

TOWN OF WESTMINSTER  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING (PC)

April 10, 2023

Members Present: Bari Shamas (Chair), Richard Crocker, Michelle Chemlar, Seroya Crouch  
Others Present: Stephen Major (Select Board Member), Janice Leary-Jones (Recording Secretary)

1. Call to Order: 6:32pm Bari Shamas called meeting to order
2. Communications and Public Comment: None.
3. Adjustments to Agenda: None.
4. Acceptance of Minutes: March 21, 2023 Richard moved to accept minutes, Michelle second, Unanimously accepted.
5. Unfinished Business (Discussion / Action):

A. *Town Plan*

i. Timeline deadlines

Bari and Seroya met with Michael from WRC; Timelines reviewed at this meeting.

Town Plan needs to be ready for the Select Board by June 1st.

ii. Transportation

Bari attended Selectboard meeting.

Chuck Lawrence, head of Highway Department, suggested that perhaps with the significant raise in aggregate pricing and its negative effect on the Town Budget, considering paving town roads may be in the interest of the town. Currently, there is a large incurment of cost when there are significant storms such as was experienced in Westminster in March. \$150,000 has been spent on new aggregate, the budget was for \$50,000.

Bari raised the question, should there be a study to determine if paving all town roads is needed.

PC will add a Recommendation/action step in the Town Plan for town to evaluate advisability for paving town roads. Seroya will amend the Transportation section to include a recommendation to study putting down a hard surface on Town roads.

iii. Economic Development

Michelle has taken more notes for this section and has also written an introduction for the Recreation Section.

Michelle has the notes given to her from other members of the PC and is looking to complete the section in the next two weeks. Michelle will email other members when it is added to the draft so others can review.

Stephen Major joined the meeting as an alternate from the Select Board. Stephen is newly elected to Select Board and is now joining the PC as an alternate.

5G was mentioned as a consideration for the Economic Development Section.

The state has changed the definition of an on farm business; PC will include language in the Town Plan referring to the town updating its regulations to be in sync with the new state regulations.

Act 143, references regulations for on farm store signage; includes regulations for how large a sign can be.

Westminster Zoning needs to reflect changes to on farm retail store/businesses signage. Add language on this issue to the Town Plan. Michelle can follow up on this language with Sarah Danly.

iv. Education

No update.

v. WRC meeting review

Seroya and Bari met with Mike McConnell of the Windham Regional Commission.

Census data needed for updates to Town Plan, but has yet to be obtained from Mike.

Municipal Planning Grant contract reviewed. Alli's signature is needed.

Richard to go to town hall and sign WRC contract for the Municipal Planning Grant tomorrow.

Scope of grant discussed, deadlines for plan reviewed.

Mike is going to talk with Jeff Nugent, map maker.

vi. Selectboard Attendance

Chuck's comments on paving roads mentioned.

Stephen is going to be an alternate to the PC from the Selectboard.

Select Board has a question for the Planning Commission, Bari will follow up on this.

Seroya and Richard had their terms reviewed.

Select Board is aware that the PC is looking for new members. Richard will attend the Select Board Meeting in April.

Stephen looks forward to attending PC meetings and representing PC needs at the Select Board.

vii. Other Town Plan reviews

None.

6. New Business

Is Monday or Tuesday an easier day for PC members? Mondays are best.

Vermont Council on Rural Development: This group holds Town Meetings on Various Topics, Summary published, and results shared.

Putney recently went through the process and the culminating document summarizes the main needs of the town and collected information.

Westminster could put it in the Town Plan to complete a similar project in Westminster.

Stephen mentioned that in order for Westminster to be successful in this endeavor, a Town Manager would be needed for the implementation of a project of this size.

VCRD did all the advertisement and publicity to help make it happen. Seroya suggests working with VCRD to complete a similar project in the upcoming year or two.

7. Other Business

8. Date of Next Meeting: Monday, May 10, 2023, 6:30pm

9. Adjournment: Seroya moved to adjourn, Michelle second, unanimous, 7:19pm

Signature of Clerk

Date

Prepared by: Janice Leary-Jones