

Jamaica Planning Commission (JPC)
Draft Meeting Minutes - Regular Meeting
October 16, 2023
Jamaica Town Offices, 28 Town Office Road
Jamaica VT 05343

Commissioners present: Bryan Zieroff, Charlie Peck, Chris Robbins, Patrick McQuillan

Public present: Jessica Pollack, Mike Tuller

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

1. There were no additions to the agenda
2. The September 18, 2023 draft meeting minutes were approved as written, by unanimous vote of members present.
3. Charlie reported on phone conversations he has had with Matt Bachler of the WRC regarding WRC assistance with preparing a Municipal Planning Grant (MPG) application for funding assistance with preparation of the 2025 Town Plan update. There was general discussion about the MPG application process and the required Good Standing Certification, which requires all towns seeking state grant funds to either certify that the town is in compliance with all state and federal water quality laws or provide an explanation of why the town is not in compliance. Bryan and Charlie both stated that they are certain that Jamaica cannot accurately certify that we are in compliance, as there are many clearly visible instances of road repair and maintenance practices that are not in compliance with the Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) requirements and the Road Erosion Inventory indicates that over 70% of total road mileage is not in compliance with MRGP requirements. They suggested that the only possible accurate response to the Good Standing Certification form is to check the box indicating "I am not able to certify" and provide an explanation of the reasons why the town is unable to certify full compliance.

Jessica indicated that she supports proceeding with the MPG application (deadline November 1) and will bring the issue to the next Selectboard meeting. She stated that she is willing to sign the Municipal Resolution Form and the Good Standing Certification if so authorized by the majority of Selectboard members.

Mike Tuller indicated that he has experience with MPG applications and is willing to work with Matt Bachler to prepare and submit an application, if the JPC and Selectboard are in agreement to proceed.

Chris Robbins moved to recommend that the town proceed with the MPG application. Motion passed with Zieroff, Robbins and McQuillan voting in favor and Peck abstaining.

Charlie explained that his reason for abstaining from voting is that he has personal and family commitments that will prevent him from attending most JPC meetings next year and will therefore ask that he not be reappointed to the JPC when his current term expires next March. He stated that he will continue to participate when and if he can but feels that the JPC should have a full complement of active members during the Town Plan update process. He also stated

that the JPC should have an active member as “project coordinator” for the Town Plan update process and that he will be unable to assume that role.

4. Jessica Pollack had previously asked the JPC to review and provide input on Vtrans recommended scope of work proposals for FEMA funded disaster relief assistance with repairs to road segments damaged during the July 10-11 flood event. She had stated that she would have copies of the Vtrans recommendations distributed to the JPC members. Bryan asked about the status of that information. It appears that copies have not yet been sent out to JPC members.

Charlie asked about the status of the JPC’s previous recommendation that a portion of the towns ARPA funds be used to pay a consultant to review, assess and prioritize road segments not in compliance with MRGP requirements and prepare grant applications for IIJA funded state grants to pay private contractors to perform needed road repairs and upgrades. The Selectboard has previously voted to authorize proceeding with this recommendation. Mike Tuller said that he is unaware of this issue but will look into it.

5. Chris reported that the number of connections reported in our last meeting was misstated in that the number in Readsboro, 160, was actually passings. This difference is that a passing is that fiber has been installed at the power pole serving an address whereas a connection is fiber connected to a premises and service initiated. However, as of our governing board meeting last Wednesday, in addition to the 25 connections previously reported 149 households in Readsboro are on the list to be connected as soon as our contractor, GWI, schedules appointments. Additionally, our fiber backbone contractor, SERTEX, has begun installing fiber in Somerset with the goal of being able to start connections in mid-November.

DVFiber is gearing up to pursue a grant under the BEAD (Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment) program which is part of the federal infrastructure initiative. Vermont has on the order of \$240M allocated for subgrants. Because our area is rural where connection costs are substantially greater than metropolitan areas, DVFiber expects the subgrant amount to be substantial. This is a must win grant for DVFiber.

Mike Tuller asked if there was a map showing where and when connections will be made. Chris replied that there was but this information is acquisitive sensitive and not releasable to the public.

6. No other business was brought up.
7. There were no stated public concerns or comments.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.