

Jamaica Planning Commission (JPC)  
Draft Meeting Minutes - Regular Meeting  
October 3, 2022  
Jamaica Town Offices, 28 Town Office Road  
Jamaica VT 05343

Commissioners present: Bryan Zieroff, Chris Robbins, Charlie Peck  
Public present: Karen Ameden, Bob Rolen

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. No additions to the agenda.

2. Charlie moved to amend the draft minutes of the September 19 meeting by striking the third sentence in item 3 and the final clause in the fifth sentence in item 3. Motion passed by unanimous vote of members present. Charlie moved to approve the draft minutes of the September 19 meeting as amended. Motion passed by unanimous vote of members present.

3. Members briefly discussed the Selectboard policy on public acquisition of land in Jamaica, adopted by the Selectboard in 1993. Charlie noted that the policy states that the Selectboard will “consider a report from the Planning Commission” before making a decision on whether the town supports a specific public acquisition of land. He also stated that other provisions of the policy are problematic, quite possibly unlawful, and no longer suited to Jamaica’s present circumstances. There was general agreement that this policy should be comprehensively reviewed and updated during the upcoming Town Plan amendment process in 2024-25.

4. There was a brief discussion of issues related to the Selectboard proposal to reclassify or discontinue several town road and legal trail segments. Charlie reported that he had sent Greg Joly a copy of the JPC report and recommendation, and indicated that he and the JPC are interested to know of any specific issues or concerns Greg may have about the JPC recommendation or the present Selectboard proposal. No reply has been received.

5. Chris reported that DVfiber’s construction is proceeding with the target of making our first household connection in December in Stamford. DVfiber is now working on establishing a program to subsidize subscription fees for low income households based on participation in the FCC’s ACP (Affordable Connection Program). To that end we are holding discussions with the Equal Access to Broadband (EAB) organization. The EAB acts as the agent for administering the ACP program for ECfiber, the Exmore based CUD (Communications Union District). The EAB’s goal is to become the State wide agent for all CUD’s. This would significantly lessen the administrative load on CUD’s and the EAB would serve as the ideal agent to receive and administer future state and federal grants for low income family internet access subsidies.

Karen Ameden asked when DVfiber would get to Jamaica. Chris replied that that information is not publicly available, but in general connections are being made in the order of need, i.e., in the order of how underserved or unserved towns are.

6. Some field work has been completed at the target property for the community septic system. The initial data has been very promising, with geologic logging indicating a potential discharge capacity of up to 14,400 gallons per day (gpd), or 28,800 gpd with pretreatment. This amount is higher than originally expected, and will be confirmed with further testing. Our engineer will write up a summary of this data on the 60% deliverable, which will be presented in an upcoming 60% meeting (meeting date to be determined).

7. No other business was brought up.

8. Bob Rolen asked about the proposed reclassification of a section of Henderson road, stating that this road may be important for access to his property. He also gave a brief description of his conceptual future plans for development of an “intentional community” on his newly acquired Jamaica property, the former Craven farm in southeast Jamaica. He stated his desire to work with the Planning Commission during the next Town Plan update cycle to address how his development concept fits with existing Town Plan language and policies in the Town Plan. He was invited to share more information about his concept, and to participate in discussions concerning the Town Plan update in 2024/25.

Karen Ameden spoke about Rep. Laura Sibia’s efforts to find placements for Afghani refugees in Windham County. She asked if the JPC has any thoughts on how Jamaica could help with finding placement for refugees. It was suggested that refugees will need stable, committed host families or sponsors to help them transition into a new society, overcome language barriers, etc. The JPC does not have any immediate answers on whether such host families and sponsors are presently available in Jamaica.

9. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.