

**Approved Minutes
Vermont Downtown Board
7/25/2016**

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

Members Present (11):

- Lucy Leriche (*chair*), Agency of Commerce and Community Development
- Michele Boomhower (*vice-chair*), Agency of Transportation
- Jen Mojo, Agency of Natural Resources
- Robert Sponable for Michael Desrochers, Department of Public Safety
- Laura Trieschmann, State Historic Preservation Officer
- Katie Buckley, Smart Growth Appointee
- Scott Murphy, Vermont League of Cities and Towns
- Michael McDonough, Gubernatorial Appointee from Bennington
- Liz Gamache, Gubernatorial Appointee from St. Albans
- Michael Munson, Vermont Planners Association
- Diane Snelling, Natural Resources Board (by phone)
- Tasha Wallis, Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies
- Tom Torti, Vermont Association of Chamber Executives

Attending Community Planning and Revitalization (CP+R) Team Members (7): Chris Cochran, Annina Seiler, Richard Amore, Gary Holloway, John Adams, Faith Ingulsrud and Caitlin Corkins.

Guests (20): Joel Cope, Town of Brighton; Meredith Birkett, Village of Johnson; Meghan Rodier, Lamoille County Planning Commission; Seth Jensen, Lamoille County Planning Commission; Walter Pomroy, Village of Johnson; Raymond Coffey, City of Winooski; Peter Wernsdorfer, City of Winooski; Seth Leonard, City of Winooski; Sarah Sears, City of Winooski; Regina Mahony, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission; Mike Miller, City of Montpelier; Kathleen Ramsay, Town of Middlebury; Angela Wendall, Colatine Exit; Dale Williamson, Newsbank; Al Voegele, Northwest Regional Planning Commission; Graham Mink, Lackey's Store; Matt LaFiandra, Edgewater Gallery; Tim Hunt, Edgewater Gallery; Paula Lefebvre, Thrifty Gifts; Erik Hoekstra, Redstone.

Lucy Leriche brought the meeting to order at 1:01 pm in the Calvin Coolidge Room, 6th floor of the National Life Building, Montpelier.

1. Elect Board Chair

Michele Boomhower made a motion to nominate Lucy Leriche as the Board Chair. Jen Moho seconded and a roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jen Mojo, Katie Buckley, Laura Trieschmann, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Michele Boomhower, Robert Sponable, Scott Murphy, Tasha Wallis, Diane Snelling and Lucy Leriche. The motion carries.

2. Additions or Deletions to Board Agenda

There were no additions or deletions to the Board Agenda.

3. Approval of Minutes from June 27, 2016

Michael Munson made a motion to approve the draft June 27, 2016 minutes and Michele Boomhower seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jen Mojo, Katie Buckley, Laura Trieschmann, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Michele Boomhower, Scott Murphy, Diane Snelling and Lucy Leriche. Abstained: Tasha Wallis and Robert Sponable. The motion carried.

4. Public Comment Period

Lucy Leriche opened the meeting to public comment: there were no comments.

5. Village Center Designation – 2 – Richard Amore

Renewal Applications (2)

Island Pond Village Center

The complete application for renewal of village center designation for Island Pond village center, in the Town of Brighton, was presented to the Board. The town requested a boundary amendment to include properties directly across the street from the existing boundary along Railroad Street, Alder Street, Cross Street and Birch Street. In the original designation, the boundary only included one side of the street. The amendment expands the designation consistent with board precedent. The additional properties are a mixture of commercial and residential uses, including several multi-family residences, a pizza restaurant and law office. Staff recommends approval of the application for renewal and boundary amendment for the Island Pond village center. Michael Munson noted that civic and commercial properties in the proposed boundary additions were not identified in the legend of the map. Joel Cope, Brighton Zoning Administrator, identified the properties not included in the legend and provided a brief explanation as to why the community was requesting the amendment.

Michael McDonough made a motion to approve renewal of village center designation and the boundary amendment conditioned on the submission of an updated map to identify the newly added commercial and civic properties in the map legend. Michael Munson seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jen Mojo, Katie Buckley, Laura Trieschmann, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Michele Boomhower, Robert Sponable, Scott Murphy, Tasha Wallis, Diane Snelling and Lucy Leriche. The motion carried.

Johnson Village Center

The complete application for renewal of village center designation for Johnson village center was presented to the Board. The village has requested a boundary amendment to connect the village center to the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT) trailhead on Railroad Street and include additional properties on School Street and Clay Hill Road. The northern boundary amendment on School Street and Clay Hill Road includes the elementary school, a daycare, green space with bandstand, two Vermont Studio Center buildings and residential properties. The proposed southern boundary amendment runs along Railroad Street to include 35 additional parcels, including eight commercial properties (including FairPoint Communications, Johnson Paint and Autobody, a doctor's office, Parker and Stearns and Manchester Lumber), one civic property (Johnson Public Library), and one mixed use

property (Dogs Day grooming and residences). The southern boundary amendment is predominately adding residential uses, including 25 residential parcels.

