

PLANNING COMMISSION

PRELIMINARY MINUTES

February 16, 2021

**6:00 PM
Zoom Meeting**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87387936899?pwd=eG5DTUFENjd3Tyt0T2ZPdWc3bW9zQT09>

Meeting ID: 873 8793 6899

Passcode: 583569

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kxN8HhoKf>

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Alan Couch, Chairman
Terry Carter

Ryan Silvestri
Ted Stryhas

Phoebe Tucker

STAFF PRESENT:

Scott Murphy

OTHERS PRESENT:

Eric Alden
Alyssa Johnson

Jenna Koloski
Jason Rasmussen

Rachel Scudder
Eric Chattergee –OV-TV

1. CALL TO ORDER – ELECTRONIC MEETING GUIDELINES

- A. Alan Couch called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. He advised that the Electronic Meeting Guidelines, consistent with Governor Scott’s Executive Order of 01-20 and explained at the Planning Commission meeting on May 19, 2020 are still in effect. Members of public bodies are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely.

2. ROLL CALL

- A. All members present.

3. CONSIDERATION OF ANY CHANGES, ADDITIONS OR REMOVALS TO THE AGENDA

- A. None were needed

4. APPROVE MINUTES

- A. Alan Couch advised that the minutes to be approved are from the meeting of January 26, 2021.
- B. Ryan Silvestri noted that on page 2, item 6A should be changed to read “the letter drafted by

- C. Ryan Silvestri that would be sent to the Select Board discussing the Rental Registry.”
MOTION by Terry Carter and seconded by Ryan Silvestri to approve the minutes January 26, 2021 with change noted. Motion passed unanimously.

5. **COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS**

- A. There were none.

6. **MUNICIPAL PLANNING GRANT WORKING WORKSHOP – JASON RASMUSSEN**

- A. Alan Couch referred welcomed Jason Rasmussen and Rebecca Scudder.
B. Jason Rasmussen referred to the new Ludlow Village Center Master Plan draft. He said he would like to go over the draft and possibly set a preliminary schedule. He explained that the Project Over View was taken from the grant application:

“Project Overview: Develop a master plan for the designated Village Center in Ludlow. The purpose of the master plan is to implement the Municipal Plan by identifying physical improvements that will help the community to further village revitalization efforts. In addition, the master plan will help to identify physical improvements and land use bylaw amendments that will help with pandemic economic recovery efforts.”

Jason Rasmussen said there are 4 Project Objectives:

- i. Need for infrastructure and public realm investments that contribute toward improving the sense of place, encourage private sector reinvestment and further village revitalization goals
- ii. COVID-19 pandemic recovery: make some emergency measures to help local businesses during the pandemic permanent and identify additional long-term measures taken to help economic recovery
- iii. Engage the community to inform and get buy-in for a village center master plan
- iv. Develop an implementation plan for priority master plan elements

Jason Rasmussen said there are also 4 Project Components:

- i. Inventory of Infrastructure: develop a map/inventory of existing conditions and evaluate existing zoning provisions; summarize in a memo
- ii. Recommendations for Revitalization and Long-Term Economic Recovery: identify lasting, priority improvements to the physical environment in the Village (such as sidewalks, crosswalks, streetscape, parking, signage, outdoor seating, outdoor vending and pick-up windows.) Also, identify regulatory changes to support long-term economic recovery (such as relaxed parking standards, pick-up windows, outside dining, and adaptive reuse of existing buildings.)
- iii. Implementation Strategies: identify and prioritize physical improvements, including planning-level cost estimates and prioritizing regulatory amendments and identify a schedule for preparing zoning amendments.
- iv. Public Outreach: conduct 3 public outreach efforts (business community, DRB, general public, possibly host a table at a public community event.). Workshops with the Planning Commission and Village Trustees. Who else should be involved – Select Board, Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, SRDC, Ludlow Economic Development Corp.?

He suggested meeting with the Trustees and Select Boards in March, April or May.
Would this be a virtual meeting?

