

**TOWN OF WESTFORD**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**Minutes for July 7, 2010 Meeting**  
Approved on September 1, 2010

**Commission Members Present:** Mark Letorney (Chair), Gordon Gebauer, Patrick Haller, Jason Hoover and Seth Jensen

**Commission Members Absent:** N/A

**Also Present:** Melissa Manka (Planning Coordinator) Ted Horton, Juliette Horton, Patricia Indoe, Ben Wilson, Bob Vaughan, John Doane, and Ira Allen.

The meeting began at approximately 7:03 p.m.

**Town Center Wastewater Project Public Meeting**

Seth began by giving a presentation on the 2008 town center wastewater study and the concept of community wastewater disposal.

Mark said the purpose of the evening's meeting was to determine whether town center residents are interested in exploring the concept of community wastewater systems to help support further development in the town center. He said the majority of residents would like the town center to become more viable and wastewater capacity is needed for that to happen.

Pat said the Commission would like to know how they can help in the development of shared systems.

Jason said further study of individual properties is necessary to truly determine whether this is a feasible idea since the 2008 study looked at 3 acre soil units. Therefore, on-site soil tests are needed to determine whether a site will in reality work to develop a community system.

Juliette asked how much it would cost to hook up to a shared system and what would happen if the system failed.

Mark said their focus was on private shared systems, in which case wastewater maintenance agreements and cost would be determined by property owners and users.

Jason said all systems fail at some point and the town needs to plan for the future and look at replacement systems. He said that at some point neighbors will need to work together because a municipal system is not feasible.

Ben said the residents interested in this concept will likely be those in need of wastewater capacity and the individuals with wastewater capacity need an incentive to grant access to their soils. He asked if the town would be brokering deals between property owners.

Mark said they hope to facilitate as opposed to broker deals by helping with coordination.

Seth said there are many arrangements individual property owners could discuss.

Jason said the Commission could start discussion with the White Church and Brick Meeting House as a type of pilot project to see if anyone is interested in hooking up to a shared system.

Juliette asked if the Commission had surveyed individuals to see who has conducted perc tests on their property.

Seth said they had not, only constructed systems were researched.

Pat asked if the town found out a system was failing would they have to report it to the state.

Juliette said that soils would be tested for capacity not whether existing systems were working.

She then asked if the west side of the Common could be a possible site.

Jason said it could be but it would have to be tested.

John said the Brick Meeting House Committee had a wastewater plan drawn up 13 years ago and since then wastewater rules have changed. He said the building requires a much smaller system now. Therefore, he believes the Brick Meeting House has extra capacity.

Mark asked if anyone was opposed to the Town researching this further and no comments were heard.

Ted said he would drop off the perc test information for his property.

### **Town Center Revitalization Project – Smart Growth Update/Cost Est.**

Melissa said Smart Growth gave her a cost estimate of \$5,500 with the Town having to contribute \$1,500. Melissa said the Commission could pull together the funds using the approved Planning Commission budget, but there wouldn't be any funds left for the remainder of the year. The Commission asked her to investigate possible grant opportunities through organizations such as Yellow Wood, The Orton Foundation, Vermont Community Foundation and New England Grassroots.

### **Draft Steep Slope Regulations**

The Planning Commission discussed the draft steep slope language. They agreed to define steep slope as rise over run for a distance of 25 feet or greater with a grade 25% or greater or an elevation gain of 6 feet over a distance less than 25 feet.

Melissa stated that after research it would be impossible for the Town to prohibit development on erodible soils, because the Natural Resource Conservation Surface categorizes all Westford subsurface soils as being highly erodible. The Commission agreed to remove that statement from the regulations.

Seth said he would research whether the book *Growing Greener* defines rock outcropping. Otherwise, the Commission agreed they would have to figure out a maximum rock mass that could be disturbed by development. They will discuss this further at their next meeting.

### **Planning Commission Work Plan**

The Planning Commission discussed the work plan and agreed to move items scheduled for the end of the year forward since the smart growth work will likely not begin for a couple of months. Melissa said she would revise the work plan accordingly.

### **Minutes of the April 7, 2010 Meeting**

Jason MOVED approve the minutes.

Seth SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 3 – 0.

Gordon and Pat abstained.

### **Minutes of the June 2, 2010 Meeting**

Gordon MOVED approve the minutes.

Seth SECONDED the motion.

The motion PASSED: 3 – 0.

Jason and Pat abstained.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:20 p.m.

Submitted by,  
Melissa Manka, Planning Coordinator