

WASHINGTON PLANNING BOARD
Town Center Vision Subcommittee – Working meeting Minutes

July 25, 2018

Members present: Lolly Gilbert, Jim Crandall, Roxy Otterson, Jean Kluk, Andrew Hatch, Ron Jager, Kevin Provencher, Bert Bodnar and Nan Schwartz.

Visitors: Cherri Briggs-Chausse, Georgann Casey

1.0 **Call to Order** - The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Lolly Gilbert at 8:00 AM, in the Town Hall.

2.0 **Minutes** – Gilbert asked for any changes to the minutes, Kluk made a motion to approve the minutes, Crandall seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

3.0 **Old Business** – Gilbert reported that Ed Thayer came in after our meeting and spoke with several members who were still at Town Hall. We discussed the draft plan drawing for the proposed driveway entering to the north of the church. He said the estimate to pave the driveway was \$20K. Otterson asked if the parking area would also be paved and those in attendance didn't think that was the case. It would be a 20-foot wide drive (wide enough for 2 emergency vehicles to pass each other. It was argued that this doesn't provide access to the Town Hall from the rear parking lot. Otterson feels there needs to be signage. Gilbert said that Thayer did a study of Faxon Hill Road before the new roadwork was started and he sent the numbers to Kluk and others. We need to summarize the report. Kluk said that there is data we don't have so she reached out to Ryan Murdough and Steve Marshall. Marshall said that Murdough could borrow equipment from Sunapee to do speed and numbers of cars. Murdough is going to do counts at both ends of town and speed from the north on 31.

Gilbert noted that the Select Board postponed the public hearing on the draft Public Health Nuisance regulations. Schwartz commented that they felt that with the feedback they were receiving, they would work on it some more before bringing it back to the public for comment. Gilbert wanted Schwartz to clarify in the minutes that this issue is wholly separate from our visioning committee.

Gilbert asked for the reports from members -

Otterson spoke about the Moose Plate Grants and said they were given through NH Department of Cultural Resources, the NH Conservation Committee and LCHIP for natural, cultural and historic resources. Hatch mentioned that the Moose Plate Grant funded an educational program through the NH LAKES association. Kluk said they are rolling grants for smaller amounts (\$10K). Jager said that the town has applied for Moose Plate grants before, specifically for the archives and book restoration. She also spoke about the NH Charitable Foundation, which connects donors to nonprofits for certain kinds of projects (in the areas of health and well-being, civic engagement, education, economic development, environmental protection and arts and culture). She spoke about Heart and Soul, which is about giving a voice to everyone in the community. They are part of the Orton Family Foundations out of Vermont. She thought it would cost \$40 to 50K for full implementation and she felt was not relevant for us. There are good information and tools on their website.

Provencher spoke about the colleges and universities he contacted. He said we can rule Antioch out as they have self-designed majors and there probably wouldn't be a match with us. NEC is not a fit either. He is following up with Dartmouth and Harvard. He felt that Keene State is a good fit because they have an architectural undergrad program that includes (urban) planning. They focus on experiential learning and problem solving so he will pursue this further. He said in doing research he found that Cornell is number 1 in urban planning and Westfield State in MA is also very good, he will look into both schools.

Hatch said he had a useful conversation with CDFA – his contact there was Meena Gyawali - Director of Community Development - mgyawali@nhcdfa.org - 717-9112, they offer an annual grant round of \$10k for market analysis. They do Federal work with low-income areas and communities. Washington has a 47% poverty level. They would work with us to identify circumstances to take the level above 51% to qualify for a feasibility /planning study. They work with the RDC's or Towns to assist businesses. Housing (51% affordable), Senior Living, housing rehabilitation program (e.g. Berlin), stabilize neighborhoods. Public Infrastructure - grants for water/sewer if an incoming business needs it. Helping Corner Stores. Work with RPC's - can't deal with specific issues i.e. parking but can be a component of a strategic analysis. Federal funds come with strings attached. They administer \$4-5m in State Tax Credit awards. Examples are Littleton where they are working to connect their river with their downtown; they have received \$900k in local match money. They helped Keene with Main Street and rail yard projects, building on brownfield sites. They are also providing clean energy funds for a solar project in Warner. They recommended that we reach out to Shelly Hatfield who is an independent grant writer in the Lebanon area and she used to work for Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC).

