

February 28, 2024

To: Members of the Westfield Selectboard

From: Members of the Westfield Planning Commission

Re: Proposed Revisions to the Westfield Zoning Bylaw

Dear Jacques, Richard, and Dennis,

The members of the Planning Commission respectfully submit the proposed draft of the Westfield Zoning Bylaw for your public hearing and consideration for adoption. This draft is the result of input gathered over five years from people who deeply value the Westfield community. We appreciate your support, and emphasis on the importance of public feedback. The resulting Bylaw is more responsive to the needs of individual landowners and commonly shared resources. Thank you again for your leadership to ensure all voices be heard.

The revised Bylaw includes a Development Review Board (DRB.) The Selectboard will need to form the Development Review Board during the meeting when the Zoning Bylaw is adopted. This could be a motion such as, "a motion to create a Development Review Board of 5 members and 2 alternates to review development applications as described in the Westfield Zoning Bylaw." When the DRB is formed, the Zoning Board of Adjustment is automatically dissolved. Then to appoint members to the DRB, the motion could be "a motion to appoint the current members of the Planning Commission, Brian Dunn, Kitty Edwards, Ellen Fox, Loren Petzoldt, and Pat Sagui, as initial members of the DRB." At the first meeting of the DRB, we will organize ourselves with policies and procedures for the Board, set staggered terms for the membership, and begin a recruitment process to nominate the 2 alternates and future members. As the staggered terms end, the Selectboard will have the responsibility and authority to appoint new members.

Upon adoption, the revised Zoning Bylaw will become effective after 21 days. The public appeal period ends after 45 days. The Zoning Administrator will begin reviewing applications under the revised Bylaw on April 9 and (barring appeal) will be able to issue permits on May 3. With this timeline, we hope to accommodate folks who have spring construction plans.

If there are changes you feel must be made to the proposed Bylaw, the process is for the Selectboard to make those changes and send it back to the Planning Commission to amend our report, and a second Selectboard hearing would be warned 15 days in advance of adoption.

On final note: the table of contents, overall layout of tables and figures and professionally produced Zoning Map will be finalized after adoption for a clean, organized print version of the Zoning Bylaw to have in the Town Clerk's office and to publish on the Westfield Town Website.