

**Approved Minutes  
Vermont Downtown Board  
09/28/2015**

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

**Members Present:**

- Noelle MacKay (*chair*), Agency of Commerce and Community Development
- Joe Segale for Michele Boomhower, Agency of Transportation
- Jen Mojo, Agency of Natural Resources
- Robert Sponable for 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 (by phone), Gubernatorial Appointee Representing Downtown Organizations
- Michael Munson, Vermont Planners Association
- Jon Groveman, Natural Resources Board
- Tasha Wallis, Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies
- Tom Torti (by phone), Vermont Association of Chamber Executives (departed during the Montpelier Growth Center annual check-in)

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

**Guests:** Chip Sawyer, City of St. Albans; Mike Miller, City of Montpelier; Ashley Witzemberger, Montpelier Alive; Robert Tobin (by phone), Town of Danby; Lyn Syz; Montpelier Alive Board Member; Kate McCarthy, Vermont Natural Resources Council; Jeff Young, Northwest Regional Planning Commission.

Chair Noelle MacKay brought the meeting to order at 1:06 pm in the Calvin Coolidge Room, 6<sup>th</sup> floor of the National Life Building, Montpelier.

Noelle began by welcoming new Board member, Tasha Wallis, Executive Director of the Lamoille County Planning Commission. She has replaced Peter Gregory as the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies representative on the Board.

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

There were no additions or deletions to the Board Agenda.

**2. Approval of Minutes from July 27, 2015**

Michael Munson made a motion to approve the draft July 27, 2015 minutes and Tom Torti seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jen Mojo, Laura Trieschmann, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Peg Elmer Hough, Ron Redmond, Scott Murphy, Tom Torti

and Noelle MacKay. The motion carried. Joe Segale, Jon Groveman, Robert Sponable and Tasha Wallis abstained.

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

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

### **4. Village Center Designation Renewal – 5 – Richard Amore**

#### **Danby Village Center**

Richard presented the complete application for renewal of Village Center designation for Danby Village Center. The municipality is requesting an amendment to the designated boundary to include the town office and garage, post office, and school. Staff recommends proceeding with approval of the application for renewal of the Village Center to include the requested boundary amendment. Bob Tobin, of the Danby Planning Commission responded to Board questions about the proposed amendment. Following Board discussion, a recommendation was made to accept the proposed amendment, excluding the residential parcel across the street from the school.

Peg Elmer Hough made a motion to approve renewal of Village Center designation for Danby Village Center and to extend the designation boundary as proposed with the exclusion of the residential parcel across the street from the school. Scott Murphy seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Joe Segale, Jen Mojo, Jon Groveman, Laura Trieschmann, Robert Sponable, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Peg Elmer Hough, Tasha Wallis, Ron Redmond, Scott Murphy, Tom Torti and Noelle MacKay. The motion carried.

#### **Essex Junction Village Center**

Richard presented the complete application for renewal of Village Center designation for Essex Junction 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 Essex Junction Village Center.

Tom Torti made a motion to approve renewal of Village Center designation for Essex Junction Village Center and Michael McDonough seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Joe Segale, Jen Mojo, Jon Groveman, Laura Trieschmann, Robert Sponable, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Peg Elmer Hough, Tasha Wallis, Ron Redmond, Scott Murphy, Tom Torti and Noelle MacKay. The motion carried.

#### **Richford Village Center**

Richard presented the complete application for renewal of Village Center designation for Richford 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 Richford Village Center.

Peg Elmer Hough made a motion to approve renewal of Village Center designation for Richford Village Center and Robert Sponable seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Joe Segale, Jen Mojo, Jon Groveman, Laura Trieschmann, Robert Sponable, Michael

McDonough, Michael Munson, Peg Elmer Hough, Tasha Wallis, Ron Redmond, Scott Murphy, Tom Torti and Noelle MacKay. The motion carried.

### **Riverside/Underhill Flats Village Center**

Richard presented the complete application for renewal of Village Center designation for Riverside/Underhill Village Center. The application was submitted jointly by the municipalities of Jericho and Underhill. 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 Riverside/Underhill Flats Village Center.

Michael McDonough made a motion to approve renewal of Village Center designation for Riverside/Underhill Flats Village Center and Tom Torti seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Joe Segale, Jen Mojo, Jon Groveman, Laura Trieschmann, Robert Sponable, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Peg Elmer Hough, Tasha Wallis, Ron Redmond, Scott Murphy, Tom Torti and Noelle MacKay. The motion carried.

