

## Draft Minutes Vermont Downtown Board 6/24/2019

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

### Members Present (12):

- Josh Hanford (*Acting chair*), designated by the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development
- Jackie Cassino, alternate, designated by the Secretary of Transportation (departed at 3pm)
- Peter Walke, designated by the Secretary of Natural Resources (arrived at 3:10pm)
- Michael Desrochers, designated by the Commissioner of Public Safety (departed at 3pm)
- 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, not available from 2:33pm-3:10pm)
- 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
- Donna Casey, designated by the Chair of the Natural Resources Board
- Tom Kennedy, alternate, designated by the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies (arrived at 1:15pm)
- Tom Torti, appointed by the Governor, representing the Vermont Association of Chamber Executives (departed at 2:45pm)

**Attending Community Planning and Revitalization (CP+R) Team Members (5):** Chris Cochran, Richard Amore, Caitlin Corkins, Jacob Hemmerick, and Jenni Lavoie.

**Guests (15):** John and Jane Spencer, Town of Addison; Dakota Butterfield, Town of Barnet; Alison Lowe, NVDA; Dana Hadley, Town of Berlin; Tom Badowski, Town of Berlin; Zachary Maia, CVRPC; Brian Bontrager, Town of Bridgewater; Alex Weinhagen, Town of Hinesburg; Nancy West, Town of Sheldon; Tina Churchill, Town of Sheldon; Ann Marie Harmon, Town of Waitsfield; Sarah Hadd, Town of Colchester; Robin Jeffers, SD Ireland; Kathi Walker, SD Ireland.

Josh Hanford brought the meeting to order at 1:04 pm in the Calvin Coolidge Room, 6<sup>th</sup> 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 April 22, 2019

David Allaire made a motion to approve the April 22, 2019 minutes, no edits noted, and Tom Torti seconded. The motion carried 9-0, with one abstention.

#### 2. Public Comment Period

Josh Hanford opened the meeting to public comment: there were no comments from the public. Chris Cochran advised board members, due to many leaving early, that the July meeting will be rescheduled to Tuesday, August 6, 2019. He also shared information about a new project called Zoning for Great Neighborhoods that aims to give communities new tools

and resources to increase local housing options. A kick-off meeting is scheduled on July 10 in Montpelier.

### **3. Village Center Designation New – 13 – Richard Amore**

#### **Addison Village**

The proposed boundary runs along Route 22A and includes the town office, town hall, central school, Baptist church and parsonage, general store, small businesses, multifamily and single-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.

John Spencer, Town of Addison, advised board members of revitalization efforts in Addison village including; efforts to renovate the town hall to provide better workspace for the Town Clerk and expanded storage area for records, as well as a village wastewater project designed to serve the civic and commercial buildings in the village center.

Tom Torti made a motion to approve village center designation for Addison village and Peter Walke seconded. The motion carried 11-0.

#### **Barnet Village**

The proposed boundary runs along Route 5, Church Street, and Mill Hill Road and includes the town clerk's office, Ashoka Bahuan, the post office, Barnet Village Church, Old Town Hall, library, local businesses, multifamily, and single-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.

Dakota Butterfield, Town of Barnet, advised that the local Buddhist center largely populates and visits Barnet village center including the post office and former general store. The owner of the closed general store has decided to focus efforts on her store in West Barnet village and the town hopes another proprietor will come along to revive this business.

David Allaire made a motion to approve village center designation for Barnet village and Tom Torti seconded. The motion carried 12-0.

#### **McIndoe Falls Village**

The proposed boundary runs along Route 5 and includes the McIndoe Falls Academy, post office, former Barnet school, Paul's Whistle Stop, small businesses, multifamily and single-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.

Dakota Butterfield advised board members that village center designation for McIndoe Falls largely stems from their efforts to save the Academy building and efforts to renovate the building into municipal offices.

Tom Torti made a motion to approve village center designation for McIndoe Falls village and Chip Sawyer seconded. The motion carried 12-0.

#### **Passumpsic Village**

The proposed boundary runs along Route 5 and Bridge Street and includes the Passumpsic Baptist Church, the post office, old Grange Hall, local businesses, multifamily and single-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.

Dakota Butterfield advised that Passumpsic village is the most populated of all Barnet's villages. Board members inquired on the need for village center designation in this area. Dakota shared that commercial properties in the village could take advantage of the tax

credits, including a riverfront commercial property, a daycare and multi-family housing properties in the village.

Chip Sawyer made a motion to approve village center designation for Passumpsic village and David Allaire seconded. The motion carried 12-0.

### **West Barnet Village**

The proposed boundary runs along West Main Street and includes the West Barnet Quick Stop, Grange Hall, Presbyterian Church, thrift store, fire and rescue department, local businesses, multifamily and single-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.

