

**Approved Minutes  
Vermont Downtown Board  
3/28/2016**

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

**Members Present:**

- Noelle MacKay (*chair*), Agency of Commerce and Community Development
- Michele Boomhower (*vice-chair*), Agency of Transportation
- Jen Mojo, Agency of Natural Resources (departed during Old Business/New Business)
- Michael Desrochers, Department of Public Safety
- Laura Trieschmann, State Historic Preservation Officer
- Peg Elmer Hough, Smart Growth Appointee
- Scott Murphy, Vermont League of Cities and Towns
- Michael McDonough, Gubernatorial Appointee from Bennington
- Ron Redmond, Gubernatorial Appointee Representing Downtown Organizations (arrived after approval of the minutes from January 25, 2016)
- Rod Francis for Michael Munson, Vermont Planners Association
- Greg Boulbol for Louis Borie, Natural Resources Board
- Tasha Wallis, Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies
- Tom Torti, Vermont Association of Chamber Executives (by phone) (departed after the approval of the Colchester guidance letter)

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

**Guests:** Sarah Hadd, Director of Planning and Zoning, Town of Colchester; Karen Purinton, Planning Coordinator, Town of Colchester; Tricia Follert, Community Development Coordinator, Town of Morristown.

Chair Noelle MacKay brought the meeting to order at 1:01 pm in the Calvin Coolidge Room, 6<sup>th</sup> floor of the National Life Building, Montpelier.

**1. Additions or Deletions to Board Agenda**

There were no additions or deletions to the Board Agenda.

**2. Approval of Minutes from January 25, 2016**

Peg Elmer Hough made a motion to approve the draft January 25, 2016 minutes and Jen Mojo seconded. Peg Elmer Hough offered a revision to the minutes, requesting that the first and second sentence, paragraph 2, of the new town center guidance discussion, be replaced with the following:

Michael Munson and Peg Elmer Hough began the discussion by disagreeing with the draft guidance, in particular the concept that a New Town Center can serve a particular neighborhood vs. be a center for the municipality as a whole. They interpret statute as requiring significant municipal public buildings, reflecting municipal investment, be located

in the New Town Center and that those building should have a prominent physical presence, including being open to the public used by the public, and “not something that can be blown away in high wind.”

A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jen Mojo, Laura Trieschmann, Michael Desrochers, Michael McDonough, Michele Boomhower, Peg Elmer Hough, Scott Murphy, Tasha Wallis, and Tom Torti. Abstained: Greg Boulbol, Rod Francis, and Noelle MacKay abstained. The motion carried.

### **3. Public Comment Period**

Noelle MacKay opened the meeting to public comment: there were no comments.

### **4. Village Center Designation – 9 – Richard Amore**

#### **New Applications (2)**

##### **Arlington Village Center**

Richard presented the complete application for village center designation for Arlington village center. He described recent revitalization efforts including reconstructed sidewalks across from the Town Hall, the purchase of a private water company, and completion of an updated municipal plan. The application is complete and staff recommends approval of the application for village center designation.

Tom Torti made a motion to approve village center designation for Arlington village center and Michael McDonough seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Greg Boulbol, Jen Mojo, Laura Trieschmann, Michael Desrochers, Michael McDonough, Michele Boomhower, Rod Francis, Ron Redmond, Peg Elmer Hough, Scott Murphy, Tasha Wallis, Tom Torti, and Noelle MacKay. The motion carried.

##### **East Arlington Village Center**

Richard presented the complete application for village center designation for East Arlington village center. He described recent revitalization efforts including the rebuilding of a retaining wall along Fayville Branch and completion of an updated municipal plan. The application is complete and staff recommends approval of the application for village center designation.

Michael McDonough made a motion to approve village center designation for East Arlington village center and Jen Mojo seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Greg Boulbol, Jen Mojo, Laura Trieschmann, Michael Desrochers, Michael McDonough, Michele Boomhower, Rod Francis, Ron Redmond, Peg Elmer Hough, Scott Murphy, Tasha Wallis, Tom Torti, and Noelle MacKay. The motion carried.

#### **Renewal Applications (5)**

##### **Enosburg Falls Village Center**

Richard presented the complete application for renewal of village center designation for Enosburg Falls village center. The designated boundary was not altered and the map was updated to meet program standards. Staff recommends proceeding with approval of the application for renewal of the village center designation for Enosburg Falls.

