

WEST WINDSOR PLANNING COMMISSION

Draft Minutes
December 1, 2011

Present: Hal Pyke, Barbara Truex, Al Keiller, Mark Isenberg, Martha Harrison

1. Call to Order – Planning Commission Chair Hal Pyke called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.
2. Changes or Additions – None
3. Public Comment – None
4. Zoning Administrator nominations – **Barbara made a motion to nominate Martha Harrison as Zoning Administrator and recommend her appointment to the Selectboard. Al seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**
5. Discuss community wastewater findings and consider need for action – Al said the wastewater committee was given a report by consulting engineers A&E this afternoon. Al summarized the report as follows: The needs assessment found that water supplies are working fine but septic systems are marginal in some cases. Replacing individual septic systems would cost between \$30,000 and \$50,000 each. Density makes it difficult to replace systems in some cases. Tropical Storm Irene caused some damage that has aggravated the situation. The existing well shields overlap and are closer to septic systems than would be allowed under current state regulations. Centralized systems with flows less than 6,500 gallons per day (gpd) are subject to less stringent regulations. Flows in the village area, not including the school, are approx. 6,000 gpd. A system that would accommodate those flows would not allow any additional development. There is a suitable location for a centralized system and there are two types of systems (gravity and stepped) that could be used. The capital costs associated with the systems are approx. \$1.5 million. To be viable, the entire town would have to cover the capital costs and the users of the system would cover the operating costs. Another alternative is to connect to the Resort/Windsor system with capital costs of approximately \$2.1 million. The current Resort system is in disrepair and the Resort property owners are facing substantial increases in annual operating costs. The advantage to connecting to the Resort system is virtually unlimited capacity. Connecting to the resort is the only alternative that would allow for additional development in the core village area. Al noted that, related to this issue, the Resort property owners are considering forming a fire district and buying the sewer system from the Resort. Hal noted the existing limitations on the size of the school. Barbara said the engineers have determined that the school could potentially double its capacity with an addition to their existing system, but they would not have enough capacity to support a cafeteria. If the state were to require consolidation and food service, that would be a problem that could only be resolved by connecting to Windsor through the Resort's system. Martha noted that Reading is thinking about busing their kids to Woodstock Elementary. There was discussion about the rationale for sending Reading students to a school that is significantly farther away than Brownsville's Albert Bridge School. Al said no action by the Planning Commission is required at this time. The wastewater committee will be presenting this information at a public meeting on December 6th. Al noted that some of the wells and septic systems are so close that who knows what is leaching into the wells from the septic systems. Al said the engineers inspected 10 septic systems and 2 were in bad shape. Barbara said the willingness of the entire community to participate is key. Al said it's important to let the community know that the options are very limited. Mark asked about the status of the fire district. Al said the initial asking price for the sewer system was too high. Mark and Al agreed that connecting to the Resort system is only viable if we have control over the system through a fire district or some other means. Barbara noted that the existing system is old and needs some major work. Al said if the town decides to proceed, the next step is to contract for a detailed design. Mark said the General Store has a new septic system so what would the incentive be to hook up to a sewer system. Hal said generally people with functioning individual systems can continue to use them until they fail and then they have to hook up to the community system. Hal added that WASTE – the Windsor/Ascutney Sewage Treatment Enterprise - is supposed to manage the line between the Resort and Windsor. Barbara said when she asked the engineers about

bypassing the Resort and connecting to the sewer line where it comes into the Resort, she was told that that option has not been studied. Mark asked if there are any state programs for homeowners with failing systems close to waterways. Al said failed systems are the responsibility of the homeowner. Barbara said if the town built a community system there are grant funds available to cover a portion of the cost of constructing a line from a failed system to the treatment facility. Al said the amount of funding available is lower for the stepped system than for the gravity fed system. Al said the main points are that any system would have to be supported by the entire community, and that one option would allow additional development in the village and the other would not.

6. Discuss impact of Brook Road not being rebuilt – Hal said the road currently stops at the bridge that was destroyed by Tropical Storm Irene. Barbara said there is a temporary road on the Windsor side of the town line where the road was washed out. Hal said the repairs are Windsor’s responsibility but if Windsor decides not to repair the road and replace the bridge, West Windsor would have some say in the matter because the road crosses the town line. Hal said he is concerned about the safety of West Windsor residents and thinks that West Windsor should at least present our concerns to Windsor. Martha said towns have an obligation to maintain Class 3 roads. Al asked if there is a portion of Brook Road that Windsor can no longer maintain because the bridge is gone. Hal said the Esteys, who are residents of Windsor, have access to Brook Road on the West Windsor side of the missing bridge. Barbara said if Windsor does not replace the bridge, there will have to be a turn-around for fire trucks on West Windsor’s side. Hal agreed that there is not enough room for a fire truck to turn around now. Mark and Al agreed that a fire truck turn around makes sense and West Windsor should ask Windsor to include it in their capital plans. Hal suggested that the PC recommend to the Selectboard that they get involved in Windsor’s discussion about what to do with Brook Road. Mark asked what specific planning issues we want to address. The PC agreed that they are concerned about suitable access for emergency vehicles. There was discussion about the process that Windsor would have to go through to discontinue a portion of Brook Road. **Mark made a motion to encourage the Selectboard to actively participate in discussions regarding the disposition of Brook Road. Barbara seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.** Barbara noted that the guardrail has fallen into the brook.
7. Other Business – Zoning Regulations: Martha said the Selectboard has finished reviewing the zoning regulations and, when the edits are complete, she will send copies to the Planning Commission. Next meeting: December 29, 2011 at 6:30 PM Organizational meeting: Hal said the PC should have an organizational meeting in January to elect a Chair and Vice Chair.
8. Adjourn – **Mark made a motion to adjourn at 7:35 PM. Al seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Harrison