

Grafton Planning Commission

Regular Monthly Meeting

Tuesday April 18 , 7:00 PM

Grafton Town Hall 2nd Floor

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81340393010?pwd=TDk5Y3FDaUNYNVBHNmRRVGNwbWRiZz09>

Not ADA Compliant: Please provide notice should access or assistance to the meeting be required

MINUTES

It was easier to hear Matt and Eric than Ron and Buzz. These [] indicate that I'm unsure of something.

1. Meeting called to order 7:05
2. Agenda Approved
3. March 21 Minutes Approved
4. Flood regulation hearings. All postings and communications have been made. There have been no responses. Eric: if there were feedback to us, we would consider it. Now Select Board has to have the hearing and then vote. The Regional Commission can comment but does not vote.
5. Wastewater Update. Eric, reporting on a meeting that he attended. The meeting had a recap that there is no solution for conventional waste water location for the village. At this meeting, Eric raised the possible alternative solution of the living biological system. Discussion ensued at this meeting.
Question: what to do with the waste that is used on agricultural land during the winter when crops not grown? The expert responded that there is no place to spray it in the woods. Eric asked if they could use drip on the soil or under the soil. The expert said that it's not an accepted procedure. Someone else said that there may be an upcoming rule change. Eric didn't attend the subsequent meeting so he doesn't know if there was subsequent discussion of drip solution as potentially feasible. PC discussion: [I couldn't hear some of the discussion here. I think that they were talking about whether as long as frost didn't go below one foot, it may work.] PC asked: Are we at the point, that this biological system appears to be the only possible solution? Yes, except for the way that Mkt did it and the that was very expensive. Also, combining homes on a septic system which has the problem of homes being sold to different owners. Discussion about similarity/difference of a regular leach field.
Question re: background history. In 2004, the original issue was Windham Foundation and Tavern had a failure. They now have the leach field somewhere near or under the parking. There is a possibility that the village and the Tavern/Foundation overlap.

Question: should we be investigating the Living Machine System?
Discussion: We've gone through all the other options. We need to find out if it will work, and its cost and then we find out what the people in the town want. Seven years ago, many people didn't want to talk about possible development or business. And the

technology being offered at that time was a conventional sewage treatment plant and the price tag was going to be really high and wouldn't benefit only the village and not the people outside of the village. What we risk in ignoring this issue, it not only halts growth in town but also if a system or two fails in town and ruins the drinking water for the village and that would be catastrophic. The state now is interested in urban development and infill in villages, and in order to be in sync with that objective, we need to solve the waste water issue.

Erin Moore from T&B had gone to Sharon (at the rest area at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial) to see the Living Machine there; she said that we would still need to find the land for leach field. But, we would need less standards for this kind of land because the quality of the water from this system would be different than the conventional leach field. John Todd, of the company that took over the business of Living Machine, could give us more information. The engineer, John Kiernan with RCAP, who came to talk to us at a previous meeting said that he could help communicate with T&B and also advised us that there has to be an ongoing town committee to do this issue or things won't go forward. If we add the whey from the cheese factory, it may enhance the bio digestion of this waste. RCAP has funding to help towns in identifying a project and also has training for us by RCAP to learn how to move the project forward. Possible to share an employee among several communities.

Question re: viability of getting several communities to move in this direction at the same time. Could actually happen, thought, because communities have this same need and there is someone at the head of the regional committee who wants to move this kind of solution along. Matt will get in touch with John Kiernan and see if he can get T&B to guide us re: investigating this alternative. PC discussed the possible costs of the Living Machine implementation. [Not sure where this info is coming from? Hard to follow this part.] Take the leach water and run it through these Living Machine.

Question: Could this water go right into the river? Where do you put it though? No one wants to give up their land for anything. Eric mentioned that he found an organization called "Rural Water Organization." Their membership list contains people that we can tap for info re: Grafton waste water planning.

6. Windham Regional Plan is in revision right now. It won't be complete for another year. Eric expressed concern about classification that shows "resource lands," and they have placed approximately half of Grafton's land in this category. This is not a bad thing except that the definition of "resource lands" = lands requiring special protection or consideration due to their uniqueness, irreplaceable or fragile nature, or important ecological function." This plan calls "critical resources" lands that require extra protection. The problem is whenever a plan comes up for approval, it is almost always rejected if it is in the category of "resource lands." And a lot of the land put in this category is not really fitting this definition. What is the best solution? Is it a change to the map or a change to the definition? A lot of the land in that "resources lands" category should be in a different category of productive rural land (active agricultural lands, high value forest, mineral lands). Some discussion of the arbitrariness of the areas in each category for Grafton on the current map. Discussion of the map in other areas in Windham.

Maybe the map could have more granularity to it, we could mark as "critical resource" any land that is endangered species, wetlands, animal habitat that was particularly important (although the deer yards change every year, they are not static).

7. Long Range Planning Calendar: Matt would like to create a calendar so that we know what we are needing to do (budget, flood hazard regulations, town plan, other tasks).

What are the other tasks that should be on the calendar? Should be proactive about the sub-division regulations? Maybe we should go through it and make small tweaks? I can't hear about 1:14. Where should we put somebody??? On what? Spend money on what? If we want to apply for the municipal planning grant of 5K, there is a deadline for that. Flash-flooding hazard for the Saxton's River, needs more study/analysis. (We would need to have request for proposals now. So that we could have contractor lined up for the Fall. 6 months is the minimum amount of time that we would need to be in time for that application.) If we find out that we have a viable technological candidate for waste water treatment, then apply for a grant for that planning?

Issues that may come up in future planning: regulations for agricultural lands and the issue of compatible siting of solar on agricultural lands (for grazing not planting crops). Re: agenda for next meeting: use our budget to hire a consultant to find out more about the biological machine system. Next town plan.

8. Questions posed in Grafton News. We are still at 2 responses. The second response was in favor of a farmer's market. We should keep the questions going and maybe every 6 months or so make an executive summary so that people know what is coming in. Maybe we could ask people to look at the maps and make any comments about what they see? They are on the website for the town.
 9. Next meeting is on May 9th, 7:00PM
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