Peg Elmer Hough made a motion to approve renewal of village center designation for Enosburg Falls village center and Tasha Wallis seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Greg Boulbol, Jen Mojo, Laura Trieschmann, Michael Desrochers, Michael McDonough, Michele Boomhower, Rod Francis, Ron Redmond, Peg Elmer Hough, Scott Murphy, Tasha Wallis, Tom Torti, and Noelle MacKay. The motion carried.

Michael McDonough noted that should the town choose to amend the boundary that the Board, based on more recent practice, would desire to expand the boundary to include properties on both sides of Village Drive. Richard noted that the town has expressed some interest in amending the boundary to include a new bed and breakfast business and that the Board recommendation would be relayed to the community.

### **Hardwick Village Center**

The complete application for renewal of village center designation for Hardwick village center was presented to the Board. The designated boundary was not altered and the map was updated to meet program standards. Staff recommends proceeding with approval of the application for renewal of the village center designation for Hardwick village center. Staff noted that the community is actively working to build the capacity and support needed for a downtown designation.

Peg Elmer Hough made a motion to approve renewal of village center designation for Hardwick village center and Scott Murphy seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Greg Boulbol, Jen Mojo, Laura Trieschmann, Michael Desrochers, Michael McDonough, Michele Boomhower, Rod Francis, Ron Redmond, Peg Elmer Hough, Scott Murphy, Tasha Wallis, Tom Torti, and Noelle MacKay. The motion carried.

### **Putney Village Center**

The complete application for renewal of village center designation for Putney village center was presented to the Board. The designated boundary was not altered and the map was updated to meet program standards. Staff recommends proceeding with approval of the application for renewal of the village center designation for Putney village center.

Peg Elmer Hough made a motion to approve renewal of village center designation for Putney village center and Rod Francis seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Greg Boulbol, Jen Mojo, Laura Trieschmann, Michael Desrochers, Michael McDonough, Michele Boomhower, Rod Francis, Ron Redmond, Peg Elmer Hough, Scott Murphy, Tasha Wallis, Tom Torti, and Noelle MacKay. The motion carried.

### **Royalton Village Center**

The complete application for renewal of village center designation for Royalton village center was presented to the Board. The designated boundary was not altered and the map was updated to meet program standards. Staff recommends proceeding with approval of the application for renewal of the Village Center designation for Royalton.

Jen Mojo made a motion to approve renewal of village center designation for Royalton village center and Michael McDonough seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Greg Boulbol, Jen Mojo, Laura Trieschmann, Michael Desrochers, Michael McDonough, Michele Boomhower, Rod Francis, Ron Redmond, Peg Elmer Hough, Scott Murphy, Tasha Wallis, Tom Torti, and Noelle MacKay. The motion carried.

### **South Royalton Village Center**

The complete application for renewal of village center designation for South Royalton village center was presented to the Board. The designated boundary was not altered and the map was updated to meet program standards. Staff recommends proceeding with approval of the application for renewal of the village center designation for South Royalton.

Tasha Wallis made a motion to approve renewal of village center designation for South Royalton village center and Tom Torti seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Greg Boulbol, Jen Mojo, Laura Trieschmann, Michael Desrochers, Michael McDonough, Michele Boomhower, Rod Francis, Ron Redmond, Peg Elmer Hough, Scott Murphy, Tasha Wallis, Tom Torti, and Noelle MacKay. The motion carried.

### **De-Designations (2)**

#### **West Dover Village Center**

Dover's Town Plan does not currently meet statutory requirements and therefore an application for renewal of village center designation was not submitted. The town is working to update their plan and intends to reapply for designation in the summer of 2016. Staff recommends that the Board proceed with de-designation.

Scott Murphy made a motion to de-designate West Dover village center and Rod Francis seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Greg Boulbol, Jen Mojo, Laura Trieschmann, Michael Desrochers, Michael McDonough, Michele Boomhower, Rod Francis, Ron Redmond, Peg Elmer Hough, Scott Murphy, Tasha Wallis, Tom Torti, and Noelle MacKay. The motion carried.

#### **Peru Village Center**

Peru's Town Plan does not currently meet statutory requirements and therefore an application for renewal of village center designation was not submitted. The town is working to update their plan and intends to reapply for designation in the summer of 2016. Staff recommends that the Board proceed with de-designation.

Rod Francis made a motion to de-designate Peru village center and Michele Boomhower seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Greg Boulbol, Jen Mojo, Laura Trieschmann, Michael Desrochers, Michael McDonough, Michele Boomhower, Rod Francis, Ron Redmond, Peg Elmer Hough, Scott Murphy, Tasha Wallis, Tom Torti, and Noelle MacKay. The motion carried.

