

Minutes Vermont Downtown Board 4/23/2018

Calvin Coolidge Conference Room, 6th Floor, National Life Bldg., Montpelier

Members Present (12):

- Katie Buckley (*chair*), designated by the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development
- Michele Boomhower (*vice-chair*), designated by the Secretary of Transportation
- Peter Walke, designated by the Secretary of Natural Resources (until 2pm)
- Michael Desrochers, designated by the Commissioner of Public Safety
- Laura Trieschmann, State Historic Preservation Officer
- Patricia M. Sears, appointed by the Governor, representing the Vermont Natural Resources Council and the Preservation Trust of Vermont (via phone)
- Gabrielle Ciuffreda, designated by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns
- Michael McDonough, appointed by the governor, representing local government (via phone)
- Liz Gamache, appointed by the Governor, representing local government (via phone until 1:37pm)
- Chip Sawyer, designated by the Vermont Planners Association
- Donna Casey, designated by the Chair of the Natural Resources Board
- Tasha Wallis, designated by the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies
- Tom Torti, appointed by the Governor, representing the Vermont Association of Chamber Executives

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

Guests (5): Becky Basch, Town of Reading; Kevin Kaija, Town of Reading; Rob Dewees, Town of Albany; Emily Maclure, Town of Craftsbury; Steve Lotspeich, Town of Waterbury.

Katie Buckley brought the meeting to order at 1:04 pm in the Calvin Coolidge Room, 6th floor of the National Life Building, Montpelier.

Additions or Deletions to Board Agenda

There were no additions or deletions to the Board Agenda.

1. Approval of Minutes from March 26, 2018

Peter Walke made a motion to approve the March 26, 2018 minutes and Michael Desrochers seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Chip Sawyer, Gabrielle Ciuffreda, Liz Gamache, Michael Desrochers, Michael McDonough, Tasha Wallis, Tom Torti, Trish Sears, and Katie Buckley. Donna Casey, Michele Boomhower, and Peter Walke abstained. The motion carried.

2. Public Comment Period

Katie Buckley opened the meeting to public comment: there were no comments.

4. Village Center Designation New – 4 – Richard Amore Albany Village Center

Richard presented the complete application for village center designation for Albany village center. The proposed boundary runs primarily along State Route 14 (Main Street) including

the historical society, the Albany United Methodist Church, Village House Inn, Albany General Store, town hall, library, municipal offices, post office, fire department, saw mill, recreation field, and multifamily and single-family residences. The town and CP+R staff worked together to create the proposed boundary to meet statutory definition and provided a map that met program requirements.

Robert Dewees, with the Town of Albany, described recent planning and revitalization efforts in the Albany village center.

Tasha Wallis made a motion to approve village center designation for Albany village center and Michele Boomhower seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Chip Sawyer, Donna Casey, Gabrielle Cuiffreda, Liz Gamache, Michael Desrochers, Michael McDonough, Michele Boomhower, Peter Walke, Tasha Wallis, Tom Torti, Trish Sears, and Katie Buckley. The motion carried.

East Craftsbury Village Center

Richard presented the complete application for village center designation for East Craftsbury village center. The proposed boundary runs primarily along East Craftsbury Road including Casa Mia – multifamily housing, the parsonage, Presbyterian Church and childcare center, community care center, library, art gallery, several commercial businesses/farms and single-family residences. The town and CP+R staff worked together to create the proposed boundary to meet statutory definition and provided a map that met program requirements.

Emily Maclure, with the Town of Craftsbury, described recent planning and revitalization efforts in the East Craftsbury village center. Board members observed that while rare, including the agricultural properties within the boundary is integral to the village center.

Peter Walke made a motion to approve village center designation for East Craftsbury village center and Chip Sawyer seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Chip Sawyer, Donna Casey, Gabrielle Cuiffreda, Liz Gamache, Michael Desrochers, Michael McDonough, Michele Boomhower, Peter Walke, Tasha Wallis, Tom Torti, Trish Sears, and Katie Buckley. The motion carried.

New Haven Village Center

Richard presented the complete application for village center designation for New Haven village center. The proposed boundary runs primarily along North Street, South Street and Main Street (State Route 17) including the town offices, the elementary school, Memorial Park, the Village Green Market, town green, congregational church, several commercial businesses and single-family residences. The town and CP+R staff worked together to create the proposed boundary to meet statutory definition and provided a map that met program requirements.

Tom Torti made a motion to approve village center designation for New Haven village center and Michele Boomhower seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Chip Sawyer, Donna Casey, Gabrielle Cuiffreda, Michael Desrochers, Michael McDonough, Michele Boomhower, Peter Walke, Tasha Wallis, Tom Torti, Trish Sears, and Katie Buckley. Liz Gamache abstained. The motion carried.

Felchville (Town of Reading) Village Center

Richard presented the complete application for village center designation for Felchville village center. The proposed boundary runs primarily along State Route 106 and Tyson Road including the library, the Hall Art Foundation, historical museum, grange hall, village green, Universalist Church, Reading Hardware, town hall, Watroba's General Store, commercial businesses and multifamily and single-family residences. The town and CP+R staff worked together to create the proposed boundary to meet statutory definition and provided a map

that met program requirements.