Dakota Butterfield advised board members that West Barnet village is the most active of all the villages due to the proximity to Harveys Lake with the influx of seasonal and second home visitors. The owner of the West Barnet Quick Stop is expanding the seating area and food services currently available at the store.

Chip Sawyer made a motion to approve village center designation for West Barnet village and Laura Trieschmann seconded. The motion carried 12-0.

### **Berlin Corners**

The proposed boundary runs along Comstock Road and Scott Hill Road, and includes the town offices, a mixed-use building, town park, First Congregational Church, and multifamily and single-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.

Dana Hadley and Tom Badowski, Town of Berlin, advised board members that Berlin is the largest commercial center in central Vermont, with approximately 10-15K people visiting or working in the area daily. The village has recently expanded water infrastructure in the village and would like to protect and enhance the historic village.

David Allaire made a motion to approve village center designation for Berlin village and Chip Sawyer seconded. The motion carried 12-0.

### **Riverton Village**

The proposed boundary runs along Route 12, Crosstown Road, and Ayers Road and includes the Historic School House, town park, community center, church, general store (vacant), and multifamily and single-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.

Tom Badowski advised that the historic village originally developed and thrived due to the proximity to the river. Residents are anxious to receive designation to assist in efforts to bring the village back to its former glory.

Tom Torti made a motion to approve village center designation for Riverton village and Laura Trieschmann seconded. The motion carried 12-0.

### **Bridgewater Village**

The proposed boundary runs along Route 4 and includes the town office, Bridgewater Village School House (Bridgewater Area Community Foundation), Congregational Church, Mill Mall, post office, Olmstead Store, small businesses, multifamily and single-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.

Brian Bontrager, Town of Bridgewater, reported to board members that many of the commercial business within the village could use the financial incentives that come with designation to keep the businesses updated and in good repair. He also advised that due to Act 46, the town has lost their school, but intend to utilize and renovate the building into a daycare, community and senior center.

Thomas Kennedy made a motion to approve village center designation for Bridgewater village and Chip Sawyer seconded. The motion carried 12-0.

### **Bridgewater Corners**

The proposed boundary runs along Route 4 and includes the Bridgewater Store, the Mennonite Church, Grange, post office, Long Trail Brewing Company, two inns, and local businesses, multifamily and single-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.

Board members discussed and inquired about the proposed designation boundary and inclusion of two commercial Inn properties. Richard Amore and Brian Bontrager advised that due to the steep terrain in the area, the map appears deceiving and the parcels in question connect and front Route 4.

David Allaire made a motion to approve village center designation for Bridgewater Corners village and Bruce Cheeseman seconded. The motion carried 12-0.

### **Hinesburg Village**

Hinesburg was previously designated from 2006-2016. The proposed boundary runs along Route 116, Commerce Street, and Mechanicsville Road and includes the town office, fire station, three churches, the community school, police station, numerous businesses, and multifamily and single-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.

Alex Weinhagen, Town of Hinesburg, advised board members that Hinesburg continues to see growth and development. The town is currently undertaking infrastructure improvements to sustain and grow the village center. Alex also advised that the town plans to submit an application for Neighborhood Development Area in the near future. Board members commented that Hinesburg would be a good candidate for Downtown designation, the town agreed while indicating they aren't quite there yet.

Bruce Cheeseman made a motion to approve village center designation for Hinesburg village and Chip Sawyer seconded. The motion carried 11-0.

### **Sheldon Village**

The proposed boundary runs along Bridge Street and Main Street, and includes the town office, library, post office, historical society, Grist Mill Park, LVRT, Methodist Church, Food Shelf and Community Center, Episcopal Church, local businesses, multifamily, and single-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.

Tina Churchill, Town of Sheldon, advised that a daycare owner has recently purchased a historic building in the village with hopes to renovate and expand the daycare. The town would also like to install sidewalks and build a gazebo as a gathering place for residents.

Thomas Kennedy made a motion to approve village center designation for Sheldon village and Chip Sawyer seconded. The motion carried 11-0.

### **Sheldon Springs**

The proposed boundary runs along Route 105 and Mill Street and includes the post office, fire station, elementary school, minimart, St. Anthony's Church, Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail, local businesses, multifamily, and single-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 West, Town of Sheldon, reported that the town is enjoying the recently completed LVRT which connects their two villages. Board members inquired about the paper mill in the village, West Rock, to which Nancy advised is the largest employer in the area.

David Allaire made a motion to approve village center designation for Sheldon Springs village and Laura Trieschmann seconded. The motion carried 11-0.

