RUTLAND CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

City Hall – 52 Washington St. – Rutland, VT 05701
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6/29/2016

Minutes
June 29, 2016

Present: Dave Coppock (DC), Susan Schreibman (SS), Patrick Griffin (PG) and *Larry Walter (LW).

Also Present: Zoning Administrator Tara Kelley, DPW Commissioner Jeff Wennberg, City Engineer Jim Rotondo, Superintendent Cindi Wight and Alderman Melinda Humphrey.

DC, Acting Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:34 pm.

I. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS – Creek Path management update added.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT – None.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 25, 2016.

PG moved to approve the minutes of May 25, 2016. SS seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. NEW BUSINESS – Complete Streets Preliminary Draft.

Jeff said an internal committee was formed to work on the draft that included Jim, Nate Stansberry, Cindi, Matt Prouty, Mike (school) and Brennan Duffy. The committee looked at plans from other communities including Burlington, all having a different approach. The Rutland draft is an improvement over the Burlington plan, is easy to understand, there is less complexity to the streets and it's easier to navigate. Ideally the plan is best as an electronic document as the maps are very large and difficult to read when reduced for a paper copy.

Jeff continued by explaining that the draft provided for tonight's meeting is not the final draft and is not ready for the public. The committee would like to solicit feedback from the Commission before public release. He asked the Commission to review the draft over the next two weeks and provide input. Other groups that will be asked to review the draft include: Board of Aldermen, RAPAC, and Pine Hill Partnership. Following input from these groups a public meeting will be held at the library or senior center to solicit feedback. The Board of Highway Commissioners will be briefed before adoption of the final draft. All comments received will be provided to the Board of Highway Commissioners.

Jim distributed copies of the preliminary draft and provided copies of the maps for viewing. He preceded to discuss the various sections of plan as follows:

Index/Introduction – includes the BOA directive, Act 34 obligations of municipality;
Road Classifications – 2 tier approach, standard street function based on specific users;
Matrix – includes which Complete Street classifications to consider;
First Tier Classifications –smallest (residential neighborhood), primary purpose (collector), transitional anterior, major thoroughfare, downtown, light industrial/business;
Map – vehicular-based classification of all streets;
Second Tier – pedestrian priority, bike priority and transit priority; and
Complete Street features – 42 features in eight separate categories for all anticipated modes of transportation.

PG asked about the shared responsibility of the State for a major thoroughfare. Jeff said there is no unilateral authority and improvements are negotiated through communication with the State. The plan will make future supplemental funding more competitive but the City could not install traffic lights on major thoroughfare.

PG asked whether "volumes" were considered when classifying streets. Jim said measuring the threshold was subjective and the committee looked at the diversity of ridership and people using other modes of transportation where there is vehicular traffic. Cindi added that the schools provided a range of where children walk to schools.

SS said there are no accurate counters for bikes but pedestrian counters are available. Jim added that information was provided by the schools, recreation department and walking tour maps for pedestrian priority.

Jeff said he expects the public will be connecting the lines for pedestrian and bike priority. He also discussed "wouldn't it be great" scenarios where City easements and corridors controlled by the City could be opportunities for practical bike path connections.

PG asked if a shared-use path was required to be asphalt or concrete. Jeff said both but concrete is more durable. Discussion continued on the cost of repairing City sidewalks vs. annual budget allowance.

*LW arrived.

Jim continued with the sections of the draft plan:

Bike Accommodations – Roadway design, standardizing lane widths, radius intersection, shorten crossings, bulb outs;
Complete Street Features – traffic calming (speed bumps/humps) etc;
Transit Features – items to offer safety to bus riders;

Parking; and
Lighting and Signage.

PG asked if there were limitations on curb-cut widths. Jeff said no but there is a limit on the number of curb cuts. Discussion continued regarding the large expanse of asphalt at the Party Store and limiting the width of curb cuts. Jeff said site plan review could limit curb cuts and narrow egress to add green space.

Jeff updated the Commission on the Gateway Pedestrian Improvements planned for Strongs Avenue. It will be re-bid in November.

Discussion continued regarding traffic calming areas of need in the City and included talk of round-abouts.

LW discussed reducing the speed limit in residential areas to 25mph stating the survival rate is greater for injuries sustained at that rate of speed. Jeff said until there is enforcement he is not convinced reducing the speed is the answer.

Map sets were provided for each Commissioner. Jeff and Jim were thanked for the impressive work done to date on the draft.

DC suggested taking the next two weeks to review the Complete Streets preliminary draft and devote the July 13 meeting to the draft.

V. OLD BUSINESS – Sign Ordinance.

Tara and Melinda were welcomed to the meeting and updated on the status of the Sign Ordinance revision process, as well as, why the zoning by-law revision was tabled. Tara will look into the Municipal Planning Grant application due date and status of the Mayor's matching funds.

SS and PG said they would send Tara the draft sign ordinance and matrix.

LW said he measured the downtown sandwich signs and all but two were smaller than the allowed size. He believes it will be easy to reduce the size in the revised ordinance.

Melinda said there would be hesitation on the Aldermen not to grandfather the existing signs. LW said there should be some limit to the grandfathered signs.

Tara suggested engaging businesses and agencies early and show that the Commission has done its due diligence.

Tara suggested the Commission think about what changes are needed and the goals for the revised zoning bylaws. She said Alan created a list of revisions regarding State Statute changes and perhaps those should be fast-tracked to strengthen the current zoning as opposed to waiting to include implementing long term changes.

Creek Path Management Update – SS is no longer the project manager on the Rutland Creek Path. She provided an update with regard to Segments 4 and 5. A contract is at RRPC regarding the environmental and archeological work necessary due to the revised engineering on Segment 4. VTrans and ANR agree on a proposed solution of narrowing Dorr Drive to remove the Segment 5 path from the floodway. The contractor needs to be told to proceed. Tara volunteered to follow up with the Mayor and DC said he would write a memo from the Planning Commission discussing the potential for lost future grants and repayment of grant funds expended to date if the City does not go to construction. SS will email bullet points to both Tara and DC.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE.

SS moved to receive and file the following correspondence. PG seconded. Motion was approved.

5/27/16 – Murphy, Sullivan & Kronk, De Minimus Application, Verizon Wireless, certificate of public good.

PG moved to receive and file the following correspondence. LW seconded. Motion was approved.

6/23/16 – State of VT Public Service Board, Order Revision pursuant to Act #130 (H.577).

VII. ADJOURN.

SS moved to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting ended at 7:48 pm. The next meeting will be held July 13.

For the Commission
Barbara Spaulding, Recording Secretary