Becky Basch and Kevin Kaija, with the Town of Reading, described recent planning and revitalization efforts in the Felchville village center. Board members commented about the inclusion of agricultural properties within the boundary and the adaptive re-use of the buildings that add vitality to the village.

Michele Boomhower made a motion to approve village center designation for Felchville village center and Michael Desrochers seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Chip Sawyer, Donna Casey, Gabrielle Cuiffreda, Michael Desrochers, Michael McDonough, Michele Boomhower, Peter Walke, Tasha Wallis, Tom Torti, Trish Sears, and Katie Buckley. The motion carried.

5. Village Center De-designation– 1 – Richard Amore Rochester Village Center

Rochester’s municipal plan does not currently meet statutory requirements and therefore an application for renewal of village center designation for Rochester village center was not submitted. The town is working to update their municipal plan and intends to reapply for designation later this year. Staff recommends that the Board proceed with de-designation.

Michele Boomhower made a motion to de-designate Rochester village center and Michael Desrochers seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Chip Sawyer, Donna Casey, Gabrielle Cuiffreda, Michael Desrochers, Michael McDonough, Michele Boomhower, Peter Walke, Tasha Wallis, Tom Torti, Trish Sears, and Katie Buckley. The motion carried.

7. Downtown Transportation Fund – 1 – Gary Holloway Amendment Request – Waterbury (DTF-2017-04)

The Town of Waterbury was awarded a Downtown Transportation Fund (DTF) in the amount of \$100,000 in 2017 for wayfinding and streetscape improvements. The project is part of a larger VTrans Main Street Reconstruction project. The DTF agreement included items (e.g. period streetlights, banner arms and flagpole holders) that VTrans has subsequently added to its scope of work. The town requested an amendment to the budget to adjust the number of these items and add bike racks, banners, benches and a watercart (used to water streetscape plants in pots and baskets). Additionally, final design adjustments have delayed the start of construction. The town requested a grant amendment to extend the date of completion from 10/24/19 to 10/24/20.

Tom Torti made a motion to approve the amendment request and Peter Walke seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Chip Sawyer, Donna Casey, Gabrielle Cuiffreda, Michael Desrochers, Michael McDonough, Michele Boomhower, Peter Walke, Tasha Wallis, Tom Torti, Trish Sears, and Katie Buckley. The motion carried.

8. Downtown Transportation Fund Grant Ranking and Awards – Gary Holloway

Michael McDonough recused himself and noted that he did not participate in scoring any of the downtown transportation fund grant applications. He explained this was to avoid any appearance of conflict of interest as he had prepared an application under consideration.

Board members reviewed and individually scored all Downtown Transportation Fund grant applications prior to the meeting. Gary Holloway presented the tallied and ranked scores of the 8 eligible applications requesting a total of \$498,608 for an available \$334,274 in funding. Based on tallied and averaged board scores full funding could be made available to applications from Springfield, Bristol, Rutland, and Vergennes. The remaining \$33,024 could be offered to the next highest scoring application from Wilmington.

Tom Torti made a motion to accept the ranking and to fully fund the Downtown Transportation Fund grants for Springfield, Bristol, Rutland, and Vergennes and to offer remaining funds to Wilmington. Michele Boomhower seconded, and a roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Chip Sawyer, Donna Casey, Gabrielle Cuiffreda, Michael Desrochers, Michele Boomhower, Tasha Wallis, Tom Torti, Trish Sears, and Katie Buckley. The motion carried.

9. Electric Vehicle Charging Station Grant Ranking and Awards – Gary Holloway

Board members reviewed and individually scored all Electric Vehicle Charging Station grant applications prior to the meeting. Gary Holloway presented the tallied and ranked scores of the 6 eligible applications requesting a total of \$73,762 for an available \$20,885 in funding. Based on tallied and averaged board scores full funding could be made available to the application from White River Junction. Gary will notify unfunded applicants about the new electric vehicle charging station grant opportunity foavailable this summer.

Chip Sawyer made a motion to accept the ranking and to fund the Electric Vehicle charging Station grant for White River Junction. Gabrielle Cuiffreda seconded, and a roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Chip Sawyer, Donna Casey, Gabrielle Cuiffreda, Michael Desrochers, Michael McDonough, Michele Boomhower, Tasha Wallis, Tom Torti, Trish Sears, and Katie Buckley. The motion carried.

10. Old Business / New Business

Announcements

Chris Cochran informed board members that the May meeting will be canceled, due to the Memorial Day Holiday.

He shared that the proposed \$250,000 increase in the Downtown and Village Center Tax Incentives passed the Houses and is in the Senate. The increase is funded by a new e-cigarette tax. As proposed, the bill conflicts with the governor's pledge of no additional fees or taxes. We are hopeful this will be resolved before the end of the session, which is expected in mid-May.

The annual Downtown and Historic Preservation conference will be held on June 8, 2018 in Bristol.

11. Adjourn

Tom Torti made a motion to adjourn and Chip Sawyer seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The Downtown Board meeting was adjourned at 2:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Jenni Lavoie