### **Waitsfield Village**

Waitsfield was previously designated from 2007-2017. The proposed boundary runs along Route 100 and Bridge Street and includes the town offices, the elementary school, the General Waits House, library, church, Masonic Hall, Lovett Park, Valley Players Theater, numerous businesses and restaurants, and multifamily and single-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.

Ann Marie Harmon, Town of Waitsfield, advised board members that the town lost its designation due to an error in the Municipal Plan, the village center wording was inadvertently removed. She also spoke to revitalization efforts in town since Tropical Storm Irene including, the creation of Lovett Park, new sidewalks, and the new town offices.

Chip Sawyer made a motion to approve village center designation for Waitsfield village and Laura Trieschmann seconded. The motion carried 8-0.

## **4. Downtown and Village Center Tax Credit Program – 1 – Caitlin Corkins**

In preparation for the upcoming July round of downtown and village center tax credit and sales tax reallocation applications due July 1, Caitlin walked the board through the review process, and recent updates to the program's scoring and competitive criteria. Board members reviewed sample applications and discussed strategies to ensure consistency in scoring. Board members inquired how to score incomplete applications. Caitlin advised that applications will be reviewed for eligibility and completeness prior to being sent to the board. Scores should reflect an evaluation of the project solely based on the application materials submitted.

## **5. Growth Center 5-Year Check-In – 1 – Jacob Hemmerick**

### **Town of Colchester**

Colchester submitted a complete report for their second, 5-year check-in, on the status of development in their growth center, including maps and tables showing the type and location of growth. The town has made progress on its approval conditions as well as the goals of the growth center designation program. Three initial conditions were included in the approval of the 2009 designation to address bicycle and pedestrian connections, public transit, and density and rural preservation. For the first condition on bicycle and pedestrian connections, the town has worked with VTrans to make improvements such as; wide road shoulders, signalized pedestrian crossings, and shared use paths, bike lanes, and sidewalks. For the second condition on public transit, the town has worked with GMT to establish a bus stop within the growth center at Severance Corners under a three-year contract. The route offers six stops a day connecting to the center to Burlington and Milton, as well as points in Colchester. For the third condition on density and rural preservation, the town has developed and adopted form base code, removing density maximums, requiring multi-story buildings,

and eliminating parking minimums. Additionally, the town continues a partnership with Fire District 2 to ensure adequate water supply and with South Burlington to ensure adequate sewer capacity.

Board members asked about the width of Route 7 (Ethan Allen Highway) and how the proposed design would support pedestrian-friendly design and transportation modes other than cars. Sarah Hadd, Director of Colchester Planning and Zoning said that the town asked VTrans if the road design could be revisited. They said it could not. The town then worked with VTrans to reduce the speed limit near Severance Corners from 50 to 40 MPH. Pedestrian signal crossings will also be installed, as well as shared use paths. Board members also inquired about the gazebo and when the public programming would begin. Ms. Hadd reported that the town had just received title to the green and gazebo on Thursday, June 20, 2019. She mentioned that the town had surveyed Severance Corners residents and business about the types of programming they would enjoy (movie nights was the top request). The Planning and Zoning Office is collaborating with the Recreation Department to include this and other programming in the fall. Lastly, board members asked why the percentage of commercial growth within the growth center was not higher. Ms. Hadd reported that the town, while on target with residential growth, did not see much commercial development in the last five years. She further explained that commercial projects the town permitted during this time frame were not compatible uses within the growth center, such as: a self-storage facility, a gas station, and a waste recycling center. SD Ireland, the owner and developer of Severance Corners, said several service-based businesses are located within the Growth Center. SD Ireland has commercial prospects in the pipeline and they plan to break ground on the first commercial property within the next six months.

Chip Sawyer made a motion to approve staff's recommendation that Colchester's Growth Center continues to meet the standards for designation in effect at the time it was originally designated, and Laura Trieschmann seconded. The motion carried 6-0, Michael McDonough, Thomas Kennedy, and Patricia Sears abstained.

## **6. Old Business / New Business / Announcements**

### **Downtown Conference Reprise**

Chris Cochran thanked board members who attended the conference and thanked Michael McDonough for his 20 years of service to the Downtown Development Board.

### **Placemaking Initiative**

Richard Amore reported that the downtown conference set the stage for getting communities interested in Placemaking and that the Department is looking for ways to advance the state-wide efforts to build placemaking locally. DHCD, along with many partners, are kickstarting a program with creative financing to enhance villages and downtowns with this initiative.

### **Fall Meeting Planned for a Village Center**

Chris shared that a fall meeting of the Downtown Board is being planned for a village center.

## **7. Adjourn**

Chip Sawyer made a motion to adjourn and Laura Trieschmann seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The Downtown Board meeting was adjourned at 4:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Jenni Lavoie