



RUTLAND CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

City Hall – 52 Washington St. – Rutland, VT 05701
Mailing Address: P. O. Box 969 – Rutland, VT 05702
Phone: 802-773-1800

Minutes February 28, 2018

Present: Susan Schreibman (SS), Alvin Figiel (AF), Dave Coppock (DC), Pat Griffin (PG) and Larry Walter (LW).

Others present: Tara Kelly (TK), Alderman Rebecca Mattis (RM)

SS, Chair, called the meet to order at 5:32 pm

The Commission's normal clerk, Barbara Spaulding, could not attend this evening. Tara Kelly is taking the minutes in her place.

- I. **ADDITIONS/DELETIONS** – Request from RRA to sign resolution pertaining to the City's application for a Downtown Transportation Fund grant.
- II. **PUBLIC COMMENT** – None.
- III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 10, 2018.**
DC moved and LW seconded to approve the minutes. Accepted as presented.
- IV. **NEW BUSINESS**

SS read aloud a memo from Brennan Duffy of the Rutland Redevelopment Authority which informed the Planning Commission of the intention to seek a grant through the Downtown Transportation Fund to continue to work on gateway improvements in the downtown. According to the memo, the proposed project would include designing and constructing two new enhanced pedestrian crossings similar to those installed on Strongs Avenue and Merchants Row. It would also include way-finding and promotional signage along West Street and Strongs Avenue crossing to promote pedestrian safety and commercial activity.

DC proposed the Planning Commission only sign the resolution if the RRA included a commitment to include within the scope of the grant that the City will reduce the speed limit in downtown to 25 MPH and install appropriate signage. SS echoed DC's proposed action as it is an important step and it would strengthen the grant application.

Discussion ensued about whether or not making this a condition of signing the resolution was the right way to pursue the issue of speed limit reduction. SS noted that a study had been conducted which supports the speed limit reduction, but it has not been implemented. All

members of the Planning Commission agreed that a reduction in the speed limit is the goal. They also agreed that they support the enhanced pedestrian crossings.

TK suggested the Planning Commission should carefully consider whether or not they want to risk holding up the grant application since a referral to the Traffic Safety Committee would be a more appropriate way to consider the speed limit reduction. AF and PG expressed concern that not signing the resolution would hold up potential funding for something they deem as positive.

Alderman Mattis suggested the Planning Commission could choose to sign the resolution but submit a memo regarding the desire to lower the downtown speed limit. She offered to make a motion at the Board meeting to refer the issue regarding the speed reduction to Committee for further consideration and action.

After some additional discussion, TK offered the following language for consideration:

The Planning Commission supports the grant application and requests that the scope be amended to include that the City will pursue a reduction of the speed limit in downtown to 25 MPH and use grant funds to purchase and install the needed speed limit signs.

DC made a motion to sign the resolution and include a memo addressed directly to the Board of Aldermen that conveys the wording above. LW seconded. Motion passed unanimously. TK will draft a memo for SS to review and approve in time to be included in the Board of Aldermen packet for their meeting on Monday March 5, 2018.

V. OLD BUSINESS

Sign Ordinance

SS let the Commission members know that she has arranged to have the draft Sign Ordinance presentation made at the noontime March 28th board meeting of the Rutland Region Chamber of Commerce. TK was asked to make the presentation.

TK asked the Commission to take another look at the freestanding sign sizes proposed in the draft ordinance. She acknowledged that though she has asked this question before, she remains unconvinced that the dramatic reduction in sizes will gain support and could lead to strong opposition of the ordinance. The Commission members reinforced they are certain that the sizes are realistic and supportable. They acknowledged that during the adoption process, things might shift as the Board of Aldermen begins working with the draft.

After the RRCC board meeting, the Commission will request that the draft be referred to the Community and Economic Development Committee of the Board prior to going to the Ordinance Committee.

Zoning Update

TK shared with the members a concept for creating a “Neighborhood Commercial Node” overlay within the new Zoning Ordinance. The concept is to acknowledge the existence of small retail uses that are embedded within zoning districts – and make them legal uses (within parameters that keep the use at a similar intensity of operations) versus making them into non-conforming uses (which can have the effect of limiting investment for the future).

The members reviewed maps that highlighted existing situations and provided the following guidance:

- Commercial nodes should be established for the following:
 - Crescent and Grove (Pet Cage and new pet grooming business)
 - Bellomo’s, Beer King, and similar small convenience stores
- Examine zoning along Grove St from edge of Downtown Business District northerly toward Crescent St. Should this zone be changed?
- Examine Zoning along east side of Stratton Rd toward Jackson. Should this be changed in order to acknowledge changes and plan for the future?

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

The following communication was received and placed on file:

- Notice of a filing related to WWTF Permit #3-1285 from the State of VT Office of General Counsel.

VII. ADJOURN - The next meeting of the Planning Commission will be on March 14, 2018. Meeting was adjourned at 7:07 PM