### **Westford Village Center**

Richard presented the complete application for renewal of Village Center designation for Westford 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 Westford Village Center. Joe Segale noted that towns like Westford might consider assuming local control of state roads within their centers to allow them greater flexibility in their planning and design.

Michael Munson made a motion to approve the renewal of Village Center designation for Westford Village Center and Michael McDonough seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Joe Segale, Jen Mojo, Jon Groveman, Laura Trieschmann, Robert Sponable, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Peg Elmer Hough, Tasha Wallis, Ron Redmond, Scott Murphy, Tom Torti and Noelle MacKay. The motion carried.

## **5. Downtown Designation Renewal Application – 1 – Gary Holloway**

### **City of Montpelier**

Gary Holloway introduced Ashley Witzenberger from the Downtown Organization, Montpelier Alive; Mike Miller, the Director of Planning for the City of Montpelier; and Lyn Syz, Montpelier Alive Board member. Gary presented the staff review for the renewal of Downtown Designation. The application is complete and all requirements are met. Staff recommends proceeding with approval of the application for renewal of Downtown designation for the City of Montpelier. Ashley provided the Board with a presentation on community successes, challenges, and future plans. The Board discussed various revitalization and marketing efforts that the City has undertaken, a façade improvement grant program, and the creation of a Downtown Improvement District.

Michael McDonough made a motion to approve renewal of Downtown designation for the City of Montpelier and Peg Elmer Hough seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Joe Segale, Jen Mojo, Jon Groveman, Laura Trieschmann, Robert Sponable, Michael

McDonough, Michael Munson, Peg Elmer Hough, Tasha Wallis, Ron Redmond, Scott Murphy, Tom Torti and Noelle MacKay. The motion carried.

## **6. Growth Center Annual Check-in – 1 – Faith Ingulsrud**

### **City of Montpelier**

Faith Ingulsrud noted that the Board accepted the five year review of Montpelier's Growth Center designation at the September 22, 2014 meeting. However, the acceptance was conditioned on the submission of a one year progress report to include a summary of all zoning revisions and comprehensive plan updates and an implementation timeline. The annual check in was required to address Board concerns regarding the large area of land designated, the inclusion of areas of low density development as well as areas zoned for auto-dependent uses. Mike Miller, the Planning Director for the City of Montpelier presented the Board with a summary of the zoning and municipal plan updates to date. A lengthy Board discussion ensued and members continued to express concern regarding the size of the designated area and the existing zoning that was not consistent with the statute and the goals of the program.

Tasha Wallis made a motion requiring the City of Montpelier to provide, within nine months, a revised boundary to address areas of ongoing concern. Jon Groveman seconded and a roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Joe Segale, Jen Mojo, Jon Groveman, Laura Trieschmann, Robert Sponable, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Peg Elmer Hough, Tasha Wallis, Ron Redmond, Scott Murphy and Noelle MacKay. The motion carried.

## **7. Growth Center Designation Review – 1 – Faith Ingulsrud**

### **City of St. Albans**

Faith 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 the state designation, including the TIF district and priority consideration for state grant programs, were essential to the ongoing revitalization of St. Albans.

Robert Sponable 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 Munson seconded and a roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Joe Segale, Jen Mojo, Jon Groveman, Laura Trieschmann, Robert Sponable, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Peg Elmer Hough, Tasha Wallis, Ron Redmond, Scott Murphy and Noelle MacKay. The motion carried.

## **8. Old Business/New Business**

- It was noted that due to Peter Gregory's resignation, the Board will need a new vice-chair. Interested members were invited to contact Noelle. Nominations and a vote for the new vice-chair will be scheduled at the next Board meeting.
- Noelle noted that at this time there are no planned legislative changes to the Department's designation or incentive programs.
- Noelle shared information with the Board about the Stronger Communities Better Connections (SCBC) grant program, a partnership between the Agency of Transportation and Commerce and Community Development, to strengthen relationship between transportation, land use, and economic development. Noelle noted that the Agency of Natural Resources plans to join the partnership to help state designated communities incorporate clean water into their project planning and infrastructure investments.

## **9. Adjourn**

Noelle MacKay made a motion to adjourn and Tasha Wallis seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Joe Segale, Jen Mojo, Jon Groveman, Laura Trieschmann, Robert Sponable, Michael McDonough, Michael Munson, Peg Elmer Hough, Tasha Wallis, Ron Redmond, Scott Murphy and Noelle MacKay. The motion carried and the Downtown Board meeting was adjourned at 3:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Annina Seiler