

Planning Commission Unapproved Meeting Minutes – January 23, 2025 ---7:30PM

In Attendance- PC Members Judy Corso, Vince Foy, Alison Despathy
Absent- David Kyle, Kate Whitehead

Guest Speaker in attendance- Alison Low- Danville Select Board member and Northern Vermont Development Association (NVDA) senior member

Danville Resident in attendance- Greg Prior

January Meeting/Agenda Summary:

Meeting began at 7:36pm

Review of January Agenda- no amendments or changes

Review of December 2024 minutes- Vince moved to accept and full consensus vote to accept followed

Presentation of Danville Waste Water, Act 181, Act 250 and Tier 1B status:

Alison Low is a senior member since 2003 of NVDA, the regional planning commission which serves over 50 municipalities and has a staff of 10 people. She is also a Danville Select Board member. Alison was invited to discuss the Danville Waste Water situation and recent report as well as offer an introduction to Act 181.

Alison Low discussed the recently received “90% Waste Water Report” which was received and reviewed by all present PC members.

Alison Low introduced the recently passed Vermont law- Act 181. Act 181 amends Act 250 and specifically offers temporary Act 250 exemptions to towns that meet certain criteria including adequate zoning bylaws as well as adequate wastewater and drinking water capacities.

Alison Low discussed that NVDA and all regional planning commission at this time are developing maps to categorize land use in certain categories such as – rural lands, agriculture, forestry and rural conservation lands. Also the newly appointed Land Use Review Board (LURB) has just convened and is starting their work to determine Act 250 governance as well as the Tier 3 rule of Act 181 which will map out critical resource areas throughout the state. This is in the very beginning stages and there is still much to be determined by the LURB

Maps are a high priority and focus at the regional planning commission at this time and it should be acknowledged that FEMA flood maps are also under development and review. The developed maps will be considered under collaboration in order to finalize designations. FEMA flood maps will also influence future development but there will not be “reversing development” due to FEMA mapping. These maps will influence decisions and planning by the Planning Commission.

Under Act 181, Tier 1a or 1b Status creates temporary exemptions to Act 250 with the possible option for permanent exemption if criteria are met and town requests permanent status.

Tier 1b status for Danville Village would require a subdivision plan. North Danville would not qualify due to the absence of water or sewer infrastructure.

Alison Low shared that there is a February 11, 2025 webinar scheduled to review Act 181.

WASTEWATER DISCUSSION -90% report recently received by Danville Select Board.

Wastewater changes and work being considered at this time are intended to support and allow for continued operations versus increased capacity. Cost is a strong factor influencing this decision.

Alternative #4 is the most appropriate as determined by the Select Board at this time. It is currently expected to cost \$2.24 million. This plan would involve a cover on Lagoon #1 which is more effective in waste processing. Improvements and changes in operation to the lagoons is also included in this option. UV treatment will need an upgrade and is at its end of life. Several pump stations including Railroad and Sugar ridge require replacement.

Alternative #3 was considered but it involved constant sludging with a higher maintenance cost.

The cost to desluge is \$95,000- unsure as to whether this included removal alone or removal and disposal.

Costs of both wastewater and drinking water services are being evaluated to ensure adequacy. Danville's rates have been significantly lower than other towns. Increased rate consideration to help with operation and maintenance costs. There appears to be some funding available and this will require further exploration.

The contracted wastewater engineer suggested a fee of \$700/year. Current forecasts are at \$760.

CURRENT CONNECTIONS:

There are 160 current connections and 109 are residential.

GROWTH PROJECTION =36 units/72 people would be capacity of current system for development
In the next 20 years, projected growth is at an estimated 400 or so

PC conversation followed regarding the question of, if the sewer system did not exist, how would this impact the community and its services etc Conversation identified that wastewater is a community wide asset influencing grant and funding options as well as impacts on non sewer connected taxpayers.

Many thanks were shared with Alison Low for her time and for sharing this information with the PC. We will continue to connect and collaborate as all of this work evolves and influences the work of the PC

It was identified in the meeting that Greg Prior would be interested in joining the Planning Commission. He expressed interest and the member present agreed with consensus that he would be welcome and it would be greatly appreciated if he was willing to join the PC.

It was also noted that Planning Commission elections for Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary would be held at the February PC meeting

The next PC meeting is scheduled for February 27, 2025

Meeting closed