The town invited staff to tour the proposed boundary amendment and discuss the importance of the LVRT connection. Staff found the northern boundary expansion along School Street and Clay Hill Road was consistent with the statutory definition of a designated village center. While staff recognizes the importance of the LVRT connection, feedback was offered that expansion of the southern boundary to include the Railroad Street and LVRT amendment would not meet the statutory definition due the predominance of residential uses. Staff supported a more modest southern boundary expansion, terminating on Railroad Street at Johnson Public Library.

In addition to the amendment application and staff review, the Board received a supplementary memorandum and an updated designation map from the Lamoille County Planning Commission (LCPC) in support of the southern boundary expansion. This information and the staff response to LCPC, indicating continued concerns over the residential nature of Railroad Street, was sent to the board via email.

Meredith Birkett, Village Manager, Walter Pomroy, Village Trustee and Seth Jensen and Meghan Rodier from LCPC addressed the Board. They maintained that the southern boundary expansion meets the statutory definition, addresses smart growth principles, enables transportation alternatives, revitalizes the community and supports the forest sector. They explained the historic connection between the village core and the railroad. They also stated that the village's goals to improve the quality of the rental housing on Railroad Street supports the goals of the village center designation program.

Scott Murphy made a motion to approve the renewal application and accept the village's boundary amendment request. Michael McDonough seconded the motion. Board discussion ensued. Michael Munson offered a substitute motion to approve the renewal application and accept the staff recommend boundary, adding the northern boundary amendment and terminating the southern boundary amendment on Railroad Street at the Johnson Public Library. Michele Boomhower seconded the motion.

A roll call vote, on the proposed amendment to the original motion, was taken: Ayes: Jen Mojo, Katie Buckley, Laura Trieschmann, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Michele Boomhower, Robert Sponable and Lucy Leriche. Nays: Scott Murphy and Diane Snelling; Tasha Wallis abstained. The motion carried.

A roll call vote, on the amended motion, to approve the renewal application with the staff recommended boundary, was taken. Ayes: Jen Mojo, Katie Buckley, Laura Trieschmann, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Michele Boomhower, Robert Sponable and Lucy Leriche. Nays: Scott Murphy and Diane Snelling; Tasha Wallis abstained. The motion carried.

Michele offered a note of explanation, stating that while there are challenges to adding Railroad Street to the village center designation, the adoption of zoning regulations which

support and strengthen the connection to the village core could support the case for future boundary amendment request.

6. Downtown Designation Renewal Application – 1 – Gary Holloway

City of Winooski

Gary Holloway introduced Seth Leonard, Sarah Sears, Raymond Coffey, and Peter Wernsdorfer from the City of Winooski along with Regina Mahony from Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission. Staff presented the review for the renewal of Downtown Designation. The application is complete, all requirements are met and no boundary changes are proposed. Gary noted that the city continues to demonstrate its commitment to the downtown by increasing financial support for the downtown organization and community development staff. Staff recommends approval of the application for renewal of downtown designation.

Sarah provided the Board with a brief overview of the downtown organization and highlighted rebranding efforts and the success of community events, including French Heritage Day and the Farmer's Market. The Board thanked the guests for their presentation and acknowledged the dramatic transformation in the City of Winooski.

Robert Sponable made a motion to approve renewal of downtown designation for the City of Winooski and Michael Munson seconded. a roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jen Mojo, Katie Buckley, Laura Trieschmann, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Michele Boomhower, Robert Sponable, Scott Murphy, Tasha Wallis, Diane Snelling and Lucy Leriche. The motion carried.

7. Neighborhood Development Area Designation Application – 1 – John Adams

City of Winooski

John presented the complete application for neighborhood development area designation from the City of Winooski. The city was originally awarded Vermont neighborhood designation in 2009 and they are seeking to redesignate and expand the area as a neighborhood development area. The proposed boundary extends beyond the neighborhood planning area (.5 miles for designated downtown) and includes sections of Route 2, Route 14 and Mallets Bay Ave. The area outside the .5-mile planning area buffer is approximately 48.3 acres in size. Approximately 292 acres of the planning area is either undevelopable due to wetlands, the Winooski River, and steep slopes. Staff found the application complete and all requirements have been met. Staff recommends awarding designation.

Tasha Wallis made a motion to approve the Neighborhood Development Area designation for the City of Winooski. Michelle Boomhower seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jen Mojo, Katie Buckley, Laura Trieschmann, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Michele Boomhower, Robert Sponable, Scott Murphy, Tasha Wallis, Diane Snelling and Lucy Leriche. The motion carried.

