Westmore Planning Commission Date: Tuesday, May 27, 2025

Minutes

Attending: Greg Gallagher, Bob Kennedy, Jeff Moore, Andrew Zebrowski, Randy Knaggs Carol Davis, Kathy Holmes, Donna Dzugas (by zoom)

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| Topic | Discussion | Outcomes |
| Meeting guidelines | Bob opened the meeting at 5:02PM and read the meeting guidelines. He asked if there were additions to the agenda and there were none. Bob related to the board a question that was given to him about using a camper for rental, therefore considered an auxiliary dwelling, to be discussed later. |  |
| FEMA and NIFP new maps | The FEMA flood plain maps were outdated and were updated. This may necessitate changes in the Westmore Town by-laws, which were done in 2021. VT Lakes and Ponds confirmed that the by-laws are up to date. Therefore, the town can apply for the FEMA flood insurance program, which will help property owners. Andrew asked if the planning commission needed to take action. Bob explained that the new maps could be challenged if a local review showed discrepancies. Andrew said the thought that there should be a chance for town property owners to view the maps. He said that John Zimmer said he would let them know when he is going to view the maps. The question was asked if the Westmore Planning Commission (WPC) should look into the requirements again as they are now more stringent. It was noted that if the WPC required adherence to any VT State regulation that would protect the shoreline.  Randy and Jeff said that they had tried to see the maps but it was difficult. Carol said John had sent her the link. Jeff said he had the link but was not able to zoom in. Bob explained how some properties have areas in the flood plain while other areas are not and gave Greg’s property as an example. He said that the new maps were done by satellite and that feedback from the towns is wanted. He thought there was not as much risk here because the lake is unlike rising sea water. Randy recounted an instance he was aware of when a lake did rise and flood.  Carol reported that in her conversation with John he indicated that he did not want to let the maps go without approval but that he did think that the town should apply for the FEMA flood insurance program. It was noted that flood insurance could be required for mortgages. The Westmore Select Board (WSB) would be the entity to apply. It was felt that the WPC should check the relevant by-laws. | Bob will resend the link for the maps to the members of the WPC  Carol will send the link to Greg  Members of the WPC will check the by-laws relevant to the FEMA mapping and flood plain designation |
| By-laws relative to living spaces, boat houses | Bob described the query about using a camper as a guest house. It was noted that if it is considered a living space it would have to have sewer and water and would fall under zoning regulations. Using a proposed boat house renovation, which included additional second story space, the group discussed what the role of the WPC is. It was agreed that the jurisdiction of the by-laws ends at the water. The state regulations are strict and will restrict any renovations that are not for the public good and the health of the lake. Again, the Lakes and Ponds Management and Protection Agency regulations will take precedence and should be part of any permitting process by the town. Repairs can occur within the current footprint of the existing boat house but no additional space is allowed.  Bob said he is attending the Vermont League of Cities and Towns meeting tomorrow and could ask any questions that the WPC members have.  Carol asked if a camper that has an existing bathroom would qualify as an accessory dwelling. Currently campers are allowed to be parked for 21 days at a camping site. If it is used as an accessory dwelling it needs to follow all zoning regulations. Jeff noted that the time restriction applies to use of a camper on a lot but that there is no restriction about how long a camper can be at a residence.  Carol said that boat houses would fall under the Public Trust Doctrine and be governed by the rules related to lakes and ponds of the Vermont Department of Natural Resources.  Andrew asked if the listers refer to Andy Berley, Zoning Administrator, if they find some situation out of compliance or without appropriate permits? It seems that listers do report such instances. | Bob will check on listers’ role |
| Hazard Mitigation Plan | Ethan was not at the meeting but Bob reported that he is working with John and Peter on the plan. It was found that the number one risk in Westmore is for landslides, which could isolate town members. They have been working with FEMA. There is a small risk of the washing out of rivers. WPC members reported that less fish are being seen in the rivers and lake. |  |
| Other business | Jeff asked Bob is he could ask at the VLCT meeting about urban compact farmyards, which are becoming a problem in some areas. It was noted that the state may not prohibit the use of city properties for small scale farming. Bob noted that the state is supporting compact housing development. If there are state regulations for either it would supersede any local regulations. | Bob will see if there is information about small scale farming in cities |
| Approval of minutes and adjournment | The minutes of the April15, 2025 WPC meeting were approved.  Randy motioned to adjourn with Greg seconding and the meeting was adjourned at 5:55 PM. |  |

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Kennedy, Clerk, Westmore Planning Commission