- C. Terry Carter suggested inviting them to the Planning Commission's March meeting.
- D. Alan Couch said he agrees. He said that ZOOM meetings are more accessible to the public. They will need to get the word out. He said he will talk to Rose Goings in the morning.
- E. Jason Rasmussen said he had been thinking May, but it will be good to start getting input earlier.
- F. Alan Couch said they will be able to get a feel for what the other boards think and get their comments and suggestions before we start going in a direction the other boards don't agree with.
- G. Jason Rasmussen said that later on, they will need to do more public outreach, maybe in the late spring or summer.
- H. Ryan Silvestri said there is a weekly Farmers' Market held on the Okemo Mountain School front lawn. He suggested setting up a table there.
- I. Terry Carter said it is on Fridays from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m., starting Memorial Day Weekend.
- J. Jason Rasmussen said that would be a great place to start. He suggested that they have a map laid out with sticky-notes for comments or suggestions. He said he will talk to Rose Goings and Scott Murphy about the best time to talk to the Select Board and Trustees.
- K. Alan Couch said to invite them to the March meeting.
- L. Jason Rasmussen suggested Front Porch Forum.
- M. Alan Couch said absolutely.
- N. Jason Rasmussen said he will work up a flyer to start off. He said they could also do this again toward the end of the process, after they have set up their plans and have another public meeting.
- O. Alan Couch said that the Chamber and Rotary are good places to go. Possibly someone could be a guest at a Rotary meeting.
- P. Jason Rasmussen said he would revise the draft schedule and the board can discuss it at their next meeting. He said that the grant work must be completed by May, 2022. It will show existing conditions, improvements wanted and how to implement them.
- Q. Phoebe Tucker suggested environmental components and bi-lingual signage – possibly Spanish, French and symbols.
- R. Jason Rasmussen said they are already working on signage and will look at it again. He asked what she meant by environmental components – possibly the river and parks.
- S. Phoebe Tucker said green along the roadway – rain gardens.
- T. Jason Rasmussen said that would be a challenge with Route 103. VRANS is concerned about traffic and mobility.
- U. Alan Couch said he would email his suggestions to Jason Rasmussen.
- V. Terry Carter suggested considering opening river access.
- W. Alan Couch said it is great to come up with a plan and feasibility, but funding will be an issue to implement. We will have to consider the budget and grants. We will need to have answers to questions and prioritize our plan.
- X. Jason Rasmussen said he is mindful of this and they will need to be realistic. We don't just want a plan; we want this to be something that gets done.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

- A. Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD)
 - i. Jenna Koloski advised that the VCRD is a non-profit, independent organization that

receives funding from various sources. They are authorized by the Federal Farm Bill to have a unique board structure that includes government cabinet members, business members, community members and members from the 3 branches of state government. They work to empower communities to access funding by working with the communities on important issues. One of the programs that they offer is the Community Visit Program. Our Community Visit program is a way for towns to engage and bring together their residents, set common goals and directions in a neutral and facilitated structure, and access resources that will help them take action on those goals. Provided at no cost to communities, the Community Visit program - now offered using virtual meetings and digital tools - gets citizens engaged in working for their communities and connects them to the resources they need to be successful. This is not a list for the Planning Commission or Select Board. The program offers a 3 month service to set up big public meetings. One month before we start the program, we will meet with the town to set up a steering group meeting to look into what the community members want and brain storm. They will reach out to residents in 5 different ways. There will be summits on the future of Ludlow in different locations throughout the town. There will be a community dinner. They will collect ideas from residents. They will then cluster the ideas and bring them back to a community meeting to vote on the ideas and ask people to join task forces to start action planning. They will see what resources are available to help fund the projects. They will then set up a final action report with committees that have been formed and roster of members. They will only work in towns where they have been invited to work. They must receive a Letter of Invitation from the Select Board. The program costs the VCRD about \$35,000 and is at no cost to the town. They will ask the town to do a mailing to residents, inviting them to events. The town will be responsible to put on a dinner for the first event. Due to COVID, meeting now is not possible and they have adopted their program to be Virtual. She said that many communities have put the program on hold until meeting in person is viable. They do have some openings available for this summer.

- ii. Alan Couch said that the group does provide a useful service and resources that we should use. He would love to figure out how to mesh this program into our grant.
- iii. Terry Carter said that this may help up fund the goals of the grant.
- iv. Jenna Koloski said she would be open to that when they are available. They will not be redundant. She said that they also offer a shorter, abbreviated process. The town will have identified project focuses.
- v. Phoebe Tucker said that with the full or consolidated process available, the town gets to decide where to go. We still need to get a letter from the Select Board.
- vi. Jenna Koloski said she would like to meet with the Select Board to get their input. She said that our board of advisors reviews the goals. She said that there is a long waiting list after in-person meetings resume – about 1 ½ years. If Ludlow wants and can get the letter now, we have the ability to work hybrid programs this summer or fully virtual ones.
- vii. Alan Couch said it is a wonderful resource and he would like to take advantage

of it and work with them.

- viii. Jenna Koloski said she will send hand-outs to Phoebe Tucker, along with reports from towns they have worked with.
- ix. Terry Carter said we did similar public meetings when we were in the process of revising the town plan. We did pizza parties and got good participation from the residents.
- x. Jenna Koloski said the Community Visit Program is a way to take the town plan and move it to concrete action. She said that sometimes towns work the Community Visit programs goals into the town plan.

B. Regional Planning Commission

- i. Terry Carter said the Regional Planning Commission sent board members a tool kit for helping feed people during the pandemic. It included setting up a food shelf and meals-on-wheels, both of which Ludlow has. There is also information about library grants for equipment such as kayaks or snowshoes. She said she contacted Jill Tofferi and while the library does not have a lot of storage room, they could use snowshoes. She gave Jill Tofferi the grant information.

8. **ADJOURN**

- A. **MOTION by Ryan Silvestri and seconded by Terry Carter to adjourn this meeting. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisha Klaiber

Alan Couch, Chairman

Ted Stryhas

Terry Carter

Phoebe Tucker

Ryan Silvestri