

Minutes Vermont Downtown Board 04/12/2021

Meeting held via conference call in compliance with the Executive Order 01-20

Members Present (12):

- 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
- Robert Sponable, alternate, 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.
- Mayor David Allaire, 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
- Greg Boulbol, designated by the Chair of the Natural Resources Board
- Tasha Wallis, designated by the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies
- Cathy Davis, appointed by the Governor, representing the Vermont Association of Chamber Executives (arrived at 1:12pm)

Attending Community Planning and Revitalization (CP+R) Team Members (4): Chris Cochran, Gary Holloway, Jacob Hemmerick, and Jenni Lavoie.

Guests (18): Vince Conti, Town of Berlin; Tom Badowski, Town of Berlin; Karla Nussli, Town of Berlin; Brandy Saxton, PlaceSense; Paul Simon, Park Architecture; Jim Alvarez, CVMC; Matt Moore, Evernorth; Bonnie Waninger, CVRPC; Clare Rock, CVRPC; Maxwell Kreiger, DHCD; Ben Doyle, PTV; Chuck Storrow; Nicola Anderson, Downstreet Housing; Ed Bove, RRPC; Eileen Hee, CVMC; Julie Curtin, Downstreet Housing; Kate McCarthy, VNRC; and David Delcore.

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

Additions or Deletions to Board Agenda

There were no additions or deletions to the board agenda.

1. Public Comment Period for Berlin New Town Center Application

Josh Hanford opened the meeting to public comment.

- Kate McCarthy, Sustainable Communities Program Director, Vermont Natural Resources Council (VNRC), spoke in opposition of the New Town Center

A board member asked for clarification of VNCR's opposition, inquiring if they were opposed to housing in the proposed New Town Center area. Ms. McCarthy clarified that VNRC's was

not opposed to the proposed housing, VNRC's was opposed to the board considering an application that did not meet statutory requirements.

2. New Town Center Application – Town of Berlin

Commissioner Hanford framed the proceedings and Board charge. Jacob Hemmerick presented and updated staff report and draft findings of the New Town Center application. The town commented that they are committed to meeting the conditions and they intended to make this area something everyone can be proud of.

The Board discussed and inquired about the conditions pertaining the street-based regulation, the street grid at the Route 62 gateway, pathways, and existing Act 250 conditions pertaining to wetlands and stormwater. Town staff indicated that the re-alignment of the gateway could commence after the town acquires a piece of property in the proposed area. DHCD staff, and consultants for the town discussed specific required pathways, and which if needed, could be removed from the proposal. Staff and board members reviewed the draft condition, which indicates that if the State's regulatory permit approvals substantially affect the facts upon which the Board based its findings, the Town will return to the Board to amend the New Town Center designation.

Several board members commented that a New Town Center in this area made sense due to the existing employment opportunities and amenities already available.

Bruce Cheeseman made a motion to approve Berlin's New Town Center application with conditions as presented by staff, and Michele Boomhower seconded.

Michael McDonough moved to amend the motion to require that the Town return to the Board in two-years to provide an update on the town's progress meeting the conditions of approval. Discussion ensued. Chip Sawyer seconded the motion. Ayes: Billy Coster, Bruce Cheeseman, Cathy Davis, Chip Sawyer, Greg Boulbol, Jaime Lee, Laura Trieschmann, Robert Sponable, Michael McDonough, Michele Boomhower, Tasha Wallis, and Josh Hanford. The motion carried.

The Board voted on the amended motion. Ayes: Billy Coster, Bruce Cheeseman, Cathy Davis, Chip Sawyer, Greg Boulbol, Laura Trieschmann, Robert Sponable, Michael McDonough, Michele Boomhower, Tasha Wallis, and Josh Hanford; Nay: Jaime Lee. The motion carried.

3. Old Business / New Business

Chris Cochran advised board members that at the next normally scheduled meeting, Monday, April 26th, the board would be reviewing and awarding the Downtown Transportation Fund applications. A training on the program, and scoring will be available for new board members, and other board members who would like to join on Thursday, April 15th.

4. Adjourn

Chip Sawyer made a motion to adjourn, and Tasha Wallis seconded. Ayes: Billy Coster, Bruce Cheeseman, Cathy Davis, Chip Sawyer, Greg Boulbol, Jaime Lee, Laura Trieschmann, Michele Boomhower, Michael McDonough, Robert Sponable, Tasha Wallis, and Josh Hanford. The motion carried. The Downtown Board meeting was adjourned at 2:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Jenni Lavoie