



Brattleboro Planning Services

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Brattleboro Planning Commission

June 22, 2020
Meeting Minutes

NOTE: Per the “Stay home – Stay Safe” order issued by governor Scott, this meeting was held with no physical location using GoToMeeting.

Planning Commissioners: Felicity Ratte, Tom Mosakowski, Jessica Gelter, Prudence Mackinney and Kathy Urffer, and Kate Audlin

Absent: Josh Steele

Staff: Sue Fillion and Andrew Graminski

Public: Oscar Heller

A. Meeting called to Order

F. Ratte called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

B. Announcements

S. Fillion made an announcement that the town has set up several parklets (created using Jersey barriers) along one stretch of Main Street. A hand sanitizing station was also set up by a community group in front of the Void. Planning staff have begun to review technical proposals for the Western Avenue Bicycle Scoping study.

C. Public Comments

There were no public comments made.

D. Approve Minutes of May 18 and June 1, 2020 Meetings

K. Uffer made a motion to approve the May 18, 2020 minutes with edits to the text. Motion was seconded by K. Audlin. Minutes were passed. T. Mosakowski made a motion to approve the June 1, 2020 minutes which were seconded by K. Audlin. Minutes were passed.

E. Downtown Plan

B. Saxton of PlaceSense walked commissioners through the StoryMap and what new items have been added since the commission last reviewed the plan. B. Saxton noted that some last-minute editing needs to be done. A few commissioners asked for some clarity when reviewing some of the conceptual concepts for some of the public spaces downtown. During that discussion, B. Saxton pointed out some of the preferred alternative design concepts by the project team. A member of the public made a comment about how the ideas in the plan arose and why some of the concepts look the way they do. S. Fillion responded by saying that the project was undertaken because developing a downtown plan was something stated in the Town Plan and the commission decided to undertake this project for the 2019 year. Many of the design concepts were designed from public outreach and a design charrette that happened in the fall of 2019. A commission asked if some of

the considerations for the strategies were in light of Covid-19. B. Saxton responded by saying some of the strategies in the plan are aimed to help expand outdoor space and the possible expansion of outdoor seating and dining. A commissioner asked if the conceptual designs could include dimensions to help calculate social distancing and how many people could be in a space at a time? B. Saxton said she can calculate those numbers.

A commissioner noted that it seemed that the plan was designed to push most of parking downtown to the transportation center. She responded by asking if that is the goal of the plan and if the plan is trying to reduce surface parking to expand public spaces? B. Saxton said that the language in the plan is not direct at saying that but in essence it is. In order for public space amenities to be created downtown, the parking needs to be directed to the transportation center. Commissioners discussed backing that idea. Most commissioners agreed that in order to open up public spaces downtown, parking will need to be directed to the transportation center. A commissioner noted that it could be tough to get there because there are negative perceptions of the transportation center and many folks actively avoid it. A. Graminski brought up that with time and more people using the transportation center, that perception could change, and people might feel safer. A member of the public had a question about language in the text that mentioned the word "policing" at the Whetstone pathway and thought that should be addressed. B. Saxton responded that the idea was some members of the public wanted more foot patrol rather than heavy policing. S. Fillion said that section should be relooked at and another commissioner responded by saying that maybe policing should be reworded or possibly removed.

B. Saxton said that the plan, after final review and comments by commissioners, will be ready for a final presentation. There are two options, one is a video formation with a conclusion. Another option is using GoToMeeting with a Q/A at the end of the presentation. S. Fillion said that there is a lot of content in the StoryMap, one meeting might not do it justice, maybe it could be broken down into several sections with a Q/A at the end. A member of the public responded and asking when the plan is finished, what is its use in the future and how is it implemented. S. Fillion responded by saying, if the Selectboard adopts it, it becomes something that the town looks to implementing sections over time. A commission responded by saying if some of the ideas in the plan could be considered for next year's budget. S. Fillion said that is a possibility. Next steps for plan include completing the plan by the end of the week (06/26/2020). Once the plan is completed, B. Saxton will send plan out the planning staff which will get plan out to all commissioner who will review it and give S. Fillion comment by June 30. Commission will finalize plan at the July 6, 2020 meeting.

F. Next Meeting

The Planning Commission will meet on July 6, 2020 to finish up the downtown plan and possibly some other agenda items.

G. Adjourn

P. Mackinney made a motion adjourn the meeting, seconded by K. Audlin. Meeting was adjourned at 7:32 PM.