

**Approved Minutes  
Vermont Downtown Board  
4/3/2023  
MS Teams Virtual Meeting**

**Members Present (10):**

- Josh Hanford (*Chair*), designated by the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development
- Michele Boomhower, designated by the Secretary of Transportation
- Billy Coster, designated by the Secretary of Natural Resources
- Michael Desrochers, designated by the Commissioner of Public Safety
- Laura Trieschmann, State Historic Preservation Officer
- Jaime Lee, appointed by the Governor, representing the Vermont Natural Resources Council and the Preservation Trust of Vermont.
- vacant*, designated by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns
- Michael McDonough, appointed by the governor, representing local government
- Bruce Cheeseman, appointed by the Governor, representing local government
- Chip Sawyer, designated by the Vermont Planners Association
- Sabina Haskell, Chair of the Natural Resources Board
- Charlie Baker, designated by the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies
- Cathy Davis, appointed by the Governor, representing the Vermont Association of Chamber Executives

**Attending Community Planning and Revitalization (CP+R) Team Members (5):** Chris Cochran, Richard Amore, Gary Holloway, Amy Tomasso, and Jenni Lavoie.

**Guests (5):** Jean Richardson, Town of Ferrisburgh; Steven True, Town of Ferrisburgh; Will Colgan, Town of Plainfield; Christian Meyer, CVRPC; Hannah Andrew, ACRPC.

Josh Hanford brought the meeting to order at 1:02pm via MS Teams virtual conference call.

**Additions or Deletions to Board Agenda**

There were no additions or deletions to the board agenda.

**1. Public Comment Period**

Josh Hanford opened the meeting to public comment: there were no comments.

**2. Consent Agenda Items:**

- February 27, 2023, Draft Meeting Minutes
- Danby Village Center Designation Renewal
- Proctor Village Center Designation Renewal

Charlie Baker made a motion to approve the consent agenda items, and Cathy Davis seconded. Ayes: Billy Coster, Cathy Davis, Charlie Baker, Chip Sawyer, Jaime Lee, Laura Trieschmann, Michael Desrochers, Michele Boomhower, Sabina Haskell, and Josh Hanford. The motion carried.

### **3. Village Center Designations – 2**

#### **Town of Ferrisburgh – Ferrisburgh Village**

The proposed boundary runs along US Route 7, Middlebrook Road, and Little Chicago Road, and includes the town offices and community center, town green, church, post office, historical society, Union Meeting Hall, Ferrisburgh Central School, ice skating rink, highway department, small businesses, multifamily and single-family residences. The town worked with staff to define the boundary that meets statutory definition and submitted a map that meets the program's requirements.

Steven True informed board members that the designation will bring great benefits to the town. Jean Richardson added that there is good energy and momentum right now, and many younger people are taking an active interest and role in the community.

Commissioner Hanford inquired if the proposed boundary was developed so that housing infill could be developed. Jean Richardson advised that it was.

Michele Boomhower made a motion to approve the village center designation for the Town of Ferrisburgh, and Charlie Baker seconded. Ayes: Billy Coster, Cathy Davis, Charlie Baker, Chip Sawyer, Jaime Lee, Laura Trieschmann, Michael Desrochers, Michele Boomhower, Sabina Haskell, and Josh Hanford. The motion carried.

#### **Town of Plainfield – Boundary Amendment**

The town is requesting a boundary amendment to add 4 additional properties that includes one commercial property, two residential properties, and one multi-family/mixed use property including 78 Creamery Street which intends to apply for the Downtown and Village Center Tax Credits in July 2023. The existing boundary runs along Route 2 and includes the health center and annex, numerous small businesses, the library, the post office, the Town Hall/Opera House and several mixed use and residential properties. The existing boundary continues southeast along Main Street to include several small businesses, a restaurant, the village park, the Methodist church, the municipal offices, the fire department, the Plainfield CO-OP, and the park and ride.

Will Colgan shared that there have been many good projects in the town within the past 20 years which have improved village life. This boundary amendment will help a multi-family mixed use building apply for tax credits. It will be a nice addition to the village to have this historic property online for housing and art studio.

Board members inquired if a village could apply for both a village center, and neighborhood development area at the same time. Staff advised they could.

Chip Sawyer made a motion to approve the boundary amendment for the Town of Plainfield, and Charlie Baker seconded. Ayes: Billy Coster, Cathy Davis, Charlie Baker, Chip Sawyer, Jaime Lee, Laura Trieschmann, Michael Desrochers, Michele Boomhower, Sabina Haskell, and Josh Hanford. The motion carried.

### **4. Downtown Transportation Fund Grant**

The Downtown Transportation Fund (DTF) supports transportation-related capital improvement projects such as new sidewalks, lighting and other pedestrian and streetscape improvements in designated downtowns and eligible designated village centers. Eligible projects must be within or serving the downtown district or village center and support economic development.

We have received 7 eligible Downtown Transportation Fund (DTF) Grant applications for the FY23 round. Requests totaled \$1,116,184 for the available \$3,300,000 in funding. The

applications were reviewed and checked for completeness and accuracy by DHCD staff. One additional application, from the Town of Bennington, was deemed ineligible.

Board members engaged in a discussion if all the eligible applications should be funded, or projects that most closely with the program intent. Additional discussion ensued regarding the lack of applications given the funds available, and if it was due to the abundance of resources and funding currently available to municipalities. Final discussion surrounded offering a second round of applications in the fall. Gary will come back to the next board meeting with a proposal on the next round.

Gary Holloway requested feedback on the application, board members indicated that additional information around eligible activities might be helpful.

Charlie Baker made a motion to award all 7 Downtown Transportation Fund applications, and Chip Sawyer seconded. Ayes: Billy Coster, Cathy Davis, Charlie Baker, Chip Sawyer, Jaime Lee, Laura Trieschmann, Michael Desrochers, Michele Boomhower, Sabina Haskell, and Josh Hanford. The motion carried.

### **5. Old Business / New Business**

Chris Cochran shared with board members that the Community Planning & Revitalization team held the most successful Downtown Day at the State House to date. Downtown Directors thanked legislators for supporting a proposed \$800,000 in funding to support the downtown program and local organizations.

Additionally, the CP&R team is working with the top bidder of the Designation Review and Assessment to finalize contract terms and get the project underway.

### **6. Adjourn**

Charlie Baker made a motion to adjourn, and Billy Coster seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The Downtown Board meeting was adjourned at 4:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Jenni Lavoie