

Jamaica Planning Commission (JPC)
Draft Meeting Minutes - Regular Meeting
February 19, 2024
Jamaica Town Offices, 28 Town Office Road
Jamaica VT 05343

Commissioners present: Bryan Zieroff, Charlie Peck, Chris Robbins, John Van Hoesen

Public present: Lexa Clark, Karen Ameden

1. It was agreed by consensus to add to the agenda a discussion of a recently received message from the WRC, inquiring if the JPC wants to participate in a proposed multi-town housing needs assessment and planning effort to be sponsored by the WRC.
2. The January 15 2024 draft meeting minutes were approved as written, by unanimous vote of members present.
3. There was general discussion of the previous JPC recommendation that a portion of Jamaica's ARPA allocation be used to pay for consultant services to assess and prioritize deficiencies (MRGP non-complying segments and other sites and hazards likely to cause stormwater erosion or other damage)) threatening our road system. This assessment and prioritization would then be used as the basis for multiple grant applications seeking to best utilize presently available IJJA-enhanced state grant programs to address and correct high-priority (most likely to cause or contribute to road system damage) sites. The Selectboard has agreed to proceed with this recommendation and has indicated that a draft of an RFP for consultant services would be appreciated. Bryan will prepare a draft RFP and circulate to JPC members for comment before delivering to the Selectboard.
4. The JPC has received a "reminder" message from Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) and the WRC, reminding the town that our Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) will expire in 2025, and must be updated to retain eligibility for certain federal disaster preparedness and hazard mitigation grant programs. Charlie noted that WRC Senior Planner Alyssa Sabetto had developed the existing LHMP and can likely offer advice and assistance with updating it. John agreed to contact the WRC to discuss this issue.
5. Bryan reported that project engineer Chrissy Haskins has prepared a report for submission to the State to keep the Town on a priority list for ARPA funding to support construction of a wastewater system, should the Town choose to move forward with the project. This report is not part of the design process but was completed to make sure the Town stays on a priority list for the federal funding. Related to site specific work, our engineer is completing a groundwater model (via a hydrogeologist subcontractor) to understand conceptual flow direction and travel time for wastewater. This is a final step prior to completing conceptual design and understanding the cost of a potential system. It is anticipated that the Community wastewater disposal system feasibility study will be completed, and town-wide public information meetings held, in late spring or early summer of this year.

6. Chris reported that January 31st was legislature day for Vermont's CUD's. DVFiber sent a delegation and is pleased to report that they were well received and that the legislature's support for CUDs remains strong. Chris further reported that as of the first week of February, connections were 158 with an near equal number signed up but not yet connected. Our subscription rate is currently 28% of passings. This compares favorably with other CUDs in the state with subscription rates ranging from 12% to 34%. Our target for this phase of the build is approximately 1400 sub subscriptions so 158 connections plus approximately 150 commitments to be connected puts us on target for the portion of our program funded by ARPA grant funding. When asked when Jamaica could expect to be able to connect, Chris remained enigmatic.

7. The WRC has inquired if Jamaica would like to participate in a collaborative housing planning effort among the four towns of Jamaica, Londonderry, Weston and Winhall. According to the WRC message, "The idea is to identify housing needs and affordability among the four towns, and then go through a conceptual planning and design process to think through where it might best be located, taking into account flood and fluvial erosion hazard risks." The message further states that there will be no const to participating towns, and no obligation to participate in any affordable housing plans or projects that may result from the collaborative effort. JPC members present agreed by consensus that we should participate, and John agreed to contact the WRC to let them know of our interest in joining the collaborative effort.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.