



Brattleboro Planning Services

230 Main Street, Suite 202 • Brattleboro, Vermont 05301
Phone 802-251-8154 • www.brattleboro.org/planning

Brattleboro Planning Commission

Wednesday, December 18, 2019

Meeting Notes

Planning Commissioners: Felicity Ratte, Tom Mosakowski, Josh Steele, and Prudence Mackinney

Excused: Kathy Urffer, Jessica Gelter, and Katharine Manthei Audlin

Staff: Sue Fillion, Planning Director and Andrew Graminski, Planning Technician

Public: Erin Maille O'Keefe

Guest: Brandy Saxton, PlaceSense

A. Meeting called to Order

Chair F. Ratte opened the meeting at 6:04 PM.

B. Announcements

S. Fillion made an announcement that, that the Town has hired its first ever Sustainability Coordinator, Steven Doctson who will start in February.

C. Public Comments

Erin Maille O'Keefe was present to discuss planning efforts in West Brattleboro (see item G).

D. Approve Minutes of November 4, 2019

A motion was made by T. Mosakowski to approved minutes, seconded by P. Mackinney. November 4, 2019 minutes were approved.

E. Neighborhood Development Area Designation

A. Graminski gave a presentation on a state designation program called "Neighborhood Development Area Designation" through the Agency of Commerce and Community Development. This designation is an add designation to a core designation such as a designated downtown or village center which Brattleboro has both. The proposed NDA staff is proposing would be within 0.5 mile of Brattleboro's designated downtown with an extension north on Canal St before Exit 1. Staff plans to submit application for designation in February to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development. Planning Commission approved staff efforts to get Neighborhood Development Designation.

F. Downtown Design Plan

a. Survey Results

A total of 564 survey submissions were collected. Out of all the respondents, the majority were female responders. Major themes distilled from results showed people wanted more greenspace and have concerns over negative activities occurring downtown. Other major results the survey showed is that 1/3 of the respondents do not go to the Whetstone pathway, 27 percent feel unsafe and uncomfortable downtown. Negative perception in this case is important to understand and it's showing that is affecting people's behavior and acidity downtown.



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b. Report Format – Story Map

B. Saxton presented an ArcGIS Online Story Map template which will be the format for the final downtown plan. It's an online format that is responsive to devices and web based. B. Saxton ran through story map with commissioners and what the final product could look like.

B. Saxton asked commissioners what topics and areas of downtown should get extra focus with the remaining budget and time. Commissioners discussed priority areas should be Harmony Lot, High Grove Lot, and Depot St/ River front area. T. Mosakowski wanted the plan to emphasize changes that would benefit pedestrians and users year-round and not just seasonally. J. Steele thought the Harmony Lot had the potential to offer all wants/needs that were expressed by the public through workshops and survey results. P. Mackinny mentioned the future impacts of the new Hinsdale Bridge would open great opportunities down on Depot St and the riverfront area. Public member E. Maille O'Keefe thought the plan should have big emphasis on the programming in public lots.

B. Saxton mentioned that along with the Story Map format for the plan, she will develop a short executive summary with project list and a poster. B. Saxton will meet with Commission again most likely in February.

G. Big Picture Planning Efforts – West Brattleboro

F. Felecity and public member E. Maille O'Keefe were both members of the West Brattleboro Alliance have been working on a project with Melrose Terrace. E. Maille O'Keefe stated that the project would focus attention on land and looking at potential third place for West Brattleboro. It would also center around how to create a "there-there. The project is called Water Ways Through Community Engagement and Creative Placemaking. There are three events planned in June. Point of these events is to understand how the Whetstone waterway moves and this new space should be used in the future. There will be outreach with the community, especially the Westgate and Tri Park neighborhoods.

H. Weather-related backup meetings

If there is bad weather on the day of a regular meeting, there will be a backup date meeting of the first Wednesday following the first Monday of every month.

I. Adjourn

A motion was made by P. Mackinny to adjourn the meeting, T. Mosakowski seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 PM.