

Jamaica Planning Commission (JPC)
Draft Meeting Minutes - Regular Meeting
April 15, 2024
Jamaica Town Offices, 28 Town Office Road
Jamaica VT 05343

Commissioners present: Bryan Zieroff, Chris Robbins, Patrick McQuillan, John Van Hosean

Public present: Karen Ameden, Erica Bowman

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM
2. There were no additions to the agenda.
3. The October 16, 2023 draft meeting minutes were approved as written by unanimous vote of members present.
4. Community Septic Update. Bryan tabled a full discussion of the community septic because the major part of the project status is in preparation for a forth coming town meeting presentation. A brief overview of the project was offered for the benefit of the members of the public present.
5. Discussion of VT Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) status. Bryan provided a summary of the status of the roads from last month meeting, primarily to bring the attending members of the public up to date. Jamaica's roads are documented in the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VTDEC) Road Erosion Inventory (REI) database, with respect to the requirements of the MRGP. The MGRP is a program intended to reduce erosion from storm water runoff from municipal roads. Of 300 road segments considered environmentally sensitive, 167 need repair and 20 – 30 need immediate attention. Jamaica failed to submit the required annual report to update the REI and thus is out of compliance with VTDEC requirements. We can bring ourselves back into compliance with a plan to correct 20% of deficiencies per year. The first step in formulating such a plan is the conduct of a road inventory of deficiencies per 100 meter road segments. John Van Hosean is qualified to make such assessments and he and Bryan have volunteered to do so. The review may also include an include third party assistance from WRC interns to review the road sections that are not covered under the MRGP.
6. The discussion of the Local Hazzard Mitigation Plan was tabled.
7. WRC Collaborative Housing Planning Effort. John reported attending a WRC meeting hosted by Chris Campany, the WRC director. The discussion centered on affordable housing requirements in our local region, Jamaica, Londonderry, Stratton and Winhall. The recent surge in Air B&Bs in the rental segment of the housing market has aggravated the situation in the past but now seems to be mitigating making a potential increase in long term rental stock possible. A general discussion with the public present on possible affordable housing construction sites followed.
8. Jamaica Communications Committee Update. Chris Reported that as of the April 2,2024 DVFiber has 241 subscribers. This is an increase in the rate of signing up new subscribers which can be

attributed to hiring the previous administrative assistant, Ann Krafcik, to the position of Marketing Assistant and her efforts to increase sales. Bryan once again sought a commitment from Chris as to when DVfiber would be available in Jamaica but to no avail. However, Chris did allow that if awarded the BEAD grant, its requirement to prioritize unserved and under-served locations, parts of Jamaica will probably be reached before the post 2025 date published in the town report.

9. There was no other business.

10. Public Concerns.

Erica Bowman presented plans of the town beautification committee to pursue a community tree planting grant under the Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program. Grants of up to \$70 K are available and Jamaica is on the list of eligible towns. The object of the program is to plant trees in locations that will either mitigate damage from future flooding events, such as willows along the banks of flood prone streams, or in previously flood damaged areas to restore same. The grant application requires Public input so Erica is seeking support from both the Planning Commission and the Selectboard. Bryan stated that the project had the support of the Planning Commission and that we would help when other commitments allowed.

Karen Ameden reported on the recent School Board meeting. The school is close to closing because of the low number of students attending, now in the teens with 4 or 5 in kindergarten. Jamaica did not file its application for pre-K for this year but now has done so and anticipates approval. An assessment of the schools in the supervisory union has been made by the Stevens Association with the resulting scores of Jamaica 88, Townshend 58, and Newbrook 93. Jamaica's relatively high score reflects an excellent facility. The superintendent is pressuring Jamaica to close. However there are 20 -30 pre-K students not currently served which Jamaica could serve when recertified. Neither Townshend nor Newbrook can do so. Should the school be closed, the town has the right to purchase it for \$1. We might do so and open a private pre-K. Jamaica's most immediate problem is hiring teaching staff which is currently being addressed.

11. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35PM.