8. Growth Center Boundary Amendment – 1 – Faith Ingulsrud

City of Montpelier

As required by the Board, the City of Montpelier submitted a revised growth center designation boundary and a letter addressing the corrective action. The proposed boundary

amendment follows the boundaries of the proposed zoning districts and was approved for submission to the Downtown Board by the Montpelier City Council. Staff reviewed the proposal and believes the changes address the Board concerns regarding the size and auto-oriented nature of the original designation. The city submitted a recently completed Economic Development Strategic Plan that offers sufficient evidence that the proposed boundary will be able to accommodate a majority of Montpelier's anticipated growth for the remaining duration of Montpelier's growth center designation. The submission is complete and staff recommends the city accept the corrective action proposed by the city and replace the existing growth center boundary with the recommended boundary. If the proposed zoning regulations are not adopted by the five-year review in 2019, further corrective action may be required. If the city adopts zoning with boundaries different from those shown, the city shall notify the Board immediately upon adoption for further review.

Mike Miller, Planning Director for the City of Montpelier responded to questions from the Board. He commented that the city has the school, water and sewer capacity to support additional growth and that the focus is to keep the city vibrant and to increase housing options. Michael Munson commended the city for their work in addressing Board concerns.

Michael Munson made a motion to accept the corrective action proposed by the city and replace the existing growth center boundary with the recommended boundary. If the proposed zoning regulations are not adopted by the five-year review in 2019, further corrective action may be required. If the city adopts zoning with boundaries different from those shown, the city shall notify the Board immediately upon adoption for further review. Jen Mojo seconded and a roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jen Mojo, Katie Buckley, Laura Trieschmann, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Michele Boomhower, Robert Sponable, Scott Murphy, Tasha Wallis, Diane Snelling and Lucy Leriche. The motion carried.

9. Downtown Transportation Fund Grant Amendment Request – 1 – Gary Holloway

Town of Middlebury

The Town of Middlebury was awarded a \$100,000 Downtown Transportation Fund grant in 2014 for a project to replace two severely deteriorated railway overpass bridges with a railroad tunnel in the downtown. The engineering work for this large and complex project took longer than anticipated and the design was further refined to address concerns about the impact of the replacement of the bridges on the economic vitality of the downtown. The town is requesting an extension of the completion date from October 28, 2016 to May 31, 2018. Staff recommends approval of the amendment extending the completion date to August 31, 2018, rather than the requested May 31, 2018, to allow use of the entire construction season and ample time to complete landscaping.

Kathleen Ramsay, Town Manager, responded to questions regarding the extension request and ongoing community concerns, including stormwater discharge and historic structures.

Michele Boomhower made a motion to amend the grant completion date to August 31, 2018. Michael Munson seconded and a roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jen Mojo, Katie Buckley, Laura Trieschmann, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Michele Boomhower, Robert Sponable, Scott Murphy, Tasha Wallis, Diane Snelling and Lucy Leriche. The motion carried.

10. Tax Credit Applications

Caitlin Corkins presented the Board with the tallied and ranked scores for the Downtown and Village Center Tax Credit and Sales Tax Reallocation applications. Based on the average Board score, 20 applications, ranked from the highest to lowest, could be fully funded and one application could be partially funded. Five additional applications were identified as alternates, should recaptured funds become available. Funding will be offered to these applications in order of highest to lowest average score. Board members commented on the strength of the applications and that it suggests that downtowns and villages are alive and well. It was also observed that the lack of available funding means that many deserving applications could not be funded. Staff reminded members that the scoring and review process would be discussed at the next meeting.

Michael Munson made a motion to approve funding of the applications ranked 1 through 20, to award partial funding to the application ranked 21st, and should recaptured funds become available, to offer funding to the identified alternates. Michele Boomhower seconded and a roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jen Mojo, Katie Buckley, Laura Trieschmann, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Michele Boomhower, Scott Murphy, Tasha Wallis, Diane Snelling and Lucy Leriche. Abstained: Robert Sponable. The motion carried.

11. Old Business/New Business

- Members were reminded that the August meeting has been cancelled. The Board will next meet on September 26, 2016.
- Chris Cochran informed the Board of possible funding for Electric Vehicle Charging Station (EVCS) grants thanks to a legal settlement with Volkswagen over emissions violations. Staff will update the Board as more information about this funding and the expanded EVCS program becomes available.

12. Adjourn

Scott Murphy made a motion to adjourn and Laura Trieschmann seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jen Mojo, Katie Buckley, Laura Trieschmann, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Michele Boomhower, Robert Sponable, Scott Murphy, Tasha Wallis, Diane Snelling and Lucy Leriche. The motion carried and the Downtown Board meeting was adjourned at 3:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Annina Seiler