

Approved Minutes Vermont Downtown Board 10/24/2016

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 (departed during Randolph Downtown Renewal)
- Katie Buckley, Smart Growth Appointee
- Scott Murphy, Vermont League of Cities and Towns (by phone)
- Michael McDonough, Gubernatorial Appointee from Bennington
- Liz Gamache, Gubernatorial Appointee from St. Albans (by phone) (departed during Old Business/New Business)
- Michael Munson, Vermont Planners Association
- Diane Snelling, Natural Resources Board
- Tasha Wallis, Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies
- Tom Torti, Vermont Association of Chamber Executives (by phone) (departed during Randolph Downtown Renewal)

Attending Community Planning and Revitalization (CP+R) Team Members (4): Chris Cochran, Annina Seiler, Richard Amore, and Gary Holloway.

Guests (8): Steve Mackenzie, Barre City Manager; Janet Shatney, Barre City Director of Planning, Permitting and Assessing Services; Josh Jerome, Barre Partnership Executive Director; Eric Vorwald, Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission; Mel Adams, Randolph Town Manager; Julie Iffland, Randolph Area Community Development Corp. Executive Director; Lee Moore, Randolph Area Community Development Corp. Board President; Al Voegelé, Northwest Regional Planning Commission.

Michele Boomhower brought the meeting to order at 1:00 pm in the Calvin Coolidge Room, 6th floor of the National Life Building, Montpelier.

Michele began by thanking Michael Munson for his more than ten years of service to the Downtown Board. He was appointed to the Downtown Board as the Vermont Planners Association representative in 2006 to review growth center designation applications. He helped guide the Board through the maze of complex requirements while maintaining principled standards and asking important questions based on his extensive experience as a planner. In 2013, he played an important role developing recommendations and offering testimony in support of a comprehensive reform of the state designation programs. His term ends this month and Rod Francis, Brattleboro Planning Director, will serve as the Vermont Planners Association representative beginning in November. Michael responded that it has been an honor to serve and was satisfying to see how the Board has evolved in the past ten

years, making principled and thoughtful decisions and progress on important state planning goals.

1. Additions or Deletions to Board Agenda

There were no additions or deletions to the Board Agenda.

2. Approval of Minutes from September 26, 2016

Michael Munson made a motion to approve the draft September 26, 2016 minutes and Tasha Wallis seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jen Mojo, Katie Buckley, Laura Trieschmann, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Tasha Wallis, Liz Gamache, Scott Murphy, Tom Torti and Michele Boomhower. Robert Sponable abstained. The motion carried.

3. Public Comment Period

Michele Boomhower opened the meeting to public comment: there were no comments.

4. Village Center Designation – 4 – Richard Amore

Renewal Applications (4)

Jericho Corners Village Center

The complete application for renewal of village center designation for Jericho Corners 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 Jericho Corners village center.

Michael Munson made a motion to approve renewal of village center designation for Jericho Corners village center and Jen Mojo seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jen Mojo, Katie Buckley, Laura Trieschmann, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Robert Sponable, Tasha Wallis, Liz Gamache, Scott Murphy, Tom Torti and Michele Boomhower. The motion carried.

Montgomery Village Center

The complete application for renewal of village center designation for Montgomery 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 Montgomery village center.

Robert Sponable made a motion to approve renewal of village center designation for Montgomery village center and Katie Buckley seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jen Mojo, Katie Buckley, Laura Trieschmann, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Robert Sponable, Tasha Wallis, Liz Gamache, Scott Murphy, Tom Torti and Michele Boomhower. The motion carried.

Montgomery Center Village Center

The complete application for renewal of village center designation for Montgomery Center 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 Montgomery Center village center.

Jen Mojo made a motion to approve renewal of village center designation for Montgomery Center village center and Tasha Wallis seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jen Mojo, Katie Buckley, Laura Trieschmann, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Robert Sponable, Tasha Wallis, Liz Gamache, Scott Murphy, Tom Torti and Michele Boomhower. The motion carried.

Shelburne Village Center

The complete application for renewal of village center designation for Shelburne 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 Shelburne village center.

Michael Munson made a motion to approve renewal of village center designation for Shelburne village center and Jen Mojo seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jen Mojo, Katie Buckley, Laura Trieschmann, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Robert Sponable, Tasha Wallis, Liz Gamache, Scott Murphy, Tom Torti and Michele Boomhower. The motion carried.

5. Downtown Designation Renewal Application – 2 – Gary Holloway

City of Barre

Gary Holloway introduced Steve Mackenzie, City Manager, Janet Shatney, the Director of Planning, Permitting and Assessing Services, Josh Jerome, the Executive Director of the Barre Partnership, and Eric Vorwald, from the Central Vermont 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 recommended that the city continue to pursue strategies to increase volunteer and board development and that staff build off their current success by marketing downtown Barre and sharing the story of community revitalization to attract new businesses downtown. Staff recommends approval of the application for renewal of downtown designation.

