

WATERBURY PLANNING COMMISSION
Approved Meeting Minutes
Monday, June 13, 2016

Planning Commission: Becca Washburn, Chair; Ken Belliveau, Mary Koen

Staff: Steve Lotspeich, Community Planner; Patti Spence, Secretary
Bill Shepeluk, Municipal Manager

Attending:

Karen Nevin, Exec. Director, Revitalizing Waterbury, Inc.

Zoe Gordon, Economic Development Director, Revitalizing Waterbury, Inc.

The Chair opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. at the Municipal Offices at 28 N. Main St.

AGENDA REVIEW AND MODIFICATIONS

No changes were made.

COMMENTS FROM THE GENERAL PUBLIC

There were no members of the general public present to comment.

DISCUSSION OF APPLICATION FOR VILLAGE DESIGNATION FOR WATERBURY CENTER VILLAGE

Subsequent to the last meeting Steve Lotspeich reviewed the proposed Village Center area with Richard Amore with the state to discuss expanding the area, as discussed at the May 23, 2016 Planning Commission meeting. There was only one income producing property in the expanded area that would qualify for tax credits. The application needed approval by the Select Board and there wasn't enough time to engage the additional property owners, so the application was submitted with the mapping presented May 23, with no changes at this time. The application is being reviewed by the Downtown Board on June 27th. Steve pointed out that the area and individual properties within the Designated Village Center can be changed at any time by application and an approval process through the state.

DISCUSSION WITH THE MUNICIPAL MANAGER REGARDING OVERSIGHT OF THE WATERBURY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Bill Shepeluk presented the follow summary of the arrangement between Revitalizing Waterbury (RW) and the Town of Waterbury regarding the economic development program and the position of Economic Development Director that is currently held by Zoe Gordon:

A Memorandum of Understanding between RW and the Town regarding funding the Economic Development Director position by the Town was signed in 2015 but needs to be updated and renewed.

After Tropical Storm Irene occurred Waterbury went through the FEMA assisted Long Term Community Recovery (LTCR) planning process. As part of that process 22 projects were

identified. One of those projects was to establish an economic development program and Director position for the Village and Town. The Town was unsuccessful obtaining grant funding for the Economic Development Director position. As a result the Town and Village decided to fund the position through a variety of sources with an 18 month contract with Darren Winham. The Director was to form a Board of Directors and establish for long-term source of funding.

During the first 12 months there were some differences of opinion with those in municipal leadership wanting open sharing of information and the Economic Development Director wanting to maintain confidentiality with the businesses he was pursuing for relocation or expansion in Waterbury.

At the end of the initial 18-month contract the position was cut back to 1/2 time or 20 hours per week. The Director at the time did not renew the contract. Then Waterbury decided not to handle this as a Town contracted position but worked out an agreement with Revitalizing Waterbury (RW) to have the position be under RW with funding still coming from the municipality.

The Town of Waterbury has provided some funding to RW for their other operating expenses through the Town operating budget for a number of years.

Zoe Gordon, the current Economic Development Director, spoke about her position. The position reports and provides bi-monthly updates to the Select Board, Trustees, Municipal Manager, Board of Revitalizing Waterbury and the Waterbury Area Development Committee (WADC). The WADC sets goals and gives overall direction to the economic development program.

Karen Nevin, the Executive Director for RW has been working with RW for only seven months. Revitalizing Waterbury is expanding outside of the downtown area as far as the scope of their planning and marketing. They are also planning on merging with the Waterbury Tourism Council. The overall mission of RW is to promote, preserve and enhance the Waterbury community.

Becca Washburn spoke to the relationship and communication between the Planning Commission and RW. Her goal is to work together on community planning projects and recognize that the importance of planning and zoning needs is shared by the two organizations. Commissioners expressed their dismay regarding when RW stepped in late in the process with the development of the Flood Hazard Regulations with a very different viewpoint than the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission hopes that RW would make any thoughts concerning areas that they work in known to the Planning Commission early on in the process so that they can be discussed and considered.

The Planning Commission suggested the following general goals to help further cooperation with RW:

- Develop work plan processes that can be worked on together, integrated and communicated

- Have communication from RW be part of Steve Lotspeich's reports to the PC. Plan on more regular participation by RW in the PC meetings
- Develop a plan to communicate information between RW and the PC on the upcoming Zoning Regulation rewrite as it progresses

DOWNTOWN DESIGNATION RENEWAL

Subsequent to the May 19th site walk of the downtown area that Steve, RW staff, and Gary Holloway of the state Dept. of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) took, Gary commented that he feels the south end of the traditional downtown area of the Village ends before the NAPA Auto Parts store. South of that point, the Village changes to a more auto and less pedestrian oriented environment. With the consideration of possibly extending the Designated Downtown (DD) to the south along S. Main St. this area will require further review. It is recommended to handle this after the application for renewal of Downtown Designation is submitted by August 1st, rather than applying for the extension in conjunction with the renewal application.

There is also consideration of extending the Designated Downtown in the north end of the Village from the roundabout to Butler Street. There are some businesses and historic structures in this area that could benefit from being part of the Designated Downtown. Possibly adding this area will also need subsequent review and should not be part of the renewal application.

Therefore the area of the Designated Downtown as it exists now will be what is on the renewal application.

Next steps:

1. The DD renewal pre-application is due August 1st.
2. The application needs to be reviewed and approved by the Select Board and Trustees.
3. The PC could make a recommendation to the Select Board and Trustees offering their support.

Motion:

Ken Belliveau moved and Mary Koen seconded the motion that the Planning Commission support and recommend to the Town Select Board and Village Trustees the renewal of the Waterbury's Designated Downtown with the delineation of the area as it currently exists.

DISCUSSION OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENT STUDY FOR THE VILLAGE OF WATERBURY

Steve is working with the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission on natural resource mapping. He will see if steep slopes can be incorporated.

OTHER BUSINESS

Add to the agenda at a future meeting the ruling on siting renewable energy facilities that Governor Shumlin signed into law.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of May 23, 2016 were reviewed.

MOTION:

Mary Koen moved and Ken Belliveau seconded the motion to approve the minutes of May 23, 2016, as amended.

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:19 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Spence
Secretary

