

**TOWN OF WESTFORD**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**Minutes for February 18, 2009 Meeting**  
Approved on April 8, 2009

**Commission Members Present:** Mark Letorney (Chair), Seth Jensen, Michael Nelson and Jason Hoover.

**Commission Members Absent:** Patrick Haller.

**Also Present:** Melissa Manka (Planning Coordinator) and Suzanne Blanchard.

The meeting began at approximately 7:07 p.m.

**Draft Town Center Wastewater Letter, Town Center Wastewater Informational Meeting & Property Owner Contact**

The Planning Commission discussed the revised draft wastewater letter. They asked Melissa to set up a meeting with the Selectboard so they could request approval to send the letter to town center property owners. If approved by the Selectboard, Melissa will schedule a public informational meeting, Seth will present at the meeting, Seth will create a list of priority property owners and Mark will contact priority property owners prior to the meeting.

**Suzanne Blanchard – CCRPC Westford Representative**

Suzanne said she would like to meet with the Planning Commission once or twice a year to discuss regional and local issues. The Commission agreed.

Suzanne presented an overview of CCRPC projects.

She said the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO) has been working on the Blue Ribbon Report which investigates merging the CCMPO and CCRPC in hopes it would save money and create a more nimble organization that could respond quickly to changing times. She does not know what is going to happen with the proposal since more research is needed.

Suzanne informed the Commission that the major regional issues that will directly affect Westford are the CIRC highway, transportation planning and the Forest Legacy Program. She apologized for requesting last minute comments on these issues in the past and said the CCRPC staff is working on providing CCRPC representatives with advance notice of comment submission deadlines and providing data on the possible impacts of proposals before the CCRPC.

Jason said he feels like Westford is the forgotten town in Chittenden County but in the future Westford is going to have to share the brunt of the county's growth. He would like the CCRPC to consider the values of Westford when reviewing proposals and creating the Chittenden County Regional Plan.

Suzanne said Westford will feel growth pressure and the key to protecting Westford's rural character is creating a sustainable and vibrant community while having regulations in place that protect and promote a scale of development that works for Westford.

Seth said Fairfax and Cambridge are some of the fastest growing communities. He is concerned that these communities abut Westford but are located in Franklin County and Lamoille County. He asked whether discussion and planning was occurring between regional planning commissions since development pressures and effects of planning initiatives in these counties will impact Westford and Chittenden County.

Suzanne stated the CCRPC needs to do more work with the Franklin County regional planning commission and Lamoille County regional planning commission to create development and planning consistency between counties. She said there was communication between executive directors, but communication is not adequate at this time. She added that local governments could foster increased communication and develop relationships with abutting town planning commissions.

Jason said starting discussions between town planners is a good way to begin. Suzanne asked for agendas and minutes of meetings to be emailed to her.

### **Town Plan Survey Data Collection**

Melissa briefly explained the spreadsheet for calculating survey data and told Commissioners she would send them surveys to calculate after Town Meeting.

### **2009 Town Plan**

Mark said he would like Commissioners to develop base language for specific sections of the town plan which will be updated once the survey results are available.

### **Natural Resources Plan**

Mike stated he has an outline for the natural resource section of the town plan, but he needs more information prior to drafting the language. Mike asked the Commission where the current natural resource and agricultural data came from. Melissa said she would get that information for him. Mike told the Planning Commission the Conservation Commission has been developing natural resource inventories. Also, the Conservation Commission will be reviewing his draft natural resource language as it is written. Lastly, Mike stated he hopes to reformat the natural resource section of the town plan and asked if anyone had issue with that.

The Commission did not have a problem with Mike reformatting the natural resource section of the town plan.

### **Economic Development Plan**

Mark submitted draft language to the Commission. He said he was open to suggestions and informed the Commission that he removed commercial recreation from the town's economic development plan, but he is willing to put it back in if Commissioners see use in it.

Seth stated recreational activities could foster recreational businesses in town.

The Commissioner agreed to review the language prior to the next meeting.

Jason said structures greater than 4,000 square feet should have architectural standards, increased setbacks and additional screening.

Seth said large commercial structures should be located within a defined area, such as an industrial district.

### **Town Center Wastewater Planning and Fair & Affordable Housing**

Seth submitted draft language to the Commission and explained the most appropriate place for the town center wastewater language may be in the facilities and utilities section of the town plan. He said the Town of Hinesburg grants density bonuses in return for public infrastructure or land. He asked the Commission if they would approve the creation of similar language which would grant density bonuses in the town center in return for community wastewater easements or infrastructure.

The Commission was interested in Seth's proposal and agreed to review Seth's draft language prior to the next meeting

### **Implementation Plan**

Melissa explained that the town plan is required to have an implementation plan to ensure the follow through and completion of town plan goals and objectives. She presented the Commission with a draft format which would be completed once all other sections of the town plan were complete and goals and objectives solidified.

### **Steep Slope Plan**

Jason will present draft steep slope language at the next Planning Commission meeting.

### **Energy Plan**

Pat will present a draft energy plan at the next Planning Commission meeting.

### **CCRPC Informal Review of 2004 Town Plan**

Melissa said the best way to deal with the CCRPC's informal town plan review may be to discuss their comments on a section when the Commission is scheduled to review that section of the town plan. She offered to inform the Commission of the CCRPC's comments on specific sections of the town plan when the Commission is scheduled to discuss that section.

### **Minutes of the January 21, 2009 Meeting**

Jason MOVED to approve the minutes as amended.

Mike SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 4 – 0.

## **Other Business**

### **Planning Commission Work Plan**

The Planning Commission reviewed and revised the draft work plan. They agreed to review the work plan again at the March meeting as well.

Seth MOVED to adjourn. Mike SECONDED the motion.  
The motion PASSED: 4 - 0.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:15 p.m.

Submitted by,  
Melissa Manka, Planning Coordinator