

**Minutes**  
**Vermont Community Investment Board**  
**7/22/2024**  
**MS Teams Virtual Meeting**

**Members Present (12):**

- Alex Farrell (*Chair*), designated by the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development
- Adam Grinold, representing the Regional Development Associations
- Amy Bell (*alternate*), designated by the Secretary of Transportation
- Billy Coster, designated by the Secretary of Natural Resources
- Bruce Cheeseman, appointed by the Governor, representing local government
- Cathy Davis, appointed by the Governor, representing the Vermont Association of Chamber Executives
- Charlie Baker, designated by the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies
- Chip Sawyer, designated by the Vermont Planners Association
- Jaime Lee, appointed by the Governor, representing the Vermont Natural Resources Council and the Preservation Trust of Vermont
- Laura Trieschmann, State Historic Preservation Officer
- Michael Desrochers, designated by the Commissioner of Public Safety
- Michael Gaughan, designated by the Vermont Bond Bank
- Michael McDonough, appointed by the governor, representing local government
- Mike Pieciak, State Treasurer
- Sarah Hadd, designated by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns
- vacant*, representing the Office of Racial Equity

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

**Guests (5):** Nancy Boss, Town of Starksboro; Heidi Britch-Valenta, Village of Swanton; Betsy Liley, Swanton resident; Elaine Wang, City of Winooski; Melissa Corbin, Downtown Winooski.

**Start of Meeting:**

Alex Farrell brought the meeting to order at 1:05 pm and welcomed new board members.

Act 182 of 2022 directed the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to explore ways to simplify the designation programs, make them more accessible, and coordinate with the recommendations of the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) and Natural Resources Board (NRB) report.

The combined recommendations aimed to strengthen the connection between local and regional planning, state designation programs, and Act 250. The goal is to better coordinate investments, programs, and regulations to advance a place-based approach to land-use planning and community development, empowering state and local leaders to plan for and build vibrant, inclusive, and resilient downtowns, villages, and neighborhoods.

Act 181 of 2024 implemented many of these recommendations. While the act will take several years to fully implement, a few changes took effect upon passage. Among these include renaming the Downtown Development Board to the Community Investment Board and updating board membership to reflect its new focus on expanding local, regional, and state efforts to build strong communities.

As we continue to collaborate closely with the Regional Planning Commissions and the Natural Resources Board to implement the new framework, we bid farewell to Sabina Haskel and thank her for her service. We also welcome new members to the board.

- Michael Gaughan, Executive Director and Secretary, Vermont Bond Bank
- Adam Grinold, Executive Director, Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation
- Mike Pieciak, Vermont State Treasurer
- Office of Racial Equity – member to be determined

### **Additions or Deletions to the Board Agenda**

There were no additions or deletions to the board agenda.

### **1. Public Comment Period**

Alex Farrell opened the meeting to public comment; there were no comments.

### **2. Consent Agenda Items:**

- May 20, 2024, Draft Minutes
- Village Center Designation Renewals (8):
  - Town of Bakersfield – Bakersfield Village Center
  - Town of Enosburgh – Enosburg Falls Village Center
  - Town of Johnson – Johnson Village Center
  - Town of Newbury – Newbury Village Center and Wells River Village Center
  - Town of Royalton – Royalton Village Center and South Royalton Village Center
  - Town of Waterbury – Waterbury Center Village Center

Michael McDonough motioned to approve the consent agenda items, and Chip Sawyer seconded. All were in favor, none opposed. The motion carried.

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

#### **New Applications - 2**

##### **Town of Starksboro, Starksboro Village Center Application**

The proposed boundary runs along Route 116 and includes the village meeting house and preschool, town office, public library, elementary school, church, post office, food shelf, local businesses, and single and multi-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.

Nancy Boss, Town of Starksboro's Zoning Administrator, shared that flooding damage from several storms has created many challenges for the town recently. As the meeting was held, town leaders were meeting with FEMA and VEM to assess damages.

Charlie Baker motioned to approve Starksboro's village center application and award designation, and Laura Trieschmann seconded. All were in favor, none opposed. The motion carried.

##### **Town of Starksboro, Jerusalem Village Center Application**

The proposed boundary runs along Route 17 and Jerusalem Road and includes the schoolhouse, fire station, corner store, and cemetery. The town worked with staff to define the boundary that meets statutory definition and submitted a map that meets the program's requirements.

Nancy shared that Jerusalem is a quaint village within Starksboro.

