

Grafton Planning Commission

Regular Monthly Meeting

Tuesday Feb 11, 2025, 7:00 PM

Grafton Town Hall 2nd Floor

ADA Accessible

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

MINUTES

Planning Committee: Matt, Ron, Eric, Lester, Buzz
Public Attending on Zoom: Liisa Kissell

Meeting called to Order: 7:05

1. **Approved February Agenda**
2. **Approval of February Minutes**
3. **Lupiani Act 250 presentation and relation to Town Plan:** June Lupiani came to inform the PC about the camping facility she installed on her property. June and her brothers purchased a 3-acre lot at 221 Dug Road, also known as 42 Dug Rd. After cleaning up the site and and renting it out for a short time late summer and early fall, she learned that one cannot just commercialize property. There are 10 criteria that the state of Vermont looks at to see if one is complying with Act 250. In her application regarding Act 250, she included a waste water plan but the permit has not yet been approved. The PC asked questions about the concerns that abutters have with her plans for the site, access, flood zone concerns and infrastructure. June passed out a document that summarizes some of the material that she put in her application that was relevant to the Town Plan. She took some of the language of the Town Plan concerning tourism and economic growth, Grafton brand, regional landscape and put it in her application to the State.
4. **Wastewater Pumping Ordinance recommendation for dwelling occupancy:** Matt made a wastewater Pumping Ordinance recommendation and sent it around. This draft ordinance says: "With regard to the pumping ordinance, the pumping needs to be based on each property, its use, its potential occupancy, whether residential or non-residential or rental. Data needs to be kept and updated on an annual basis, along with obtaining the current septic size and type for the property that will dictate the pumping cycle basis. Any and all changes to the septic system within this jurisdiction will require a permit in order to update the data. "
This ordinance is meant for properties in the village.
Q: who is doing the data collection and monitoring?
Q: a septic that is used sporadically, has more problems than one that it is used moderately but continuously.
Q: We have \$200K which can be put towards the pumping and monitoring. Not clear if the money carries forward. Monitoring implies testing. If we had a pile of money that gave us interest, we could use the money to test into the future. Matt is going to find out if we can use the \$200K for testing septic in the village. Must find out if there is a deadline.
Q: It's important to test the groundwater to see if our septic pumping has been adequate.

Q: is there public record re: size of residence, occupancy, size and type of tank? For some of this \$200K, you could hire someone to pull together this data from our records, sales records, visits. And you can use the money to institute a water-testing system to see if the septic system is doing its job. Don't mis-spend this money. Test what needs to be tested and establish a benchmark. Otherwise, in a few years, we will be having this same discussion again.

Motion approved to send a letter to the Select Board about septic pumping that is a separate issue than the AirBnB ordinance. We should make an amendment to the existing pumping ordinance. We need to explain why this new pumping amendment is important. In light of the fact that we are not doing a major wastewater system, we need to make sure that the pumping ordinance will protect us from failures. The groundwater is vulnerable and we must look at the systems that are there and the input to them; we have to test the groundwater and see that our solution of pumping hasn't failed.

We should ask that this be put on the select board's agenda and perhaps we should ask for a joint meeting. The amendment to the ordinance should include that data at the local level should be collected when a septic system fails, is changed or a new one is put in\ juice.

5. **Windham Foundation Subdivision Village Center Designation/Town Plan:** The sale of the cheese factory and Act 250. How does the sub-division affect the Town Plan or does the Town Plan affect the sub-division? The sub-division is to enable the sale of the cheese factory itself. What becomes of the whey field? Have to look at Act 250 permit. What will be the economic impact on the town; will it still have 25 employees? When the sale goes through, we can invite the new owners to come here and talk to us about their plans.
6. **Windham Regional Plan Meeting dates for the new regional plan.** Go to their website to see the draft, which PC members should all read.
7. **Town Plan Chapters 8 & 9:** Move the discussion of review of these chapters to next month. What should we do in addition to having the Windham Regional Commission assist in updating the data? When the data is updated, we may notice issues to be discussed or changes to be made to the Plan. In our review, we need to be looking for things that we've missed, things that have to be modified, asking whether we want to add or modify policies. We could establish a group of 3 or 4 residents and have these people brainstorm on the new plan separate from us. We can direct them to focus on the economy, energy or whatever we choose. Whether or not we have committees, we need to make someone responsible for each task or the task will not be done. Resident: why doesn't someone from the PC come to Selectboard meetings and announce that you are looking for volunteers for working on the next Town Plan. Also, it would be good to have someone form the PC representing the PC at Select Board meetings. Matt: we need a liaison.
8. **Municipal Ethics Training.** Training needs to be done by Sept 25 and we need to attend.
9. **Old Business:**
10. **New Business:** Matt reported on the national water model meeting. Matt discussed rain gauges and river gauges wiith Chris Campany. It's crazy what you have to go through to get these gauges installed. Gauges are almost non-existent in the southern part of the state. They didn't want to hear us talking about ice and trees and other obstructions affecting the flow. There was some good discussion about it. The program is in its infancy. We should have a rate of rainfall gauge up in Windham; might give people in Grafton a half-hour warning before getting washed out. We need people to identify obstruction places in the water sheds

11. Public Comments

12. Meeting adjourned 9:10