

Westfield Planning Commission (PC)
Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 24, 2023, 6:00 PM
Westfield Community Center, 59 North Hill Rd., Westfield, VT

1. Call Meeting to Order

In attendance: PC members Brian Dunn, Kitty Edwards, Ellen Fox, Loren Petzoldt, and Pat Sagui
Selectboard member Dennis Vincent was also in attendance.

Pat called the meeting to order at 6:08 pm.

2. Additions/Changes to the Agenda

Add review of the Nadeau Public Hearing minutes and NOD under other business

3. Approve Minutes

A. April 10, 2023 minutes

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

– Business from Minutes

Kitty made a motion to table approval of the Nadeau Public Hearing minutes to the next meeting. Brian seconded and the motion carried.

4. Zoning Bylaw revisions:

- Miscellaneous reader edits

- The planning commission considered readers edits including:
- The need to have standards that can be measured for review and approval of conditional use and site plans.
- By state statute, site plans and conditional use approvals do not expire until 2 years have passed from approval. The PC recommends that all permits have 2 year expirations to reduce complexity in the Bylaw.
- Ellen discussed that state statute stipulates that final plats must be approved at a publicly warned hearing before recording. The PC agreed to include final plat review by the DRB in the proposed revisions to be consistent with state regulations.
- PC will remove all religious terminology associated with community gathering places and assembly.
- The PC discussed digital signs and that they can be permitted and constructed. The conditions that will be necessary to receive a permit need further discussion and input. Ellen will survey regulation of digital signs in other towns.
- A reader raised the issue that to offer a late fee implies that an individual is not in violation of the Bylaw if they begin a project and get a permit with a late fee. The PC recommends that an individual who begins a project that requires a permit, without a permit, is in violation of the Bylaw. In the application section, the PC recommends including “Failure to obtain a Zoning Permit prior to commencing construction or a change of use is a violation of the Bylaw and is subject to penalties described ...” in the penalties section.
- Language describing wind systems as small, mid, and large will be replaced with systems which are grid tied and systems that are not grid tied.
- The changes in the Bylaw to increase housing density are in several places and there was agreement to recommend explicitly allowing up to 4 dwellings per parcel in the Dimensional Standards Table.

- By-law proposed revisions public engagement
- Outreach plan for PC informational meeting

- Materials for public engagement
- Review/Edit Purpose documents

Pat will distribute the purpose document to PC members for feedback at the next meeting.

- Updates from Ellen
- Steps to approve the proposed revisions include sending a draft copy to NVDA and the State, and 30 days before the Selectboard public hearing on and potential approval of the revisions, a draft of the revisions must be publicly available and specifically sent to adjacent towns (Lowell, Jay, Troy, Montgomery.)
- In addition to what is required, the PC plans to have an informational meeting prior to the Selectboard hearing to answer questions and get public comment. There will be a process to submit comments in writing as well. Ellen will create a flow chart for the next meeting to help the PC plan this process. Materials to provide information will include:

Purpose statement

Changes document comparing the current and proposed as a table

Proposed revised version of the Bylaw

5. Sewer hook-up survey next steps - outreach

Based on suggestion from Town of Jay Selectman, Pat will revise the wastewater system survey to list the positive impacts rather than the current drawbacks for lack of a system.

6. Report out on meeting with Alison Low re NVDA role in Bylaw adoption process, and funding for two projects: sewer hook up and church assessment

Pat gave a report on the Selectboard meeting saying that it went well and was encouraging.

Wastewater System: Alison suggested the Selectboard have an informational meeting with Tom Brown who manages the Clean Water Revolving Fund. There may be up to \$125K in funding available for project development so the Town does not need to allocate funds to develop a project that would ultimately be approved or not by voters. She mentioned that the Lake Champlain Basin Program prioritizes municipal wastewater projects and so Westfield would likely be funded. This is a Selectboard project and the PC will be a supportive partner.

Church Assessment: Pat explained that Ben Doyle at the Vermont Historic Preservation will be contacted to potentially provide an assessment of the building and the needs (in terms of maintenance and upgrade) if it were to be a public building. A municipal planning grant could be used to develop a project. Pat noted that Alison and Dave explained at the Selectboard meeting that other towns have set up a community trust to own and maintain public buildings.

7. Other Business

Ellen has revisions to the Nadeau hearing minutes and NOD and so we will approve it and sign at the next meeting.

8. Next Meeting

May 8, 2023 6 pm

9. Adjourn

Brian made a motion to adjourn, Kitty 2nd the motion and the meeting adjourned at 7:58 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ellen Fox

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes April 24, 2023