Bruce Cheeseman motioned to approve Jerusalem's village center application and award designation, and Chip Sawyer seconded. All were in favor, none opposed. The motion carried.

#### **Boundary Amendment – 1**

##### **Town of Swanton, Swanton Village Center**

The town is requesting a boundary amendment to include 7 additional properties along the southern gateway on Grand Avenue consisting of one community park and 6 residential properties to allow access to the Downtown and Village Center Tax Credits program. The town worked with staff to define the boundary amendment that meets statutory definition and submitted a map that meets the program's requirements.

Heidi Britch-Valenta, Grants Specialist & Project Coordinator, shared that both the Town and Village Administrator support this boundary expansion which will capture properties that can be developed for housing. Local resident, and project champion, Betsy Liley added that you can see the power of the Downtown and Village Center Tax Credit program in Swanton village as many buildings have received prior tax credit funding.

Chip Sawyer motioned to approve Swanton's village center boundary amendment request, and Michael Gaughan seconded. All were in favor, none opposed. The motion carried.

#### **4. Downtown Designation - 1**

##### **Winooski Downtown Designation Renewal**

The City of Winooski received Downtown Designation in 2003, and last renewed in 2016. The City worked with staff on the application to ensure all program requirements are met and to offer any recommendations. The application is complete, no boundary changes proposed, and it meets all the program's requirements.

Elaine Wang, City Manager, shared that the City is in the process of a major capital projects; a parking garage which is currently underway, preparing for the replacement of the Burlington/Winooski Bridge, planning for additional housing, and a hotel. She reported several historic structures, Champlain Mill, Winooski Block, Woolen Mill, and Peking Duck House, have been improved or maintained. Additionally, the City and Downtown Winooski have held a variety of free community events.

Challenges that face the City are low median household incomes and the lowest Grand List in the county despite Form-Based Code and a TIF district.

Charlie Baker motioned to approve Winooski's downtown designation renewal request, and Chip Sawyer seconded. All were in favor, none opposed. The motion carried.

#### **5. Neighborhood Development Area Designation – 1**

##### **Winooski Neighborhood Development Area Renewal**

The City of Winooski received Neighborhood Designation in 2009, which was renewed and expanded in 2016. The City worked with staff on the application to ensure all program requirements are met. The application is complete. No change in boundary is proposed. All requirements are met.

The City shared that the three main corridors, Main Street, East Allen Street, and Malletts Bay Avenue are the areas where development density and intensity is desired. They are seeking to renew the current designation, with no boundary amendments.

Charlie Baker motioned to approve Winooski's neighborhood development area designation renewal request, and Michael Gaughan seconded. All were in favor, none opposed. The motion carried.

#### **6. Downtown Transportation Fund – 1**

##### **Bristol Amendment Request**

The Town of Bristol is requesting an extension and amendment to Bristol's Downtown Transportation Fund grant agreement 07110-DTF-2022-04 for the Basin Street Improvement Project. The current grant terms end April 25, 2025, and the request is for an extension to allow construction to be completed by October 31, 2026. Staff can approve administrative amendments that are within 9 months or less, longer requests must be taken to the board for approval.

Chip Sawyer motioned to approve Bristol's Downtown Transportation Fund grant

amendment request, and Amy Bell seconded. All were in favor, none opposed. The motion carried.

### **7. H.687/Act 181 Overview**

Pete Gill, Executive Director of the Natural Resources Board, Charlie Baker, Executive Director of the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, and Chris Cochran, the Director of the Community Planning and Revitalization Division briefed the board on the changes to the state's planning framework, Act 250, and the state designation programs. Please see the [Act 181 slide deck](#) and [DHCD's legislative summary](#) for additional information.

### **8. Board Policy on Designation Renewals**

Consistent with the provisions in the Act 181, any municipality with a State Designation renewal due prior to July 1, 2024, regardless of the board meeting date the municipality is scheduled for review, will be required to complete the renewal or check in process as outlined in renewal application guidelines prior to the new law taking effect. DHCD staff will prepare applications for consideration by the Community Investment Board for approval. Renewals and check ins for all designations will no longer be required after July 1, 2024.

Amy Bell motioned to approve the staff recommendation that designation renewals and check ins will no longer be needed after July 1, 2024, and Mike Pieciak seconded. All were in favor, none opposed. The motion carried.

### **9. Old Business / New Business**

None

### **10. Adjourn**

Alex Farrell adjourned the meeting at 3:14 p.m.

The next Community Investment Board meeting will be on September 28, 2024.

Respectfully submitted, Jenni Lavoie