

Downtown Board

Application and Issues Summary

October 24, 2016

This supplement to the agenda is intended to highlight issues, focus the discussion and promote consistent and efficient decisions.

Community Planning and Revitalization (staffing the meeting)

Chris Cochran, Director

Richard Amore, Village Center Program Coordinator

Gary Holloway, Downtown Program Coordinator

Annina Seiler, Grants Management Specialist

Meeting Guests:

City of Barre

- Steve Mackenzie, City Manager
- Janet Shatney, Director of Planning, Permitting and Assessing Services
- Josh Jerome, Executive Director, Barre Partnership

Town of Randolph

- Mel Adams, Town Manager
- Julie Iffland, Executive Director, Randolph Area Community Development Corp.

Village Center Designation

The village center designation program recognizes and encourages local efforts to revitalize Vermont's traditional villages. Once designated, the community receives priority consideration for state grants and other resources. Commercial property owners are eligible for tax credits to support building improvements.

"Village Center means a traditional center of the community, typically comprised of a cohesive core of residential, civic, religious, and commercial buildings, arranged along a main street and intersecting streets. Industrial uses may be found within or immediately adjacent to these centers." The application guidelines document further states "the boundary should be drawn around the center or core of the village including its traditional anchor points such as the post office, commercial buildings, town hall, churches and other public buildings that typically comprise the center of a village."

RENEWAL APPLICATIONS (4 Applications): Please note, the Board's policy is to accept the existing boundaries when they are unchanged.

1. Renewal Application: Jericho Corners Village Center

Summary: No boundary changes proposed. Application is complete and meets the program's requirements.

Recommendation: Approve renewal

2. Renewal Application: Montgomery Village Center

Summary: No boundary changes proposed. Application is complete and meets the program's requirements.

Recommendation: Montgomery Center village center renewal

3. Renewal Application: Montgomery Center Village Center

Summary: No boundary changes proposed. Application is complete and meets the program's requirements.

Recommendation: Approve renewal

4. Renewal Application: Shelburne Village Center

Summary: No boundary changes proposed. Application is complete and meets the program's requirements.

Recommendation: Approve renewal

Downtown Designation

Downtown designation recognizes and supports the commitment of local leaders to revitalize historic downtowns and the strengthen Vermont's communities. The state supports the designated community with variety of benefits, training and tools that work together to increase the health and vitality of the district.

"Downtown" means the traditional central business district of a community that has served as the focus of socio-economic interaction in the community, characterized by a cohesive core of commercial and mixed use buildings, some of which may contain mixed use spaces, often interspersed with civic, religious, residential, and industrial buildings and public spaces, typically arranged along a main street and intersecting side streets that are within walking distance for residents who live within and surrounding the core and that are served by public infrastructure such as sidewalks and public transit. Downtowns are typically larger in scale than village centers and are characterized by a development pattern that is consistent with smart growth principles.

DESIGNATION RENEWAL (2 Applications): Please note, the Board's policy is to accept the existing boundaries when they are unchanged.

1. Designation Renewal: City of Barre

Summary: The application is complete, no boundary changes proposed, and it meets all the program's requirements. The community will provide a 10-minute presentation to the Board summarizing their accomplishments in the last 5 years.

Recommendation: Approve renewal

2. Designation Renewal: Town of Randolph

Summary: A full application was submitted; however, the town plan lacks a map of the district. No boundary changes are proposed. Randolph's town plan was confirmed in 2013 without the inclusion of a map of the downtown district as required by statute. DHCD's interpretation of statute (see [Memo](#)) allows RPCs to approve correction of errors and omissions without triggering a complete town plan update. A number of RPCs have used their flexibility, but Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Planning Commission will not allow Randolph to add its map to their plan unless the town submits a more comprehensive update. The town is bound by its RPC's policy. We believe the town when they say the map omission was a scribes' error. The town is currently working on the larger town plan update that the RPC wants and it will include the map.

For this reason, we recommend Board approval and discussion of this matter. See [staff review](#) for further details.

Recommendation: Discuss map issue and approve renewal

Morristown Renewal Application

At the last meeting we updated the Board on Morristown's decision to leave Lamoille County Planning Commission ([see draft minutes](#)). We hoped the town would send a representative to join the discussion and answer questions on their next steps. They did not, so we sent the town administrator an email informing him of the Board's discussion and the likely consequences of their decision to withdraw from their regional planning commission. We did not receive a timely reply from him so a similar email was sent to the Chair of the Selectboard explaining that with no RPC to confirm their municipal plan, the Board could not renew their downtown designation. The town administrator subsequently sent a response indicating that's it's unlikely they will join another RPC.

[Email to Town Administrator and Response](#)

[Email to Selectboard Chair](#)