Grant applications are due by the last working day of October, with decisions coming 1st Thursday in December. There would be public hearings but not too involved as they are small grants. The Federal agency - the EDA - Economic Development Administration requires us to have a CEDS (Comprehensive Development Strategy) plan from our local Regional Planning Commission. <https://www.eda.gov/ceds/> She also recommended reaching out to PlanNH.

Kluk mentioned the “First Impressions” program through UNH Co-operative Extension and she will speak with them again. Her contact Penny Whitman said that they pair towns to look at each other’s towns. Provencher thought that maybe Keene State kids could pair with us and use their assessment program. *Kluk* said they will meet with us at no cost. Everyone agreed that this would be a great idea. *Kluk* will try to arrange an evening meeting with them for sometime in August. She also had the NH Preservation Alliance and feels they could help with a structural assessment report on the Old Schoolhouse and Town Pound. Her other item was LCHIP and she feels this could be a possibility for planning or work on the Old Schoolhouse.

Bert Bodnar spoke about the Town Pound and said the owners are keen on having it restored. They will need some arrangement so that the plowing by the town doesn’t keep filling the pound with road dirt and materials. *Crandall* said that the Town Pound in Hillsboro Center is a great example of what ours could look like when restored. *Kluk* asked if the owners are comfortable with the public going on their property to see it. *Crandall* said they are concerned about the cost. *Casey* asked what restoration means. *Crandall* said the stone need restacking and the sand needs to be removed. *Jager* said the BoS wouldn’t be willing to spend town money on private property. He asked if the owners want it done. *Crandall* said neither side is ready to commit to the project. *Gilbert* said we should ask *Thayer* for an estimate for cleaning out the sand and fixing the driveway. *Crandall* said we need to come up with a plan. *Jager* said this needs thought about what ideally should happen. *Otterson* feels we should look at other towns. *Gilbert* asked if there were pictures and *Jager* said no, the original pound was built in 1795, we don’t know its location but this could be a replacement. The pound is a stone enclosure with a gate to hold runaway or loose animals. *Otterson* will ask her husband about what he remembers about the pound. *Hatch* said we need follow up from *Thayer* because DPW directly impacts the pound. *Bodnar* said that the owners are concerned with the town continuing to fill it with sand. *Jager* feels it is a safety hazard and something needs to be done. *Casey* said she knows someone who does ground radar and could scan the pound for clues to old metal pieces.

4.0 Priorities - *Gilbert* asked if we could agree to focus on the Old Schoolhouse project and bring in the UNH Co-op people to speak with us about the “First Impressions” program. *Jager* asked if the Selectmen are on board with us or not. *Briggs-Chausee* asked how we got mixed up with the nuisance regulation. *Casey* said people are confused. *Kluk* said she posted our vision statement on the town’s Facebook page to clear up the confusion. The article in the Villager didn’t help at all. *Casey* said she is trying to get people involved and interested, she is keeping her

Facebook page open and hopes we will also.

5.0 **Other business** – Casey asked if we had discussed the old red house (Beede’s) yet. Crandall said we hadn’t, but friends reached out to the owners offering to get volunteers to clean up the yard around the house and possibly paint it, but there has not been any response. Casey suggested a tax break for the owners of the red house if they let the town use the property for some community use. It could be in lieu of rent and the town could clean up the yard, if they sold it the tax break would go away. Otterson suggested the town buy it and expand the municipal parking and find a good use for the building. Kluk requested Schwartz add this suggestion to the list under “community”. Schwartz mentioned to Briggs-Chausse and Casey that we are always looking for good ideas and suggestions from everyone to add to our list of issues and ideas.

5.0 **Next meeting** – Wednesday, August 8th at 8:30AM in the Town Hall. The other August meeting is tentatively scheduled for August 22nd, hopefully for a meeting with UNH Co-op Extension. We will let everyone know when Kluk has word on a date from them.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Nan Schwartz
Planning Board Secretary