

TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT
Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 1, 2023

Members Present: Kevin Anderson, Bob Cook, AnnMarie Harmon, Emma Hanson, Alice Peal, Jonathan Ursprung

Members Absent:

Staff Present: None

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

II. Regular Business.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order 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 revisions were made to the agenda.

3. Public Forum.

Nobody requested an opportunity to address the PC.

4. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of July 18, 2023 were approved.

5. After Our Non-Flood

Alice had sent two 'After The Flood' videos to PC members, outlining municipal roles to be undertaken after flood events, including ZA responsibilities related to evaluating damaged structures. She suggested that a review of documents related to emergency management take place at a future meeting.

6. Wastewater Project Update

An update was provided by JB in his written report, and Bob explained that the committee is still waiting for final review of the PER. Alice noted that a letter has been sent to DEC asking for resolution of the matter, including a decision regarding the Town's proposal for evaluation of income eligibility requirements using data from the project area rather than the townwide data.

7. Group Bylaws/Vibrant Villages Bylaws

Kevin provided an overview of this work so far, to give Jonathan and Beth some background.

Alex Belenz began his presentation with a review of several tasks suggested to be undertaken outside the scope of the bylaw work being completed.

- Affordable housing height and density bonuses – Alex recommended holding off on a final decision regarding this until it is definite that a wastewater system is available in the village areas. It was also noted that multiple towns have concerns regarding this portion of the HOME Act, and that the legislature might be asked to reconsider these allowances.
- Walkability standards – Alex suggested that separate ordinances might be developed to cover both a sidewalk policy and impact fees, noting that these would be able to provide more flexibility and clarity regarding these aspects of walkability. This would be in addition to the

strategies being incorporated into the bylaw revisions, including setbacks, parking standards, and so forth.

- Addressing overly broad Conditional Review standards – Alex explained that this topic is outside the scope of the bylaw work being completed, but that it is a topic the PC might want to address at some point in order to provide the DRB with more clarity when reviewing development proposals.

Alex and Julia Randall then reviewed some district standards sections of the proposed bylaw changes, during which the following changes were agreed upon:

- Village Business District
 - Use of an adjective to clarify ‘dense’ in the purpose statement – Alex made note to workshop this change.
 - There was some discussion regarding a two-story minimum excluding the ability to allow tiny homes, but it was agreed that in this district where density is preferred that this standard is acceptable.
 - Building articulation requirements were noted by Alex to be called out by ACCD as expensive and potentially not effective and therefore not recommended; it was decided to remove this from the standards in all districts. Points made included that the district has smaller lots, no very large buildings, and the general scale of the village areas don’t require articulation.
 - Specific uses may be required by law to not have their primary access be public-facing.
- Village Residential District
 - Some uses were moved to be permitted only within the Route 100 corridor – artist studios and personal services
 - Cottage court dwellings to be included in permitted uses if four or less units.
 - Further discussion will take place regarding restrictions on retail and office spaces which require 50% or more residential space

Irasville specifics will be reviewed at the next meeting; Alex will send an updated version based upon the decisions made at this meeting.

An opportunity to apply for a one-time, APRA-related grant was discussed. Alice offered to gather more information, so that the Bylaw steering committee can work on completing an application.

8. Other Business

Town Plan – Kevin asked the rest of the PC members to review his proposed changes to Chapter 13 so that a final version can be reviewed at the next PC meeting and made ready to present to the Selectboard at their August 28 meeting.

Kevin also suggested presenting the bylaw work as it stands to the Selectboard so that they have a general sense of the changes being proposed and potentially offer feedback before a final version is presented.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary