

Minutes Vermont Downtown Board 7/27/2020

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
- 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.
- 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
- Ed Bove, alternate 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 (5): Chris Cochran, Jacob Hemmerick, Caitlin Corkins, Richard Amore, and Jenni Lavoie.

Guests (20): Ann Cousins, Bob Stevens, Daniel Hoffman, Deb Fuller, Isaac Wagner, Jan Ohlsson, Julie Basol, Kacie Merchand, Lawrence Miller, Marty Steinhausen, Matt Latham, Meg Staloff, Michael Strait, Morgan Daybell, Nicola Anderson, Peter Paggi, Renny Perry, Robert Griffin, Robert Suter, Samantha Dunn.

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

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

2. Consent Agenda Items:

There were no questions on the following agenda items:

- June 22, 2020 Meeting Minutes

3. Growth Center Designation Review – Jacob Hemmerick

City of St. Albans – 5-Year Review

Jacob reminded Board members that the Growth Center designation remains in effect for 20 years after growth center approval and the Vermont Downtown Board reviews the designation every five years. Staff noted that the submission materials are complete, and the City continues to invest in policies and projects that support compact development in the Growth Center. Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning and Development for the City of St. Albans, presented a review of St. Albans' progress and achievements within the Growth Center. He noted the benefits of having great partnerships, specifically the public-private collaborations which was instrumental in the City's success.

Board members congratulated the City on its incredible transformation, and the tremendous number of walkable units (200+ units) that have been created within the Growth Center.

Tom Torti made a motion that the Board determines that the Growth Center continues to meet the standards for designation in effect at the time the Growth Center was initially designated. Michael Boomhower seconded. Ayes: Billy Coster, Bruce Cheeseman, Greg Boulbol, Laura Trieschmann, Michael Desrochers, Michael McDonough, Michele Boomhower, Ed Bove, Tom Torti, Trish Sears, and Josh Hanford, with Chip Sawyer recusing. The motion carried.

4. Downtown and Village Center Tax Incentives – Caitlin Corkins

Caitlin Corkins presented the tallied and ranked scores for the Downtown and Village Center Tax Credit applications to the Board. Scores were submitted by Board members in advance of the meeting. Applications were ranked from highest to lowest based on the average score.

Based on the scores, available funds allow full funding for the top 26 applications. Staff recommended the next four ranked projects be selected as alternates. Caitlin noted that based on the ranked scores, two Sales Tax Reallocation applications ranked above the cut-off but were above the 30% cap that can be allocated to Sales Tax Reallocation projects in a given funding round. The lower scoring of the two awarded projects, was therefore reduced to meet this cap requirement. Caitlin also informed board members that as recapture funds become available, it is likely all four of the alternates will be able to be funded this year.

Board members were encouraged to see the demand for the program, and that many worthwhile projects are continuing to move forward considering the COVID pandemic's current impact on the economy.

Tom Torti made a motion to award the tax credits and alternates as presented by staff, and Bruce Cheeseman seconded. Ayes: Billy Coster, Bruce Cheeseman, Greg Boulbol, Laura Trieschmann, Michael Desrochers, Michael McDonough, Michele Boomhower, Ed Bove, Tom Torti, Trish Sears, and Josh Hanford, with Chip Sawyer recusing. The motion carried.

7. Adjourn

Tom Torti made a motion to adjourn and Chip Sawyer seconded. Ayes: Billy Coster, Bruce Cheeseman, Chip Sawyer, Greg Boulbol, Laura Trieschmann, Michael Desrochers, Michael McDonough, Michele Boomhower, Ed Bove, Tom Torti, Trish Sears, and Josh Hanford. The motion carried. The Downtown Board meeting was adjourned at 1:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Jenni Lavoie