

TOWN OF WESTFORD
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Minutes for October 15, 2008 Meeting
Approved on December 17, 2008

Commission Members Present: Mark Letorney (Chair), Seth Jensen, Patrick Haller and Jason Hoover (7:15).

Commission Members Absent: N/A

Also Present: Melissa Manka (Planning Coordinator) and Michael Nelson.

The meeting began at approximately 7:10p.m.

Planning Commission Interviews:

The Planning Commission interviewed Michael Nelson, Conservation Commissioner, for the position of Planning Commissioner.

Mark MOVED to recommend to the Selectboard that they appoint Michael Nelson to the Planning Commission.

Pat SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 4 – 0.

Draft Rules of Procedure:

The Commission discussed the draft Rules of Procedure which was revised based on the Commission's September 9th comments. The Commission asked that language be placed in the document stating a Commissioner who misses three consecutive meetings may be removed from the Commission.

Jason MOVED to approve the document as amended.

Pat SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 4 – 0.

Draft Town Center Wastewater Capacity Inquiry Letter:

Seth stated that he was unable to draft the letter prior to this evenings meeting, but he will have one prepared for the meeting in November.

2009 Town Plan Survey:

The Commission began by discussing how the 2003 Westford Town Plan Survey was distributed and the Commission agreed that it was sent to all individuals in the Grand List (i.e. property owners). The Commission then discussed the 2008 Town Plan Survey. They began by reviewing Fairfax, Charlotte and Jericho's surveys and Westford's 2003 Town Plan survey. They proceeded to add to the 2003 survey questions from the Fairfax, Charlotte and Jericho surveys which they felt were appropriate and removed questions they felt were no longer appropriate. Additionally, they discussed adding questions regarding wind turbines, cluster development, a 25 ac Conservation District, the management of Town-owned lands and architectural review. The Commission asked Melissa to draft the 2008 survey based on the Commission's comments and email the draft to them prior to the November meeting. At the November meeting the Commission will review the draft survey, make necessary changes, discuss adding additional subdivision related questions and schedule a meeting with the other Town boards to take

comment on the draft survey. Pat stated he would gather definitions for residential, small scale commercial and industrial wind turbines.

FY 2009-2010 Planning Commission Budget:

The Planning Commission discussed the draft budget for the 2009 – 2010 fiscal year. Melissa explained the changes she made to the budget compared to last year’s budget. She said she decreased the Commission’s legal fee budget by \$1,000 since the Commission is not expected to use \$2,000 in legal fees. However, an appeal of a DRB decision can easily cost \$4,000 or more. Therefore, the DRB legal budget was increased by \$1,000. She also stated that she increased the legal notices budget by \$300 since the last ad she placed in the BFP for regulation changes cost approximately \$800. The Commission briefly discussed a few other matters regarding the budget.

Seth MOVED to approve the budget

Pat SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 4 – 0.

Minutes of the September 9, 2008 Meeting.

Jason MOVED to approve the minutes.

Pat SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 4 – 0.

Other Business.

Mark asked the Commission to review the Town Plan Projects List given to them at the last meeting. He then asked the Commission which of the projects listed they would like to work on in the coming months in addition to rewriting the Town Plan. The choices were: creation of an alternative energy advisor committee, conducting a housing needs assessment, researching pedestrian safety, or finishing work on the town center wastewater study.

Pat stated that at a recent meeting of the Selectboard and old Planning Commission the Selectboard asked that the new Commission review the regulations concerning development of slopes 25% or greater. Furthermore, the Selectboard stated that the issue is of high priority due to the recent environmental court appeals on the matter. The Commission agreed to review the regulations dealing with development of slopes 25% or greater. Melissa said she would gather information for the November meeting on how other Town’s deal with development on steep slopes.

Pat said that he had been researching the Town authority and options for developing some sort of energy committee. He stated that he was meeting with an individual this coming week to discuss the matter and would be willing to present his findings to the Commission in November.

Melissa stated that she would copy State statute concerning energy planning for that meeting.

Mark MOVED to adjourn. Pat SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 4 - 0.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 p.m.

Submitted by,
Melissa Manka, Planning Coordinator