

TOWN OF WESTMINSTER
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING (PC) VIA ZOOM
March 14, 2022

Members Present: Bari Shamas (Chair), Michelle Chmelar, Richard Crocker, Seroya Crouch

Others Present: Sarah Buckingham (Recording Secretary), Russ Hodgkins (Town Manager)

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Bari Shamas (Chair) called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM.
2. **COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.
3. **ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA:** The agenda item “Agriculture Survey” was changed to “Agriculture Section.”
4. **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:** Seroya Crouch made a motion to accept the minutes from the February 14, 2022 meeting as written; Michelle Chmelar seconded. The motion passed 4-0.
5. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS (Discussion / Action):**

A. Town Plan:

- i. Natural Resource Section - 10 min

This section is being worked on by Kathy Kingston, who was not present. Tabled.

- ii. Agriculture Section - 10 min

Crouch reported that she needs to do more work before giving the section to farmers to look at. But, she is willing to have Agriculture be the next session up for review. She is including information about regulations around farming. She said it is important for people to understand what the town can and can't do. The town can't really impact farming, it is regulated at the state level. New people moving in from other states might be surprised to learn about state agriculture regulations and so we should mention it and where to get information about it. She received comments from the Conservation Commission and is still adding data from the survey. Crouch added a color code at top of document. She said there are “orphan thoughts” at the end that might go into an appendix. Crouch encouraged the committee to comment.

Chmelar said she may not be able to attend this month's working meeting on March 28th. Crouch suggested Chmelar comment ahead of the meeting if not able to attend. Shamas suggested everyone put time into reviewing and commenting without scheduling a meeting. The 28th can be a tentative date.

- iii. Transportation - Gravel Source 10min

Hodgkins said the suggested changes to the transportation source are fine. Shamas asked the committee to take a final look at the Transportation Section as well as reviewing and commenting on the Agriculture Section.

No discussion on gravel source.

iv. Recreation - 5 min

Shamas reported no progress on this section.

v. Housing - 5 min

Crocker said he needs to get together with Hodgkins and he should be able to get to work on the Housing Section next week.

vi. Economic development - 5 min

Chmelar said she would look at this section this month with Select Board Chair Kevin Hughes.

vii. Further working meetings - which section next - 3 min

March 28th is the tentative date for work on the Agriculture Section.

viii. Intern - 2 min

No discussion.

6. NEW BUSINESS (Discussion / Action):

A. Westminster Commerce and Economic and Community Development (WCECD)

Shamas was unable attend the meeting due to an emergency. She said that Hodgkins indicated the committee is not required to have a member present. WCECD has had two meetings, with a third scheduled for Wednesday, March 16. John Jones, who started the committee, has decided not to participate further. Shamas said she does not have the bandwidth and is not interested in participating. Hodgkins said he went to the meeting. He reported WCECD is trying to create a purpose or objective for their committee, and to tie it in with the ambitions of the town. They don't want the Planning Commission to be going south and the DRB going north, and WCECD going east and west. They are trying to get everyone on the same playing field. They've requested a member from each committee and each board to attend because they don't want people going in different directions. Hodgkins said they had a remarkable discussion about how Westminster is going to make it through these hard times. Are we a bedroom community and that's where we want to stay? Or is there need for senior housing

and are we for that? With senior housing comes infrastructure. Are we into that? Hodgkins said it's interesting and he doesn't know where it will head. He was impressed with the discussion.

Shamas inquired if there was interest and suggested committee members could rotate attendance. Hodgkins said he can keep reporting. He is on the committee by default. He can forward the minutes to Town Planning Commission members and then if anyone wants to chime in on something, they can attend a future meeting.

Crouch said the more coordination the better. All the committees and boards should be working together to keep the communication really clear. She would hate to get to the end of this process and have everybody go, "What?"

Hodgkins said the meetings are the 3rd Wednesday at 6:00 PM. Shamas liked Hodgkins suggestion that he report back on the next few and then in the future Crouch or another member can join or we can rotate.

7. OTHER BUSINESS: None.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Monday, April. 11 2022 @ 6:30 via Zoom

9. ADJOURNMENT: **Crouch** made a motion to adjourn the meeting @ 6:59. Crocker seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

Signature of Clerk

Date

Prepared by: Sarah Buckingham, Recording Secretary