

Grafton Planning Commission

Regular Monthly Meeting

Tuesday October 11, 2022 7:00 PM

Grafton Town Hall 2nd Floor

(Not ADA Compliant Please provide notice should access or assistance to the meeting be required.)

Members present: Eric Stevens, Matt Siano, Ron Pilette, Seth Pajcic, Lester Schwalb

1. Call to order at 7:02.
2. Approval of the October agenda.
3. Approval of the September minutes.
4. Bill Kearns was at the meeting to discuss the Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan, we switched agenda order to accommodate Bill's schedule. Bill explained us the changes/discussion points in the document. Eric said there is a regulation re: placement of newly constructed electrical equipment in a flood hazard zone. The regulation is to build 1 foot above [above whatever standard you set as base flood elevation and a recommendation to build 2 feet above as the more prudent choice. Bill agreed and explained that it applies mostly to new construction. However, if you substantially improve (50% of value) an existing property, you must be 2 feet above. If not, the property will not be insurable (or saleable because no one will give mortgage).

The approval/denial of flood hazard zone construction is determined by the Town Administrative Officer (or flood hazard officer). The property owner can appeal to the DRB. The town flood hazard officer needs to look at the map and must decide on the basis of the existing map. The accuracy of the Flood Plan map doesn't matter for the town officer's decision, because the map is the law. So part of the appeal to the DRB can be to question the accuracy of the map. The DRB is made up of citizen volunteers. The DRB needs evidence. The "evidence" must be based on an engineer's determination re: flood hazard and elevation. The engineer determines height of flood. Adjustment to flood hazard constraints are mostly solved by amending maps. It is an end run that people regularly use.

The PC is to read the current draft of the proposed Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan and discuss any questions or concerns at the November meeting. The current thinking of the PC is to provide the required Public Notice about the Plan in the November issue of Grafton News with the intent of seeking a vote at the December 13th meeting.

5. Town survey. Our town plan is not due until 2028. Seth was advised that is much too early to apply for money in 2022/23 to fund the survey project . The PC agreed to begin to look at the survey from similar other towns and to begin to list likely questions. The PC thought that the Grafton News was a possible way to start the ball rolling and the way to pass along preliminary info and get some feedback. We discussed reimbursing Wendy and the GN to assist this survey project. The PC said that it would set aside time for discussion in each of our meetings about

survey scope and details. We could have a gmail address and people can send in questions or float ideas. We were cautioned that no responses can be given by email. Seth will get started to think about a preliminary list of questions. Discussion of possible questions. What kind of economic development do you want in town? That could mislead people into thinking that the Planning commission is all about development or wanting to promote development. What issues are there for the out-of-village areas? AriBnbs? Should there be limitations re: people renting their homes? Who decides? Everyone has a voice until the time of voting. Ultimately, who will vote: select board or town referendum?

6. The PC thought that the T&B engineer did a good job. The Village Park area appears to be the only location to locate a wastewater field. It was mentioned that In the same waste water discussion 20 years ago re paying for the wastewater treatment, the village would pay the bulk. But then someone has to figure out how to divvy up the cost and it would then necessarily be more expensive for the village owners. The inn has a problem but no one's system has failed. The "catastrophic" scenario is that a septic system leaks into the groundwater. If the town had waste coming out of the ground or someone getting sick—that will make everyone react very quickly. Likely that it will hard to decipher whose system has failed. This issue may be solved by much more frequent septic cleaning and monitoring. Have other small Vermont towns experienced catastrophic failures? We should find out this info. Matt was arranging for John Kiernan of RCAP to join the November meeting to discuss these questions, next steps and funding to move this assessment along.

The PC needs to weigh in on the waste water issue and study, to vote and have an opinion on the alternatives. We should say that the town should do X option. Part of the reason that this issue has been taking so long to resolve is that previous planning committees haven't made a recommendation.

7. Ron showed the maps samples. PC chose the series that we want to hang in inexpensive frames around the Town Hall meeting room. We also think to put one or two on the new elevator shaft walls on the ground floor as well as perhaps a Land Use map of town on the Exterior wall. Ron was getting further details. Map cost was minimal. Framing will be the more costly part of this project.
8. Budget of \$3000 was discussed and approved for submission to SB. (Plan Administrator \$800; Professional Development \$500; Office Supplies \$200; Maps \$1000; GN supplemental payment for Town Survey assistance \$500)
9. No New Business
10. No Public Comment
11. Next PC meeting Weds November 9,2022
12. Meeting adjourned 9:10