

Westfield Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
January 17, 2023, 6:00 PM
Westfield Community Center, 59 North Hill Rd., Westfield, VT

Present: Brian Dunn, Kitty Edwards, Ellen Fox, Loren Petzoldt, Pat Sagui
Members of the public: Will Young, Zoning Administrator

1. Call Meeting to Order

Pat called the meeting to order at 6:12 pm

2. Additions/Changes to the Agenda

Correction of typographical error; approval of Jan 2 minutes rather than Nov 28 minutes which is printed on the Agenda.

3. Approve Minutes

A. Nov 28 minutes corrected to Jan 2 minutes

Loren motioned to approve the minutes, Kitty seconded and the minutes were approved.

– Business from Minutes

Pat provided a written Planning Commission annual report to LaDonna.

Pat is working with Alison from NDVA to develop non technical language around sound level requirements for the performance standards.

– draft sewer hook up survey was not discussed; tabled to next meeting

4. Title 19 - municipal authority to maintain roads, culverts, ditches, drainage

- Information from Eric Kennison, Road Commissioner

Pat sent an email to Eric to ask for his input on the requirements for setbacks from town roads, and specifically what standards would protect town infrastructure in the instance of an unpermitted pond on Buck Hill Rd. Will reported that Eric wants to see 50 feet from the white line to the toe of any slope forming a pond. Also, no discharge can be directed toward a town road or ditch including the regular overflow or spillway.

The difference between a small pond and a large pond could more simply be defined by surface area rather than volume. The current draft of the Bylaw revision defines it by volume. A large pond requires review by an engineer before it is permitted. Ellen will check how the state defines small versus large and send this information and current draft language to Will for his comments and suggestions.

- Info from Jim Ryan, VTrans

Jim has instructed Pat that the Town has broad leverage to protect transportation infrastructure.

- Draft letter to Selectboard

Will plans to meet with a landowner who currently has an unpermitted pond and work toward a solution. Depending on the outcome of his investigation, he will provide an update to the Selectboard about his course of action.

5. Bylaw Revisions Outreach

- Draft *Guide to Zoning*

Pat has edited the Sutton guide for outreach in Westfield on how zoning regulations work and changes proposed in this revision. We will refine the guide for Westfield following a Planning Commission informational meeting to hear comments from citizens.

6. Zoning Bylaw revisions:

- Edits to Parking

The Planning Commissions discussed the draft parking revisions for all districts focusing on the difference between unregistered and registered vehicles, parking in the setback, and screening requirements in the context of zoning goals. It was noted that in the Village District, setbacks create greater restrictions due to smaller lot sizes. Members concurred that unregistered vehicles (up to the State limit) may be parked in side and rear setbacks, not front setbacks, if the parking area is screened and any hazardous fluids are drained from the vehicle.

Unregistered vehicles (up to the State limit) may be parked in the side and rear yards, not the front yard, if hazardous fluids are drained from the vehicle. Registered vehicles may be parked anywhere on a parcel in all Zoning Districts.

Vehicles for sale may also be parked anywhere on the property with draft language: Registered or unregistered vehicles that a legitimately for sale may be parked anywhere on a parcel (including in the setback) for no more than nine (9) contiguous months.

7. Next Zoning Bylaw draft section/s

Updates from Ellen

- Review sections: wind conversion; wireless service towers, PUD

Ellen reviewed the need for further discussion of setbacks for towers in the wind conversion and telecommunications sections. Pat will gather some information from others with expertise around setback requirements for towers (both telecom and wind energy conversion.) Ellen also reviewed the need to clarify when PUD clustering is recommended and when it is required.

Both topics added to the agenda for the next meeting.

- Groundwater protection areas

Ellen pointed out that we currently have a map titled “water supply map” showing public water supply source areas. These areas map areas with groundwater transit times of 10 years or less to a public water source. The areas in Westfield surround water sources in both Westfield and Troy. Currently, the Bylaw does not have specific, clear standards to approve development in these areas. Ellen will check with the State Groundwater Protection Division to gather information and possible guidance.

Revised schedule to complete Bylaw draft

A draft of the proposed revisions will go to the Town Attorney at the end of January/beginning of February for review. If there are sections that are not complete, this will be noted in the draft that goes to the attorney.

8. Other Business

Pat mentioned that we might want to highlight the goal of the State to conserve 30% of the land area to mitigate impacts of climate change and demonstrate how the proposed revisions to the Bylaw move toward this goal. Questions to answer include

-what percentage of land is currently conserved in Westfield?

-what percentage of land would be conserved with the addition of a conservation district?

-how would conservation in Westfield contribute to a block of continuous habitat connecting to Montgomery, Lowell, and other adjacent towns or other towns linked by continuous habitat.

9. Next Meeting

Monday, January 30 at 6 pm.

10. Adjourn

Ellen made a motion to adjourn, Kitty seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 8:18 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ellen Fox