Guests discussed recent successes, including the ‘Big Dig’, Enterprise Alley remediation and redevelopment, Barre City Place, the Cornerstone Restaurant, public art installations and the significant public and private investments that supported downtown Barre’s revitalization. The Board thanked the guests for their presentation and commented on the complete transformation in downtown Barre and how their work serves as a model for other towns across the state.

Robert Sponable made a motion to approve renewal of downtown designation for the City of Barre and Tom Torti seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jen Mojo, Katie Buckley, Laura Trieschmann, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Robert Sponable, Tasha Wallis, Liz Gamache, Scott Murphy, Tom Torti and Michele Boomhower. The motion carried.

Town of Randolph

Gary Holloway introduced Mel Adams, Town Manager, Julie Iffland, Executive Director of the Randolph Area Community Development Corp, and its Board President, Lee Moore. Staff presented the review for the renewal of downtown designation. Gary noted that the town plan lacks a required map of the designated downtown boundary though it does contain required language discussing the goals and benefits of the designation. The map was

mistakenly omitted from the municipal plan adopted in 2013 and approved by the regional planning commission. DHCD's interpretation of statute allows regional planning commissions to approve correction of errors and omissions without requiring a complete update of the municipal plan. Two-Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission's policy does not recognize this flexibility, meaning that to correct the map deficiency the town would be required to complete a more substantial plan update and address flood resiliency. Staff recommends approval of the application for renewal of downtown designation and asks the Board to consider the issue of the map requirement.

Mel Adams and Julie Iffland addressed the Board discussing challenges and successes in downtown Randolph. They mentioned the success of the pilot program with Efficiency Vermont, their recent mini-maker faire, and planning for housing options and supporting again in place. Mel noted the number of tax credit projects, downtown transportation fund grants, and their work to sustain small businesses and a robust community center. Randolph has been designated since 2000 and believes in the value and success of the downtown program. The focus of their planning efforts has been a much-needed revision of the zoning and the town planning process was scheduled for the next two years leading up to the current plans expiration in 2018. Mel noted that in this issue they are bound by their regional planning commission, with whom they have a strong and collaborative working relationship and asked the Board to recognize their hard work, continued commitment to the downtown program and the circumstance they find themselves in.

Board discussion ensued. Michael Munson stated the facts as such, the municipal plan included language discussing the downtown designation; the boundary map had been mistakenly omitted from the adopted version of the plan which was regionally approved; DHCD and other regional planning commissions have recognized the flexibility in statute allowing for the approval of minor corrections to a municipal plan; Two Rivers-Ottawuechee Regional Commission's policy does not allow for such a minor correction; the town does not have the time or capacity currently to address the locally contentious issues of flood resiliency; and the town intends to include the map of the designated boundary in the municipal plan to be adopted before the current plan expires in September 2018.

Given these facts, Michael Munson made a motion to approve the renewal of the downtown designation, with the condition that the town include a map of the designated boundary in the municipal plan to be adopted as soon as possible, but no later than the expiration of the current municipal plan, in September 2018. Tasha Wallis seconded the motion.

Michael McDonough made friendly amendment to the motion to require corrective action, as allowed by statute, rather than conditioning the motion. Michael Munson and Tasha Wallis accepted the friendly amendment to the motion.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion to approve renewal of the downtown designation, requiring corrective action by the town to adopt a municipal plan to include the map of the designated downtown by September 2018. Ayes: Jen Mojo, Katie Buckley, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Robert Sponable, Tasha Wallis, Liz Gamache, Scott Murphy, and Michele Boomhower. The motion carried.

6. Old Business/New Business

- **Housing Report** – Chris noted that ACCD is working a report to the legislature, required by Act 157, reviewing existing programs and offering recommendations to finance infrastructure investments in small towns and improve the quantity and quality of housing in and around state designated areas.
- **Supreme Court Decision** – The Board was made aware of a recent Vermont Supreme Court decision affirming the role of the regional plan in Act 250. The court reversed a lower court decision on the Quechee Highlands development.
- **Morristown Downtown Designation Update** – The Board was provided with copies of emails sent to the Selectboard Chair and Town Manager following last month’s meeting, to notify them that the Board discussed the issue of their Regional Planning Commission (RPC) confirmation, in relation to their upcoming downtown designation renewal application. The town was notified that the issue would be discussed at both the September and October Board meetings, and invited to participate. The Town Manager confirmed the town has no intention to rejoin the Lamoille County Planning Commission nor have they pursued membership with another RPC. The Board cannot legally renew the town’s designation without a RPC to confirm their municipal plan.
- **November Board Meeting:** Staff confirmed that the meeting scheduled for November 28th, the Monday after Thanksgiving, would not conflict with holiday plans and that we would be able to ensure a quorum.

7. Adjourn

Katie Buckley made a motion to adjourn and Jen Mojo seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jen Mojo, Katie Buckley, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Robert Sponable, Tasha Wallis, Scott Murphy, and Michele Boomhower. The motion carried and the Downtown Board meeting was adjourned at 3:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Annina Seiler