business.**

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 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.**

An item was added to the Other Business portion of the meeting.

**3. Public Forum.**

Nobody requested an opportunity to address the PC.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of May 2, 2023 and May 16, 2023 were approved.

**5. SE Group Bylaws/Vibrant Villages Discussion**

JB reported that sale of the Mad River Green Shopping Center is in negotiations.

Alice reported that comments had been offered at the previous evening's Selectboard meeting regarding the potential for further density in the Loop Road neighborhood if infrastructure was available.

Alex Belenz reported that S.100 has been passed by the Legislature.

Alex and Julia Randall continued their overview of potential strategies developed by SE Group for the Irasville area. The following was noted when discussing each of the points in their presentation, which is available on the Town's web site.

1K – Incentivizing affordable units – Clarity is still needed regarding how S.100 will impact affordable density bonuses. There was some discussion regarding lowering the density allowances (particularly the number of stories allowed) in order to ensure that the additional leeway offered through S.100 will not lead to structures or lot coverages being oversized for the character of the area. Incentives related to wastewater system expenses can be addressed through the ordinance that will be developed for that system.

1L – PUD acreage requirement reduction – Discussion centered around whether the reduction should be related to acreage requirements or lot size requirements. JB confirmed that the Adaptive Redevelopment Overlay is more applicable to Ag-Res and Forest Reserve, and will stay in place for

those districts. It was confirmed that the focus will remain on the Villages and Irasville, and that nothing outside of those areas will be part of this project.

1M – Connection to pedestrian network or contribution to future path development – There is some related language existing for PUDs. JB confirmed that it should not be too much of an administrative burden to handle any funds put aside through this requirement.

1N – Shared-use parking – Alex clarified that this refers to shared parking among nearby buildings. Whether this would best be a suggestion or requirement was discussed; Alex pointed out that a requirement with a waiver potential ensures that the possibility is investigated for every proposal. Julia explained that a municipal parking area might be considered as part of any master planning work. The topic of stormwater considerations was raised; Kevin explained that State permitting requirements generally cover this aspect of development.

1O – New parking development to sides of or behind buildings – Emma spoke to ensuring least visibility due to the potential nature of future development at the shopping centers; Alex explained that walkability is the primary concern, and visibility a lesser aspect. He noted that it is best to keep requirements straightforward and unintimidating for applicants.

Potential future strategies – these topics will be looked at through a master plan lens, for further development and refinement of standards and requirements, partially in conjunction with any expansion of the wastewater service area. The SE Group gave the PC ideas for a future master plan including the following:

- Where should more denser areas be located?
- Create perimeter standards for new blocks.
- Create detailed frontage-related requirements for new roads.
- Clarify where we want to emphasize green spaces.
- Perhaps create standards for guest accommodations such as inns and B&Bs.

Alice suggested paying attention to what Waterbury looks like after their Revitalize Waterbury effort, pointing out some specific buildings that have been developed or redeveloped.

Alex indicated that the steering committee had discussed the number of units threshold for permitted vs conditional uses, and had agreed that any proposal for over four units be subject to conditional use; this is to make it more straightforward for smaller projects to complete applications for review. Kevin asked that information regarding what threshold other communities have set for comparison, and Alex indicated he would supply that information.

AnnMarie suggested that graphics to assist in understanding lot coverage limits and setback requirements would be helpful in future discussion of these parameters.

It was agreed that the fairgrounds parcel can be part of the future considerations discussions when they take place.

Kevin asked for clarification of site plan vs conditional use review; Alex and Julia explained that site plan review is incorporated into conditional use review, and there is still a need for this. They noted that site plan review is not part of the review for permitted uses.

Alex explained that he and Julia will be meeting with JB to prepare actual changes to the LUR language, and that they will consult with the steering committee if any questions arise as they complete this draft. After the draft language is available, they will reconvene with the full group for review and for outlining public outreach efforts. This will likely take place in July.

## **6. CVRPC Regional Plan Update**

Alice explained that the update process has begun for the Regional Plan, and that the PC will be asked for feedback when the Plan is ready for review. She will continue to provide updates on the progress of the Plan.

## **7. Wastewater Project Update**

Bob and JB provided an update, noting that the 90% PER had been accepted by the Selectboard and would be in its final form by the end of June, after which work will focus on the Final Engineering Plan (construction), which will also be broken into three phases. Robin Morris will be refining the information which has been collected about existing systems to ensure that none are captured in more than one of the Wastewater Needs Analysis categories.

Alice noted that there is mitigation funding for homeowners with failed systems in the river corridor.

JB reported that the Northern Borders grant application had been submitted, and that upcoming DEC funding applications are fairly straightforward. He noted that the Project group is hopeful that the Sanders appropriation application will provide some level of funding.

It was confirmed that the four priorities outlined will stay in place, but that these designations are for planning purposes as well. It was agreed that a future conversation regarding equity perceptions will be important, so that accurate messaging can be developed.

## **8. Other Business**

Appointments –

Alice indicated that Jonathan Ursprung would like to join the PC. She also noted that she is willing to serve as the PD representative until Town Meeting in March 2024.

**MOTION:** *Kevin made a motion to recommend Jonathan Ursprung to the Selectboard for appointment to the PC. The motion was seconded by AnnMarie. All voted in favor.*

**MOTION:** *Kevin made a motion to recommend Alice to the Selectboard for appointment to the MRVPD as Waitsfield's PC representative until Town Meeting in March 2024. The motion was seconded by Emma. All voted in favor.*

Application for pilot program for infill design –

AnnMarie provided an explanation of ACCD's 'Homes for All' program and the tool kit provided to towns which are selected to participate in this case study. She indicated that she and Alice are able to draft an application in time for review by the Selectboard at their June 20 meeting and submittal to ACCD by the June 23 deadline. The other PC members expressed their approval for moving forward with this application.

Chapter 13 review –

Alice noted that the Selectboard intends to begin their review work for this Chapter at their June 20 meeting.

**9. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary