

WEST WINDSOR PLANNING COMMISSION

Draft Minutes
January 26, 2012

Present: Hal Pyke, Barbara Truex, Elvin Kaplan, Al Keiller, Glenn Seward, Tom Kenyon, Laura Stillson, Martha Harrison

1. Call to Order – Planning Commission Chair Hal Pyke called the meeting to order at 6:37 PM.
2. Changes or Additions – Sewer acquisition informational meetings: Glenn said the Selectboard has warned a special town meeting for March 6th, and educating people about the sewer issues will be key. Glenn suggested an informational meeting on the Saturday before town meeting. Glenn said it is his understanding that there can be no discussion about the issue on town meeting day so it will just be voted on by Australian ballot. Glenn said one article on the ballot is authorization to borrow up to \$500,000 for up to 25 years in order to purchase the sewer line, and the second article is authorization to sell a portion of the line to Windsor. Al asked if the article specifies that the cost will be borne by the users. Glenn said it is not specified in the article; that's why the informational meetings are important. Tom said it appears that the sale of the resort has not happened because of the sewer issues. Hal said the Planning Commission (PC) and Wastewater Committee are willing to host some informational meetings. Elvin suggested a PowerPoint presentation to make sure everyone is getting the same information, regardless of which meeting they attend. Glenn suggested asking A&E to come up with a PowerPoint. Elvin said he thinks A&E should be there but the town should present the information. Al said he thinks A&E should prepare the PowerPoint and someone from one of the committees should do the presentation. Al said the presentation should describe what we're buying in terms of the length of the pipe, the number of pumps and the number of connections. Glenn suggested that A&E might come up with an aerial view. Al asked if the information could be mailed to everyone. Glenn said he thinks it would be worthwhile to mail something to the 765 voters. Al said the property owners would be the ones at risk so Glenn might want to check with counsel. Glenn said the Property Owners Association (POA) could also be made aware through email. Tom cautioned against announcing the vote on town meeting day in the publicity for the informational meetings. Barbara asked if it is okay to announce at the informational meetings that there will be an Australian ballot vote on town meeting day. Tom said yes. Those present agreed to host informational meetings on February 21st at 7:00 PM and March 3rd at 10:00 AM, and post information around town, but not send out a mailing. [*The date of the first meeting was subsequently changed to Feb. 22nd*] There was discussion about the POA forming a fire district and taking control of the sewer system. Glenn said the POA has made it clear that, if they were unsuccessful in negotiating the purchase of the system, they would try to seize it through an eminent domain proceeding. Glenn said the senior lender would fight that proceeding and we'd be in limbo for years. Glenn said Orange Lake is in favor of the town purchasing the sewer line. Elvin asked what Windsor thinks about purchasing a portion of the system. Hal said Town Manager Tom Marsh is in favor of the two towns owning the system. Elvin asked why. Tom said Windsor could control the amount of development that takes place along the pipeline in Windsor if they own their portion of it. Glenn said Windsor residents who are currently connected to the pipeline are urging Windsor officials to buy their portion of the line. Glenn said he is going to meet with Tom Marsh tomorrow. One possibility, Glenn said, would be a reduction in treatment charges in exchange for equity in the system. Tom said if resort property values continue to fall, the taxes on everyone else will increase. Al asked if the town would form a fire district. Glenn said the town would own it, contract with Windsor or Pathways Consulting to operate it, and hire someone to do the billing and collections. Glenn said those costs would be passed along to the users, as they are now. Tom said the users won't be sending their checks to Utah and worrying about a bankruptcy. Al asked if the town could put a lien on the property if the owners don't pay their sewer bill. Glenn said yes and the town could also sell the property. Elvin asked who would own the existing indebtedness if the town purchases the system. Glenn said the town has made it clear that the indebtedness will stay with Snowdance. Theoretically, Al said, that could be included in the price negotiation. Glenn agreed.

Tom said the escrow fund would also be made whole and transferred to the town along with the system. Barbara asked if the state ever steps in with situations like this. Glenn said the Selectboard sent a letter to the Governor and various other state officials asking for help. Tom said if we can get this straightened out before the reappraisal, property values should stabilize. Glenn said he will contact A&E about providing a PowerPoint presentation and attending the informational meetings. Glenn said he got a call from Don Robisky notifying him that, because the town has asked to be high on the priority list, the issues identified will have to be taken care of, whether or not the voters approve the acquisition. Glenn said he told Don that he sees this as a multi-year project. Don said that's fine but there has to be a plan. Elvin said the elephant in the room is the cost of hooking the village up to the sewer line. Al said that issue is addressed in the Wastewater Committee's annual report. Tom noted that the community wastewater system considered for the Leland property sits right on top of the protection zone for the resort's water supply.

3. Public Comment – Town Hall: Tom gave the PC a list of problems with the Town Hall that he'd like the PC to address over the next 10+ years. Tom suggested that an addition to the building would solve several of the problems. Tom said he will email a copy of the list to Martha.
4. Elect Officers – **Elvin made a motion to elect Hal Pyke as Chair and Barbara Truex as Vice Chair. Al seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**
5. Confirm regular meeting day and time – The PC agreed to continue holding regular meetings on the last Thursday of the month at 6:30 PM.
6. Economic Development & Recreation – Hal reviewed the purpose of the municipal planning grant recently awarded to the town. There was general discussion about town plans. Tom said he would like the Town Plan to address the issue of housing for seniors. Hal said Cathy Boedtger would like the Town Forest Committee (TFC) to be involved in revising the Recreation chapter of the Town Plan. Martha said the trails in the town forest are an important component of recreation in West Windsor but she hopes that the PC will look at recreation, initially, as not being tied to a specific activity or area of town. Martha said there may be activities that are appropriate for West Windsor that don't already exist here. Al asked who would do the SWOT analysis. Martha said she sent the SWOT information to stimulate a conversation about how the process of planning for recreation and economic development could work. Tom expressed concern about recreation programs getting too big. Al said that would be a good problem to have. Elvin reminded everyone about the concept of bicycle trails that extend into neighboring towns. Barbara noted that there are snowmobile trails everywhere so the same could happen with bicycle trails. Hal said we need to get input from people who are involved in other activities. Those present agreed that horseback riders, hang gliders, cross country skiers, and others should be involved. Tom noted that the state is interested in expanding recreational activities in the state park to improve our economy without destroying the environment. Al asked who is charged with doing the municipal planning grant work. Martha said the town usually contracts with the regional planning commission to assist the PC but Jason Rasmussen is probably going to start by asking the PC how they want to proceed. Hal said each task is an objective. Elvin asked who is responsible for the plan and the process. Hal said the PC is responsible but they can "farm out" some of it. Barbara said the first task is to organize outreach to the community. Martha said the PC could do a SWOT analysis and then present their findings to the community for additional input and feedback. Barbara suggested doing a SWOT analysis with the Town Forest Committee, the Conservation Commission, the Green Mountain Horse Association, and other similar groups. Hal asked Laura how long it would take her to develop a list of strengths and weaknesses relative to recreation in the town forest. Martha suggested that the process be more inclusive. Hal said the PC could ask other groups to develop a list as well. Laura said we've burned a lot of bridges with GMHA. Al asked Laura what she is referring to. Laura said GMHA has been looking to acquire exclusive "horse only" rights to trails and there are a lot of groups (the Vermont 100, the Vermont 50, STAB, VAST, etc.) that have issues with that. Elvin suggested that the PC start addressing these issues after Town Meeting. Hal asked Elvin if he could just jot down the town's strengths and weaknesses between now and Town Meeting. Barbara said she would like to invite the various recreational groups in town to a PC meeting for a collective SWOT analysis. Laura said she and

Glenn talked about doing whatever they do very well and not getting overextended. Laura said she's not sure that people want West Windsor to be a huge recreational town. Laura said we could do a really nice job with a smaller high-quality operation that respects the conservation needs of the town forest. Tom said if the resort is sold, the recreation plan will be affected by what the new owners want to do with it. Hal said the informational meetings on the acquisition of the sewer are the PC's top priority between now and town meeting. Martha said her hope for this evening was that the PC would agree on a process for revising chapters 6 & 11. Martha added that she thinks Jason would appreciate some feedback and direction from the PC as well. The PC agreed to invite the various recreation groups in town to their March 29th meeting for a SWOT analysis facilitated by Jason. Al asked how many groups have to be invited to get adequate representation. There was discussion about who to invite. Tom suggested finding out more about the state's plans for recreation. Laura and Martha agreed to come up with a list of people and groups to invite. Barbara suggested inviting someone from Orange Lake to provide input on the types of recreation their guests would like. Laura suggested inviting Brian Bevacqua and Raina White as well. Tom suggested including someone from the school. Martha noted that the son of Windsor's Town Manager works in the zip line business, which would be perfect for Ascutney. Laura said she thinks West Windsor would be a great place for summer camps. Elvin suggested a music camp. Martha agreed with Elvin that recreation doesn't have to be limited to sports and physically strenuous activities. Laura said there are no arts in West Windsor.

7. Minutes - September 29, 2011: **Elvin made a motion to approve the minutes of September 29, 2011. Barbara seconded the motion, which passed with Al abstaining.** October 27, 2011: **Barbara made a motion to approve the minutes of October 27, 2011. Al seconded the motion, which passed with Elvin abstaining.** December 1, 2011: **Al made a motion to approve the minutes of December 1, 2011. Barbara seconded the motion, which passed with Elvin abstaining.** December 29, 2011: **Elvin made a motion to approve the minutes of December 29, 2011. Barbara seconded the motion, which passed with Al abstaining.**
8. Other Business – Brook Road: Barbara asked if we've heard anything more about what is happening with Brook Road. Hal said no. Everyone agreed that the rebuilt road is rough and difficult to turn around on.
9. Adjourn – **Barbara made a motion to adjourn at 8:22 PM. Al seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Harrison