### **5. Colchester New Town Center Discussion**

At the November 2015 Board meeting, the town submitted a one-year progress report as required by the renewal approval from December 1, 2014, which included the executed April 2015 lease agreement for a new public information center and information about staffing, hours of operation, and the activities and uses in the building. In response to the one-year progress report the Board expressed ongoing concern regarding the town's ability to meet the requirement for public and civic buildings ([24 V.S.A § 2793b](#)) and requested that department staff draft guidance for the community regarding this requirement. At the January 25, 2016 meeting the Board reviewed and discussed the drafted general guidance and a letter to the Town of Colchester and requested that staff continue to work with the

town to identify a range of options to include in a revised guidance letter which lays out the expectations for the 2019 new town center designation renewal.

Noelle MacKay provided Board members with a brief overview and noted that the community has made significant efforts to address Board concerns and that the intention of today's discussion is to focus on how best to communicate to the community what the Board's expectations will be at the next designation renewal. Michele Boomhower made a motion to accept the letter drafted to the Town of Colchester, outlining the Board's expectations regarding the civic and public buildings requirement and Rod Francis seconded. Michele began the discussion by noting that the town has invested significant resources in providing sewer and water services to this area and is clearly working to accommodate and plan for future growth. Peg Elmer Hough expressed concern regarding the possible misapplication of this interpretation in other municipalities that apply for new town center designation. Additionally, she noted that the original intent of the new town center designation has been whittled down. Other Board members disagreed but acknowledged there were failed communications about this designation over the years. They also recognized the steps Colchester has already taken to address Board concerns. Michael McDonough expressed concern with the town's ability to meet the requirements stated in the letter by the November 2019 renewal date due to the length of time it often takes to construct a civic building.

A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Greg Boulbol, Jen Mojo, Laura Trieschmann, Michael Desrochers, Michael McDonough, Michele Boomhower, Rod Francis, Ron Redmond, Scott Murphy, Tasha Wallis, Tom Torti, and Noelle MacKay. Nays: Peg Elmer Hough. The motion carried.

## **6. Downtown Transportation Fund Grant Sample Scoring – Gary Holloway**

In preparation for the upcoming round of Downtown Transportation Fund grant applications, the Board reviewed and scored a sample application. Members discussed the scoring process and the application guidelines and requirements. Numerous suggestions and points of clarification were offered to improve next year's application guidelines and competitive criteria. For next month's meeting members requested information about the projects funded in the last five years, information about geographic distribution, project readiness, and a clarification of the policy for members scoring applications from their own community.

## **7. Old Business/New Business**

- **Planning Manual:** Noelle announced that the new Planning Manual for Vermont municipalities is complete and includes a module on The Municipal Plan and State Designation Programs. The project included participation from over 300 stakeholders at the state, regional and local levels. Staff is now working with Bolton and several other communities as they use the manual to create more useful and innovative town plans. Noelle gave special thanks to DHCD staff, and in particular John Adams for his work in developing the manual.
- **Bradford Downtown Designation:** Bradford is planning to downgrade their downtown designation, which was due for renewal in February and is currently on 90-day suspension, to a village center designation. The decision was made by the community as they have struggled to build the necessary capacity and financial support to maintain the downtown organization and designation.

- **Morristown Designation:** Noelle updated the Board on issues, which have been covered by local press in recent weeks, regarding Morristown's downtown designation. The town does not currently meet the designation requirement of bylaws demonstrating local planning commitment. Staff outlined the community's plans to address it before the draft renewal application is due in August 2016. Tricia Follert, Community Development Coordinator for the Town of Morristown stated the designation was important to the community and they are committed to taking the steps needed to maintain the designation.
- **9L Guidance:** After many months of work and with substantial input from over 30 internal and external stakeholders, the Natural Resources Board (NRB) officially adopted new Act 250 guidance that aims to minimize auto oriented development. Michele Boomhower requested that staff provide a brief overview of the guidance at a future Board meeting.
- **Downtown Day:** Noelle invited Board members to attend Downtown Day at the State House on April 14<sup>th</sup>. This is an opportunity for downtown organizations, property and business owners and other municipal leaders to meet with local legislative representatives to express their appreciation and highlight recent projects that were made possible because of the program. Testimony is scheduled with the Commerce and Economic Development Committee. Special meetings with the Governor, Lt. Governor, and Speaker of the House are planned as well.

## 8. Adjourn

Michael McDonough made a motion to adjourn and Tasha Wallis seconded. The motion carried and the Downtown Board meeting was adjourned at 3:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Annina Seiler