

TOWN OF HIGHGATE
Village Core Master Plan Mtg.
August 25, 2020 @ 6:00pm
DRAFT MINUTES

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Present were:

In person – Steve LaFar; Clarence Miller; Mary Laroche; Sue Cota; Evangeline (Lene) LaRocque; Virginia Holiman,

Via Zoom – Luc Dupuis, Ken Thompson, Rebecca Howrigan

CALL TO ORDER- Steve LaFar called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Motion by Clarence Miller to accept the minutes from July 28 as written. The motion was seconded by Sue Cota– **APPROVED.**

UPDATE ON WASTEWATER STUDY & SUPPORT SERVICES –Both Consultants, Otter Creek and NRPC were not scheduled to attend this meeting. Both Consultants intend to present a 90% draft in September if the test pits can be completed in time. Heidi shared an update from them. There is a budget line item in the Otter Creek contract for digging test pits so we can hire assistance. Greta has executed a contract with UVM Archaeological to perform a desk review on both properties for compliance with state requirements. This review will let us know if further assessment is needed or if the digging can proceed without it. Steve LaFar has spoken with Roger Wright, owner of the land on Lamkin Street that was a potential site and he is fine with the testing. He will be contacted when we know when the digging can begin. Steve had also spoken with Charlie Nye about access to the Pine Forest (aka Griswold Property). It appears the only municipal access is on the eastern side of Mill Hill Road in very steep terrain. Another access will be sought. The deeds and map of the property were available for review.

HISTORICAL ASSESSMENTS- – Arnold & Scangas had provided partially complete assessments for the Stinehour Hotel and the library. The Committee reviewed the but could not extract any valuable opinions from the material because they were lacking estimates and photos. The issue was tabled until the next meeting.

OTHER GRANT UPDATES-

The Municipal Planning Grant (MPG) that was previously discussed for planning funds for design will not be used by the VCMP. Instead Heidi suggested the VCDP Public Facilities Planning Grant will be utilized with a higher maximum amount and the staff and volunteers hours can be used as match. The Committee agreed with this plan and a \$30,000 amount was discussed with a \$7,500 match required. Rebecca and Virginia, as Library Trustees, were asked to the meeting to seek their involvement in the completion of the project which would focus on the design of the new library on the site as well as the commercial piece. They agreed that the Library Trustees would participate and asked if they should have a member or two appointed to the committee. This will be submitted in February .

The MPG will be used to augment the USDA RD Rural Business Development Planning Grant to explore Economic Development Strategies with the Planning Commission and DRB because that grant was only partially funded. These funds will hire a consultant to look at impact fees, tax increment financing districts, growth districts. The VCMP will have to be involved in this process

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to ensure appropriate consideration of the efficient and sustainable development of the Village Core. The USDA RD grant will be utilized as the required match for the MPG.

ANR Planning Funds- The Committee will also be applying for the design funding from ANR will loan forgiveness as agreed at the July Meeting.

RISE VT Grant- We are able to hold onto the \$1,500.00 from RiseVT for a community celebration which is not likely to happen in 2020. A Farmer's Market similar to the one in St. Albans Bay was discussed. No decision was made.

OLD BUSINESS- Lene brought up the issue of unauthorized activity at the VCMP Property. The State Police were called one night for concerns of illegal activity. She had brought the issue to the Selectboard at the August 20 mtg. The Selectboard agreed to ask the Public Works Department to attempt to secure the building. Lene asked to be present when that happened.

A draft First-Right-of- Refusal for the driveway on the property was provided. This had been requested by the Selectboard following discussion with abutting land owners, Sheryl and Ron Wilkins, Paws for Thought Vet Clinic. They had requested a Boundary Line Adjustment and the Committee was not comfortable making decision about the land until a final development plan and interested business were determined. The Committee discussed the value of the business for the town and their desire to protect and support this business, but they were not comfortable making any decisions on the property until a much later date. They also agreed that it was ultimately a voter decision and they felt it was premature to put anything in front of the voters until they had a comprehensive plan for the property.

MOTION Clarence Miller made a motion that the VCMP decline to take any action on this issue until the VCDMP have had more time to complete the final design stage of the property and that they recommend that Selectboard also decline to take action at this time. . Steve LaFar seconded the motion.

NEXT MEETING DATE- a tentative date of September 15th was discussed at the July meeting but it is unlikely the test pits will be complete by that time so a later date will be determined after the test pits are complete.

ADJOURNMENT – Motion by Mary Laroche to adjourn the meeting @ 7:18pm. The motion was seconded by Lene Larocquee – **APPROVED**.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

Heidi Britch-Valenta

Date

Approved by:

Steve LaFar – Chair, VCMP

Date